

# Designing Hybrid Spaces

ENVISIONING PLURAL ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL  
PRACTICES FOR REGENERATIVE URBAN FUTURES

Edited by

Laura Galluzzo and Salvatore Di Dio



# Design International series

## DIRECTION

**Silvia Piardi**

## SCIENTIFIC BOARD

**Alessandro Biamonti, Alba Cappellieri, Mauro Ceconello, Claudio Germak, Elisa Giaccardi, Ezio Manzini, Carlo Martino, Promil Pande, Mario Piazza, Angelica Ponzio, Francesco Scullica, Francesca Tosi, Yingchun Zang**

## EDITORIAL BOARD

**Alessia Brischetto, Alessio Caccamo, Barbara Camocini, Giuseppe Carmosino, Eugenia Chiara, Chiara Di Lodovico, Andrea Di Salvo, Elena Elgani, Silvia Gramegna, Marco Quaggiotto, Gustavo Alfonso Rincon, Fabiano Scherer, Daniela Selloni, Davide Spallazzo, Livia Tenuta**

The Design International series was launched in 2017 as a place for cultural exchange between the different design souls. Over the years, the series has consolidated its position as a point of reference for international research, outlining a continuously updated research map. The Scientific Committee, consisting of experts in fashion, interiors, graphics, communication, product, service, social interaction, innovation and emotional design guarantees the level of the accepted texts. The Editorial Board, consisting of young experts in the different branches of design, supports the work of the scientific committee. After an initial evaluation by the two committees, the texts undergo international double revision.

# FrancoAngeli

SERIES - OPEN ACCESS CATALOG

This volume is published in open access format, i.e. the file of the entire work can be freely downloaded from the FrancoAngeli Open Access platform (<http://bit.ly/francoangeli-oa>).

On the FrancoAngeli Open Access platform, it is possible to publish articles and monographs, according to ethical and quality standards while ensuring open access to the content itself. It guarantees the preservation in the major international OA archives and repositories. Through the integration with its entire catalog of publications and series, FrancoAngeli also maximizes visibility, user accessibility and impact for the author.

Read more: [Publish with us \(francoangeli.it\)](#)

Readers who wish to find out about the books and periodicals published by us can visit our website [www.francoangeli.it](http://www.francoangeli.it) and subscribe to *Keep me informed* service to receive e-mail notifications.

# Designing Hybrid Spaces

ENVISIONING PLURAL ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL  
PRACTICES FOR REGENERATIVE URBAN FUTURES

Edited by

Laura Galluzzo and Salvatore Di Dio

MANAGEMENT

**Laura Galluzzo, Ambra Borin, Elisa Cinelli, Andrea Manciaracina**

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Laura Galluzzo, Salvatore Di Dio, Ambra Borin, Elisa Cinelli,  
Andrea Manciaracina, Paola La Scala**

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

**Eleonora De Marchi**

ART DIRECTION

**Marco Quaggiotto**

GRAPHIC DESIGN

**Giada Zoncada, Arianna Priori, Francesca Cassanelli,  
Ambra Borin, Elisa Cinelli, Andrea Manciaracina**

ISBN e-book Open Access: 9788835183099

Copyright © 2025 by FrancoAngeli s.r.l., Milano, Italy.

This work, and each part thereof, is protected by copyright law and is published in this digital version under the license Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). Text and Data Mining (TDM), AI training and similar technologies rights are reserved.

By downloading this work, the User accepts all the conditions of the license agreement for the work as stated and set out on the website <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>

# Contents

- 09      **Hybrid Spaces: values, relations and participation**  
Laura Galluzzo, Salvatore Di Dio
- PART 1  
HYBRID SPACES AS A PLURAL ECOSYSTEM
- 21      **1. Hybrid Spaces: Design and care of urban voids**  
Silvano Arcamone
- 35      **2. Hybrid Spaces as Plural Spaces: Reimagining Urban  
Futures through Post-Anthropocentric Design**  
Laura Galluzzo, Mathew Spialtini
- 49      **3. Interior Design for Hybrid Spaces in Venice:  
Enhancing Tangible and Intangible Heritage**  
Elena Vittoria Pedrina, Lucilla Calogero
- 61      **4. Enabling drivers for long-term sustainability of  
Socio-Cultural hybrid spaces: the case of  
“Il Giardino di Torricola” in Rome**  
Matteo Alteri
- 75      **5. Creative place-making and urban regeneration:  
the case of “Casa Linhares” in Balneário Camboriú**  
Caroline Da Silva, Mandrea Mesacasa, Sandra Regina Rech

- 93      **6. Co-designing Multifunctional Urban Interiors:  
the role of architectural technology for  
environmental comfort**  
Federica Pradella, Ingrid Paoletti, Giorgio Castellano
- 107     **7. From Making to Meaning: Hybrid Economies and  
the Role of Design in Urban Contexts**  
Carla Sedini
- 121     **8. From Signage to Relational Infrastructure: a situated  
taxonomy for environmental Graphic Design  
in Hybrid Spaces**  
Anna Turco, Alessio Caccamo
- PART 2  
THE PUBLIC VALUE OF HYBRID SPACES
- 137     **9. The social value proposition of Socio-Cultural Hybrid  
Spaces: insights from the OSMOSI Mapping**  
Elisa Cinelli
- 149     **10. Transformative Places: Governance and Impact in  
Socio-Cultural Hybrid Spaces**  
Mara Soncin, Giulia Vaiani
- 167     **11. What publicness for Socio-Cultural Hybrid Spaces?**  
Isabella Inti
- 183     **12. Collaborative Spaces in Piemonte, Liguria and Valle  
d'Aosta and the effects of the Compagnia di San Paolo  
Foundation's "SPACE" call for proposals**  
Tecla Livi
- 197     **13. Activating Proximity: rethinking local services and  
commerce as hybrid of urban resilience**  
Valentina Zaro

PART 3  
CULTURAL AND PARTICIPATORY SYNERGIES IN  
RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACES

- 213      **14. Reimagining Public Assets: Cultural Practices as Strategies of Space, Care, and Design**  
Paola La Scala
- 227      **15. Co-designing Socio-Cultural Hybrid Spaces: methods and transformative practices**  
Ambra Borin
- 245      **16. Multiplicity of Hybrid Spaces**  
Marta Carubolo, Daniela Selloni
- 261      **17. Imagining Belonging: Design, Policies, and Talent Attractiveness in the Inner Areas of Emilia-Romagna**  
Irene Patria
- 273      **18. The performative device in Urban Regeneration: the playful and ritual gesture in Chiaravalle**  
Stella Civardi

PART 4  
DIGITAL TOOLS FOR NEW MODELS OF PARTICIPATION

- 285      **19. Metaverse and co-design for Social Innovation: Design reflections**  
Salvatore Di Dio, Andrea Manciaracina
- 299      **20. Sensory design in phygital environments: expanding participation through embodied experience**  
Paulo Eduardo Tonin, Marinella Ferrara, Elton Moura Nickel
- 313      **21. Designing Digital Participatory Platforms: "Lisboa Participa" and "Decidim"**  
Mariana Rosa, Roberto Falanga, João Amorim

329 **22. Hybrid Spaces Network Milano.it/net/org. The need  
for a virtual hub**  
Giulia Cantaluppi, Roberta Mastropirro

343 **Authors**

# 3. Interior Design for Hybrid Spaces in Venice: Enhancing Tangible and Intangible Heritage

Elena Pedrina, Lucilla Calogero

Università IUAV di Venezia

## ABSTRACT

The contribution presents the work developed within the *Hybrid Space & Interaction Design Laboratory* at Università IUAV di Venezia, exploring the role of interior design in shaping hybrid spaces as tools to reinterpret the tangible and intangible heritage of the city. Hybrid Spaces are here understood as relational and narrative ecosystems, capable of integrating diverse functions and stimulating new forms of inhabitation and interaction. The case studies *Toea* and *Baraonda*, developed within underutilized buildings, demonstrate how narrative zoning strategies, spatial flexibility, relational devices and interactive interfaces can transform space into a shared cultural experience. *Toea* highlights culinary culture as a medium for conviviality and the transmission of memory; *Baraonda* proposes a community-based workshop for the safeguarding of lagoon ecosystems. Both projects underscore the potential of interior and interaction design as tools to activate participatory and regenerative processes, capable of connecting tradition and innovation.

## 3.1 Introduction

Abandoned, partially abandoned, temporarily disused and underutilised spaces in the city of Venice were the keywords from which the *Hybrid Space & Interaction Design Laboratory*<sup>1</sup> began developing a series of interior design projects. These phenomena of abandonment and non-use affect a multitude of interior spaces in the lagoon city. While these topics have been widely explored through urban planning and territorial analysis (Fregolent, 2023), the laboratory chose to approach them from the perspective of interior design, focusing on the role that underutilised interiors can play as cultural and relational devices. This approach is aimed at reflecting on the meaning of Venetian heritage and exploring opportunities for its preservation, valorisation, and reinforcement through hybrid spatial interventions.

## 3.2 The Concept of Hybrid Space in Interior and Interaction Design

When interpreted within the domains of interior and interaction design, the concept of *hybrid space* refers to the capacity to design environments where functions, practices and multiple narratives coexist and intertwine – built spaces that exist in-between different activities and uses, between access and presence (Migliore, Ceinar & Tagliaro, 2021). As Brooker and Stone (2009) have noted, interior design is characterised by its inherently adaptive and relational nature, capable of accommodating transformations and functional overlaps. Other interpretations emphasise the ability of such spaces to perform and accommodate various roles and functions, occasionally or simultaneously, including the communication of content (Kassem, 2022; 2019). These are spaces defined by integrated functions and spatial configurations that allow for simultaneous or sequential uses, diverse sensory experiences, and multilayered readings of place. In interior design, hybridisation translates into mobile elements, adaptive devices, and spatial narratives embedded in the configuration of the interior (Austin, 2020), where materials and components evoke stories, traditions, and tangible aspects of a specific material culture, trigge-

ring both physical and digital interactions between space, people and cultural content (Bollini & Borsotti, 2014; De Rosa, 2022).

In the laboratory, interior design education was strongly centred around the meaning of the term *hybrid*, which etymologically refers to the mixing or crossing of heterogeneous elements. In this sense, hybridisation was understood as a design approach that challenges the rigid categories that traditionally structure space – such as the separation between public and private, production and consumption, work time and living time, or physical and digital dimensions. In line with Brooker's (2016) reflections on adaptation as a founding practice in interior design, hybridisation becomes a project strategy that reinterprets existing spaces by introducing new relationships among functions, users, and meanings. Thus, interior design, by virtue of its transformative and site-specific nature, becomes a privileged field for experimenting with hybrid and adaptive configurations. In the Venetian context, hybridisation also extends to the level of user profiles, fostering dialogue between local communities and tourism – two realities often perceived as oppositional, but which, through hybrid spaces, can find new forms of coexistence and mutual interaction.

In the laboratory, interaction design was understood as the design of relational conditions within space, not limited to digital interfaces but extended to gestures, rituals, and forms of proximity. It was addressed as an integrated component of spatial design. Attention was paid to how space could facilitate interactions between people and cultural content through physical and digital objects, interfaces and devices. Students were invited to reflect on concepts such as proximity and distance (both physical and emotional); user engagement and agency; and the temporality of the experience (from quick to prolonged engagement). In this sense, the outputs of the laboratory contemplated hybrid communicative ecosystems in which physical space and narrative environments – including digital layers – interact to shape cultural experiences.

The goal of the lab was to prompt students to envision hybrid space projects that, as an alternative to ephemeral tourism (Bettin *et al.*, 2023), proposed new uses for currently underutilised or semi-abandoned spaces. Within this process, the faculty members identified three key themes of local heritage on which students could focus

their context analysis to support the development of their design concepts:

- the lagoon ecosystem: Venice's lagoon as a result of the interaction between land and sea, shaped by both natural forces and human activity;
- traditions linked to fishing and traditional boats: including Venetian rowing, sailing with the 'vela al terzo,' and artisanal fishing techniques;
- the theme of trade, past and present: considered both as the exchange of goods and as a system of knowledge.

The identification of project sites – often hidden behind impermeable walls – sparked the creation of a map of the city highlighting abandoned and invisible places, potentially capable of triggering a reactivation process with positive impacts for the wider urban context.

These spaces emerge as a heritage to be preserved and reimagined as polyvalent interiors, places of community and interaction between those who live in them, pass through them, or have yet to discover them.

### **3.3 *Ocean Space* and *Microclima*: Two Examples of Hybrid Spaces in Venice**

Two particularly significant examples found in recent local initiatives are *Ocean Space* and *Microclima*. Both show how the interior design of historic spaces can be understood as a relational and cultural medium, capable of generating new forms of inhabitation and activating plural uses. In these projects, space is not only restored or reused but reinterpreted as a narrative and relational platform, capable of connecting tangible and intangible heritage with contemporary forms of participation and cultural engagement.

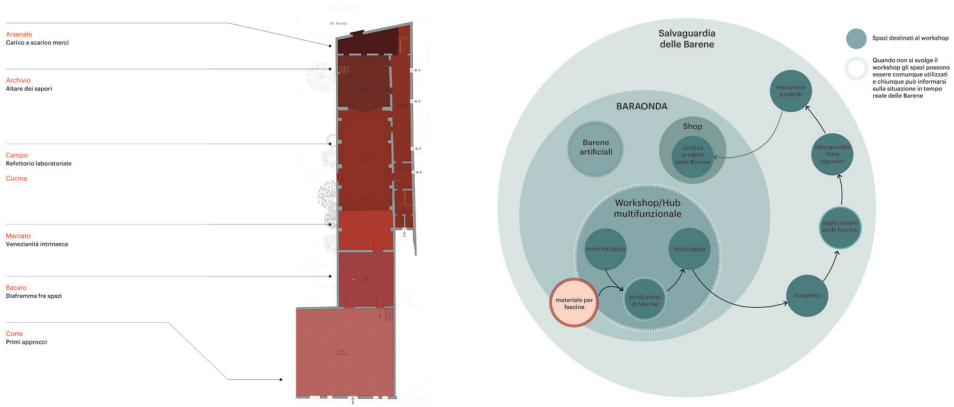
*Ocean Space*, inaugurated in 2019, is a hybrid space where a historic site – the Church of San Lorenzo, closed to the public for over a century – has been transformed into an international centre dedicated to ocean research and environmental awareness. The goal of the project is to promote critical ocean literacy through exhibitions,

collaborative research programmes and public activities, connecting art, science, and civic engagement. In this case, the hybrid space becomes a platform for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange and community participation, encouraging reflection on environmental issues and their preservation.

The headquarters of the *Microclima* association, located in the historic Serra dei Giardini in Venice, represents another example of a hybrid space that integrates artistic programming with the physical and symbolic dimensions of heritage. The greenhouse, built in 1894, was originally used to house exotic plants showcased during the early International Art Exhibitions. *Microclima* aims to renew the space's function by emphasising its historical value and social potential through an ongoing laboratory that explores new ways of engaging with cultural heritage and interacting with the local community. These two local examples demonstrate how interior spaces can activate new forms of inhabitation and cultural narration, offering a conceptual horizon for the experimental work developed in the design laboratory.

### **3.4 *Toea* and *Baraonda*: Two Interior Design Concepts for Hybrid Cultural Spaces in Venice**

Within the context of the laboratory, the projects *Toea* and *Baraonda* were developed as proposals for hybrid interior spaces, in which design engages with the need to reinterpret underutilised places by integrating tangible and intangible heritage into new spatial configurations. Both demonstrate how interior design can play a strategic role in shaping adaptive environments capable of hosting multiple functions, fostering social experiences, and creating dialogue between local communities and visitors. *Toea. Gathering around the table* as a communal act takes inspiration from Venetian gastronomic heritage and from the memory of the building known as Patronato Pietro La Fontaine – a site that becomes the catalyst for critical and multidisciplinary reflection. The aim is to recover and promote Vene-



tian culinary culture not only as historical legacy but also as a tool for social cohesion and cultural regeneration. In this perspective, food becomes a relational and cultural device, capable of conveying narratives, collective identities and practices of socio-cultural resistance. The project site features a front courtyard and a long, narrow interior space. Originally designed as a theatre, the building was later converted into a productive space and then, in the 1950s, into a Catholic Action centre. The proposed design serves a dual purpose: on one hand, it is an exercise in spatial and functional organisation through a carefully articulated layout; on the other, it acts as a spatial narrative structured around different zones of activity, intended to immerse users in the symbolic and functional layering of the interior. The narrative aims to transform the experience of space into an immersive and participatory journey. The layout is developed as a narrative sequence that reflects local practices while maintaining a flexibility that allows for interchangeable uses. The project includes six primary zones:

1. Courtyard: an introductory space accessible from outside, designed for welcoming visitors and offering a first taste of local flavours.
2. Bacaro: a transitional area inspired by traditional Venetian meeting places, connecting the public courtyard with the more intimate Market space.
3. Market: a dynamic and interactive environment that recalls the social experience of exchange central to local food culture.

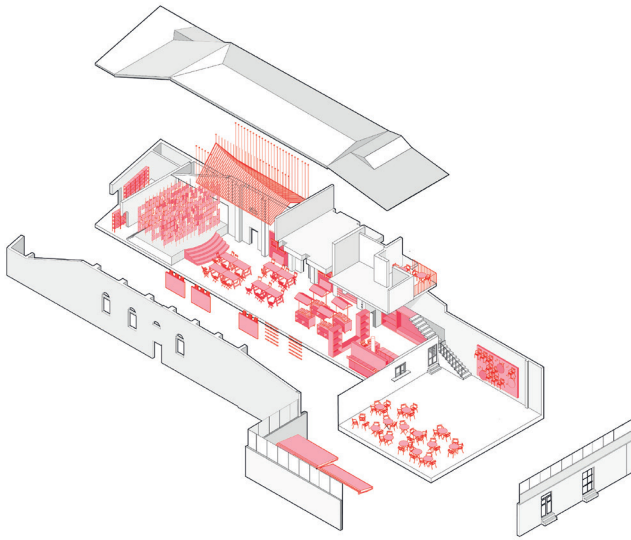
**Figure 1.**  
**Concepts for Hybrid**  
**Space projects in Venice:**  
*Toea and Baraonda.*

4. Campo: a multifunctional area for production, sharing and learning, closely connected to the historic kitchen.
5. Archive: a contemplative space for documenting and transmitting culinary knowledge, located in the former stage area.
6. Arsenale: a logistical zone with direct access to water, enabling loading/unloading of raw materials and linking to the local supply chain.

The experiential rhythm of the project moves from the quick and public engagement of the courtyard aperitivo toward the more intimate and reflective Archive that preserves historical and cultural testimonies. Traces left by users become part of a shared narrative, feeding a collective process of heritage construction. In this sense, *Toea* acts as a catalyst for the reactivation and reuse of an existing space that already holds a culinary memory. Through the adaptation and refunctionalisation of the building's historic kitchen, the project transforms the site into a centre for production and relationship-building – an accessible and shared space capable of fostering participatory dynamics. The project's objectives include the enhancement of Venetian food culture through documentation, practice and intergenerational transmission of culinary knowledge; and the promotion of encounters and exchanges between heterogeneous communities, producers, food professionals, residents and enthusiasts, through the creation of collaborative networks. The act of 'gathering at the table' is reinterpreted as a civic and collective practice capable of regenerating social ties and fostering new awareness about food, environmental sustainability, and the use value of urban space. This approach outlines an integrated vision of cultural heritage and social innovation, proposing a model of urban regeneration that celebrates local identity through shared and participatory cultural practices.

In *Toea*, hybridisation manifests not only in the integration of functions – catering, education, memory – but also in the creation of an experience involving diverse audiences (residents, tourists, professionals), in the coexistence of everyday activities and narrative processes, and in the interaction between material elements – such as the historic kitchen – and digital or documentary devices. The project thus enacts a multilevel hybridisation coherent with the theoretical approach developed in the laboratory.

Figure 2.  
Axonometric view of  
project *Toea*. Designed  
by Elettra Angeli,  
Beatrice Fistarol, Miriam  
La Barbera, Alessandro  
Faccin, Agathe  
Mahe, academic year  
2023/2024.

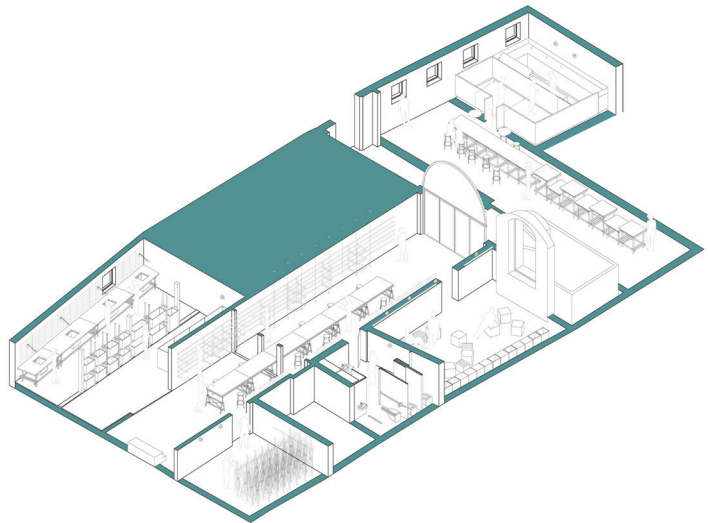


*Baraonda*, located in the ground floor rooms of Palazzo Canova on Calle Lunga Santa Caterina in the Cannaregio district of Venice, explores the potential of interiors as spaces for shared production and learning. The varied dimensions and heights of the rooms become a design resource for structuring a layout that accommodates manual activities (such as the construction of fascine), educational moments, and a space for observation and dissemination. Here, interior design works to create flexible and interconnected environments that support ecological, cultural, and community processes. These rooms, with significantly differing sizes and ceiling heights and direct access from the street, provide the context for imagining new uses, diverging from conventional restoration and reuse approaches typically applied to Venetian spaces. The design concept emerges from the intention to counter the progressive degradation of lagoon habitats – particularly the barene, which are salt marsh ecosystems vital to the Venetian lagoon yet threatened by erosion and climate change. The project proposes a network of nature-based engineering interventions that employ traditional techniques and local materials, particularly through the manual construction of fascine. These are cylindrical structures made of interwoven branches, used to stabilise

and protect the edges of the barene from water erosion. The construction process, hosted in the largest and tallest room, involves the active participation of the local community.

*Baraonda* envisions a hybrid physical space designed to support three complementary functions:

- Community Workshop: dedicated to the manual production of fascine, as well as training and dissemination of ecological maintenance practices for lagoon habitats. This space plays a pedagogical and empowering role, aiming to transmit traditional knowledge and foster environmental awareness.
- Centre for the Enhancement of Barena Products: an area for promoting and selling local resources such as honey, medicinal herbs, lagoon fish and salicornia – products seen not only as economic goods but as tangible expressions of a balanced landscape and rooted territorial culture.
- Participatory Observatory: focused on environmental monitoring and scientific communication concerning lagoon ecosystem dynamics. Through direct citizen involvement, it encourages greater understanding of ongoing environmental changes, fostering the creation of shared knowledge networks and collective responsibility.



**Figure 3.**  
Axonometric view of project *Baraonda*. Designed by Leonardo Benfatti, Francesco Fior, Tommaso Maretto, Lorenzo Muraro, Lucio Valconi, academic year 2024/2025.

As in *Toea*, hybridisation in *Baraonda* goes beyond the coexistence of educational, productive and informative functions. It is expressed in the interplay between local communities and visitors, between traditional practices and communication technologies, and between the physicality of manual work and the narrative dimension of the observatory. The project thus enacts a vision of interior design capable of building relationships across cultural, environmental and social dimensions through the hybrid configuration of space. In both projects, interior design does not merely restore functionality to marginal places, but reinterprets them as hybrid spaces open to plural uses and multiple user profiles (local communities and tourism). The proposed solutions demonstrate how interior design can strengthen the links between heritage and contemporaneity, creating new inhabitation scenarios that interweave everyday practices, collective identities and emerging forms of belonging.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The work developed in the laboratory has shown how interior design, when applied to the creation of hybrid spaces, can provide both operational and theoretical tools for addressing urban transformation in historical contexts. Through the investigation of marginal, abandoned or underused spaces, and the development of new spatial configurations, the projects activated multiple narratives, integrated diverse uses, and engaged heterogeneous communities.

The *Toea* and *Baraonda* projects provide concrete examples of how interior design can generate adaptive environments that are sensitive to the cultural and relational dimensions of space, promoting practices of proximity and belonging. In this framework, interior design assumes a transformative role that goes beyond spatial or morphological articulation and acts as a critical tool for interrogating contemporary forms of inhabitation in complex urban settings like Venice. The design experiments conducted in the lab confirm that hybridisation is not merely about combining different functions. It also entails the coexistence of diverse user profiles, the interplay between physical and digital dimensions, and the activation of narrative layers embedded

in the spatial experience. Interior design – owing to its site-specific vocation and capacity to accommodate overlap and transformation – emerges as a privileged field for responding to these challenges. One guiding question remains open, pointing to possible future developments of the research: What specific contributions can interior design – and particularly the design of hybrid spaces – offer in addressing the progressive transformation of historic cities? The cases analysed suggest that interior design, understood as a cultural and relational practice, can not only restore function to residual spaces but also generate environments that reinforce cultural identity, activate local agency, and imagine new modes of coexistence between communities, heritage and future visions.

## Notes

### Note 1

The "Hybrid Space & Interaction Design Lab" is part of the Bachelor's degree program in Product, Visual Communication, and Interior Design (Interior Design track) at Università Iuav di Venezia. The research presented refers to the 2023/24 and 2024/25 editions of the Lab, coordinated by Professors Lucilla Calogero, Davide Giorgetta, and Elena Pedrina, with contributions from Viorica Bejenari, Giovanni Covre, Ilaria Fracassi, and Tommaso Lodi.

## References

- Austin, T. (2020). *Narrative environments and experience design: Space as a medium of communication*. Routledge.
- Bollini, L., & Borsotti, M. (2014). *Exhibition design: Hybrid space of advanced design innovation*. Tecnológico de Monterrey. <https://boa.unimib.it/handle/10281/53585>
- Bosco, A., Bonini, E., Calogero, L., Dalla Mura, M. (Eds.) (2024). *Interior / Design. Espandere il campo*. Ronzani.
- Brooker, G. (2016). *Adaptation strategies for interior architecture and design*. Fairchild Books.
- Brooker, G., & Stone, S. (2009). *What is interior design?* RotoVision.
- De Rosa, A. (2022). *S+S Spatial Design + Service Design*. Politecnica.
- Fregolent, L., Ardila Garcia, A.C., So Young, H. (Eds.) (2023). *Abitare Venezia. Trasformazioni urbane nel sestiere di Castello*. Anteferma.
- Kassem, A. (2019). *Performative interiors: Terminological and theoretical reflections on the term "performative"*. *Interiority*, 2(1), 95-106. <https://doi.org/10.7454/in.v2i1.51>

- Kassem, A. (2022). Rehearsing a performative theory for architecture. In M. J. P. Neto (Eds.), *Creating through mind and emotions* (pp. 61-70). CRC Press.
- Migliore A., Ceinar, I. M., & Tagliaro, C. (2021). Beyond coworking: From flexible to hybrid spaces. In M. Orel, O. Dvouletý & V. Ratten (Eds.), *The flexible workplace: Human resource management* (pp. 3-24). Springer.
- Toscano, A., Scarpa, T., Valerio, C., Lamberti, G., Zanardi, C., Bettin, G., ... & Bettinello, E. (2023). Venezia. The passenger. Per esploratori del mondo. In *In ogni dove* (pp. 160-175). Iperborea srl.