

## Superstudio 50

a major retrospective on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of one of the most influential groups in radical Italian architecture

21 April – 4 September 2016

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#Superstudio50

*Superarchitecture is the architecture of superproduction,  
of superconsumption, of superinduction to superconsumption,  
of the supermarket, of superman and super petrol.*  
(Archizoom and Superstudio, 1966)

Rome 20 April 2016. Transverse, metaphysical, indefinable, ever-new, ever *outré*, **Superstudio** is one of the most influential groups in Italian *radical architecture*, founded in 1966 by **Adolfo Natalini** and **Cristiano Toraldo di Francia**, who were later joined by **Gian Piero Frassinelli**, the brothers **Roberto** and **Alessandro Magris** and **Alessandro Poli**.

50 years on from its foundations, MAXXI is devoting a major retrospective to the group: **SUPERSTUDIO 50** (from 21 April through to 4 September 2016), an exhibition conceived by Natalini, Toraldo di Francia and Frassinelli themselves, together with the curator **Gabriele Mastrigili**.

"This exhibition pays homage to an extraordinary group of creative talents, celebrated by international critics – just a few days ago The New York Times devoted a beautiful article to them- who have contributed to the the history of architecture, influencing the collective imagination and anticipating themes that are topical today, in such an impressive and almost prophetic way"- says **Giovanna Melandri** President of Fondazione MAXXI. Embedded in the MAXXI's DNA is the study and promotion of contemporary artists but also of all the great masters who have influenced creative projects, and Superstudio is without a doubt one of these".

"This exhibition - says **Margherita Guccione** Director MAXXI Architettura - is the most in-depth and comprehensive retrospective ever organized, a true exploration of the regions of Superstudio. A journey through space and time, through the images and the architecture, the utopias and the dystopias of the most influential group of Italian radical architecture."

"The visions of Superstudio are rhetorical expedients used to demonstrate ad absurdum, the possibilities and the limits of architecture as a critical instrument of modern society – says **Gabriele Mastrigili**, curator of the exhibition. In the collages and the drawings, in the installations and the films, what we learn from Superstudio is that architecture is not merely an object but a way of thinking about the world."

Known for the strength of its images and for the extreme variety of its output, the work of *Superstudio* has always evaded clear, identifiable labels; this exhibition brings together and presents **over 200** pieces, ranging from **installations to objects, from graphic works to photographs and through to publications** covering the entire career and development of the group, materials largely drawn from its own archives, some never previously displayed and many of which will progressively enter MAXXI's architecture collection.

An exhibition on Superstudio by Superstudio – which for the occasion is producing a **special exhibition design project** – a kind of scientific autobiography that reviews fundamental chapters in its history, from the exhibition **Superarchitettura** (1966), in which together with Archizoom, the group proposed for the first time a radical rethinking of architecture and design, replacing the traditional domestic images with a world of alienating objects and visions.

**SUPERSTUDIO 50** is an exploration of the universe of one of the most influential groups in 20th century architecture, at the dawn of the image of what today we call contemporaneity.

**SUPERSTUDIO 50** presents, among other works, the most important drawings, photomontages and installations from *The Continuous Monument* series (1969), the *Architectural Histograms* (1969-70) and *The Twelve Ideal Cities* (1971), projects through which the group demonstrated the possibilities and the limits of architecture understood as instrument of a critique of society.

Alongside this material, will be installations such as *The Wife of Lot*, presented at the Venice Biennale in 1978 and *the entrance to the Superarchitettura exhibition* from 1966 and design objects such as the *Bazaar* and *Sofa* settees (both 1968, produced by Giovanetti and Poltronova respectively) or the *Gherpe* and *Passiflora* lamps (1967 and 1968, both produced by Poltronova) and the well-known *Quaderna* series of tables (Zanotta, 1970).

Part of the exhibition is devoted to the group's videos, including the **previously unseen *Continuous Monument***, a project from 1969 of which only the storyboard existed and which has been produced by MAXXI for this exhibition with direction by the videomaker Lucio La Pietra.

Also screening will be the **five films of *The Fundamental Acts*** (Life, Educations, Ceremony, Love, Death, 1972-73), *Superstudio's* most ambitious attempt to tackle the relationship between life and design, which while on the one hand proposes an anthropological and philosophical refoundation of architecture, on the other progressively free the individual energies of the group which officially broke up in the early Eighties. The retrospective therefore comprises material such as **posters, publications** and a wide show of **"backstage" photographs** that the group realized since the beginning of its activity.

**SUPERSTUDIO 50** is moreover completed by the work of a number of artists who have given specific interpretations of *Superstudio's* work – from the videos of **Hironaka & Suib** and **Rene Daalder**, through to the documentary research of the photographer **Stefano Graziani** - helping us appreciate the freshness and currency of the message.

On the occasion of the exhibition the publisher Quodlibet is presenting ***Superstudio. Opere 1966-1978***, edited by Gabriele Mastrigli and collecting for the first time in an annotated form, the works, the texts and the projects of the celebrated group, from the best-known to the most extreme, generously illustrated with an vast quantity of images and previously unpublished documents, the fruit of long and painstaking archival reconstruction.

**The press kit and images of the exhibition** can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI's website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

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## Superstudio 50

21 April - 4 September 2016

### INTRO

*Founded in December 1966 by Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, later joined by Gian Piero Frassinelli, Roberto and Alessandro Magris and Alessandro Poli, Superstudio was one of the most influential groups of the world avant-garde scene during the 1960s and 1970s. In a Florence still covered in the mud of the 1966 flood and in a university milieu at the dawn of the protest era, Superstudio's research focused on the meaning of architecture in the age of a «society of spectacle», in its many forms of representation. Superstudio 50 here collects and presents in a chronological and analytical order, the installations, object, drawings, photomontages, as well as the prints, the publications and a series of films made by Superstudio between 1966 and the end of the 1970s. In a sort of autobiographical journey of formation, Superstudio drew from the imageries of the period: Adolfo Natalini's pop painting, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia's photography, Gian Piero Frassinelli's interest in anthropology. Refusing a generic interdisciplinary approach, the group proposed the adoption of a wider view and a radical rethinking of architecture and design, by replacing traditional and domestic imagery with a universe of estranging objects and dystopian visions. In their founding exhibition Superarchitettura (1966), held in Pistoia together with Archizoom, objects lost the connection to their function and increased their figurative power, presenting themselves as both «things and images of things». Proposing a «single design» devoid of aesthetic redundancy and reduced to its essential elements, the Histograms of Architecture (1969) and the furniture of the Misura series (1969/70) revealed how every research of ultimate objects — the utopia of modern times — is physiologically destined to failure. On the contrary, The Continuous Monument (1969) — of which we here present the film realized by Lucio Lapietra based on Superstudio's original storyboard — and The Twelve Ideal Cities (1971) were deliberately negative utopias, rhetorical means to demonstrate ad absurdum the possibilities and limits of architecture as a critique to modern society. In 1972, Superstudio participated in the famous Italy. The New Domestic Landscape exhibition at the MoMA in New York, producing a series of films dedicated to what they defined The Fundamental Acts: Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death (1972/73). These films were the ambitious attempt to confront the relationship between life and project, on one hand proposing a radical anthropological and philosophical re-foundation of architecture and, on the other, freeing the individual energies of the Superstudio members into a new and final phase, focused on teaching and professional practice (Gabriele Mastrigli)*

### Superdesign

*We should remember however that «it is poetry that makes you live», and that life is lived not only in hermetically sealed boxes made for small parallel lives, but also in the city and in cars, in the supermarkets, in the cinemas, on the motorways... And an object may be an adventure in space, or an object of worship and veneration, and become a shining intersection point of relationship... Thus evasion design aims at working on the theory of introducing foreign bodies into the system: objects with greatest possible number of sensory properties (chromatic, tactile, etc.), charged with symbolism, and images with the aim of attracting attention, or arousing interest, of serving as a demonstration and inspiring action and behaviour. ( 1967 )*

### A Journey into the Realm of Reason

*Our work has always taken the form of inventories and catalogues: perhaps the only form of work possible today is autobiography as a project for one's life. From 1965 to 1968 we worked with the conviction that architecture was a means of changing the world. Designs were a hypothesis of physical transformations, they were ways to hypothesize diverse qualities and quantities. These projects have been collected together in the first catalogue: A Journey into the Realm of Reason. A journey, such as 'Pilgrim's Progress', or a guidebook for young architects, through the architecture of monuments, the architecture of images, technomorphic architecture, the architecture of reason... ( 1969 )*

### Histograms of Architecture

*Between 1968 and 1969, we began to be interested in transposition and metamorphoses: architecture stopped being a «specific», it lost its «scale» connotations to become an abstract planning of platonic, neutral and available entities. We prepared a catalogue of non-continuous three-dimensional diagrams, a catalogue of Histograms of Architecture with reference to a grid that could be carried over to different areas or scales for the edification of a serene and immobile nature in which we could finally see ourselves. Later, furniture,*

*environments, architecture, and more, were effortlessly generated from the Histograms catalogue. The Histograms were also called The Architects' Tombs. ( 1969 )*

### **A catalogue of Villas**

*To design a villa is an inexistent problem: modern architecture has always solved all relative problems, and on the other hand, has demonstrated its social and functional absurdity. However, it remains for young architects one of the few occasions for actually «making architecture». Thus, refusing to consider the personal problems of the clients and trying to think solely of a serene life and a happy construction seen in the light of a small piece of the larger construction that is «the system of architecture», we have compiled a Catalogue of Villas. This includes four series of six villas: A. Suburban Villas, B. Villas by the sea, C. Villas in the Mountains, D. Great Italian Villas. ( 1968/70 )*

### **The Continuous Monument**

*We believe in a future of «rediscovered architecture», in a future in which architecture will regain its full power, abandoning all ambiguity of design and appearing as the only alternative to nature. Between the terms of natura naturans and natura naturata, we choose the latter. Eliminating mirages and will-o'-the-wisps such as spontaneous architecture, sensitive architecture, architecture without architects, biological architecture and fantastic architecture, we move towards the «continuous monument»: a form of architecture all equally emerging from a single continuous environment: the world rendered uniform by technology, culture and all the other inevitable forms of imperialism. ( 1969 )*

### **The Misura serie**

*Furniture and objects made of wood, covered in PRINT plastic laminate. The special features of the design consists in the homogeneity and isotropy of its entire surface, so that it can be used according to the three Cartesian directions. (...) We are interested only in «mental furniture»: objects to be held before us as mirrors, to be touched, to be looked at from near and far, as exorcisms against confusion and unjustified consumption. We are interested in furniture that inspires calm and serenity, building stones of a calm and motionless nature in which we can finally recognize ourselves. ( 1969 )*

### **Didactic Architecture**

*Between 1970 and 1971, we started to produce didactic projects, architectural critiques, we used architecture as self criticism, endeavouring to enquire into its promotional mechanisms and its ways of working. The didactic projects are: Reflected Architecture, The Twelve Ideal Cities, Salvages of Italian Historic Centers and some competitions. ( 1970/71 )*

### **The Twelve Ideal Cities**

*Twelve (plus one) descriptions of cities, which represent as many trends in urban planning and architecture. A series of tales (fantasy, science fiction, horror) that foretell the issues that await the trusty supporters of a science of the city. Published on a great number of architecture magazines (and translated until now into nine languages), they acted as a reagent for the minds of many archi-maniacs. Gregotti spoke of religious terrorism. And others took them seriously (with the Continuous Monument). Too bad for them. ( 1971 )*

### **Salvages of Italian Historic Centers**

*The only possible salvage is destruction once more; total sterilization of this organism that was born as a house of man, but became his prison and final sepulchre... It is only by leaving the city and forgetting it forever that man will free his vision from the narrow walls that imprison it... ( 1972 )*

### **The Fundamentals Acts**

*Architecture never touches the great themes, the fundamental themes of our lives. Architecture remains at the edge of our life, and intervenes only in a certain points in the process, usually when behaviour has already been codified, furnishing answers to rigidly stated problems. It then becomes an act of coherence, or a last try at salvation, to concentrate on the re-definition of the primary acts, and to examine, in the first instance, the relationship between architecture and these acts: Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death. ( 1971/73 )*



### **From architecture to man**

*Simple utensils, self-managed processes of transformation (as agriculture and the crafts) and extra-urban material cultures are utilized as field of investigation. Anthropological techniques are employed in analysis and interpretation. Direct experimentation (doing like thinking), manual work, use and behaviour are employed in reappropriating themselves and their environment. ( 1978 )*

### **The Wife of Lot**

*A metal zinc structure, similar to a table, supports five small salt architecture buildings on their respective zinc tubs. The water runs slowly down a tube drop by drop onto the first architecture building and dissolves it. Architecture exists in time as salt exist in water. The architecture buildings of salt, dissolving themselves, reveal within their insides objects that represent that which time has transformed them into. ( 1978 )*

### **Inside Superstudio**

*When the projects and images , the texts and objects of Radical Architecture were being produced, Radical Architecture didn't exist. Now that the label exists, Radical Architecture has become extinct. In other words, it cannot be regarded as simply another movement or school with homogeneous, well defined characteristics, but a series of situations, intentions and acts. ( 1977 )*

*On the boundary between project and performance, Superstudio's work always featured an intense and openly-stated dialectics between the object and its representation. «The myths of society take shape from the images that society produces», as they stated at the beginning of the Superarchitettura exhibition, in 1966. A continually evolving creative process more than an end product, Inside Superstudio presents the group's activity and development through the photographs by Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, the posters and published material designed by Superstudio to promote and often give shape to their projects, and the photographic research by Stefano Graziani on the Superstudio archive, a very uncut and concrete record of the group's work method. Lastly, Matteo Giacomelli's documentary gives voice to the protagonists while the work of video-makers Hironaka & Suib and Rene Daalder reveal the modernity and freshness of Superstudio's reasoning.*

### **BIOGRAPHY**

**Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Roberto Magris, Gian Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris. Alessandro Poli** was an associate of the office from 1970 to 1972.

*Superstudio was founded in Florence in December 1966, on the occasion of the exhibition Superarchitettura, held at the Jolly 2 art gallery in Pistoia. Among the initiators of the so-called «Radical architecture», Superstudio undertook a painstaking analysis of objects, industrial design and architecture. Superstudio's critical work was developed through theoretical projects such as Histograms of Architecture, The Continuous Monument, and The Twelve Ideal Cities, with exhibitions both in Italy and abroad, teaching and lectures, articles, essays and a series of prints.*

*In 1970 Superstudio, together with the 9999 group, started the Separate School for Conceptual Expanded Architecture (S-SPACE): a didactic organization dedicated to the exchange of information. From 1971 to 1973 Superstudio worked in the field of operative criticism, producing a series of films focused on the Fundamental Acts (Life, Education, Ceremony, Love, Death): an attempt towards the philosophical and anthropological re-founding of architecture. From 1973 to 1975 Superstudio co-founded Global Tools, a system of laboratories for the development of common creativity, and taught at the Faculty of Architecture in Florence and in several international schools. Among the most famous avant-garde groups in the international scene between the 1960s and the 1970s, Superstudio took part in the exhibition entitled Italy: The New Domestic Landscape held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1972, as well as in both international exhibitions hosted by the 15th Milan Triennial (Architettura-Città, curated by Aldo Rossi, and the Industrial Design section, curated by Ettore Sottsass jr.).*

*The exhibition Superstudio: Fragmente aus einem persönlichen Museum travelled throughout Europe in 1973/74. The exhibition Sottsass Superstudio: Mindscapes was hosted by several museums in the United States between 1973 and 1975. In 1978 the group held a solo exhibition at the Istituto Nazionale di Architettura in Rome and took part in the 38th Venice Biennale. The group broke up in halfway through the 1980s and its members went their separate ways.*

## Objects as mirrors

### The critical utopia of Superstudio

by Gabriele Mastrigli

A man sets out to draw the world.  
As the years go by he peoples a space with images of  
provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fish, houses,  
instruments, stars, horses and individuals. Shortly before dying  
he discovers that this patient labyrinth of ideas traces  
the lineaments of his own face.  
Jorge Luis Borges, *The Maker*, 1960.

Reading about Superstudio brings to mind the celebrated adage cited by Borges, *novelty is but oblivion*. In effect, in the work of the Florentine group there is nothing that is *new*: rituals and foundation myths, archetypes and symbolic forms, assemblages and *objets trouvés*, are the materials of the vast output of what was actually one of the most influential groups on the global neo-avant-garde scene of the Sixties and Seventies. Neither is there any doubt that the work of Superstudio was essentially an incessant process of accumulation, selection and cataloguing of fragments from a collective memory, as recognised in pop culture and the classical tradition, in the phenomenology of modernity and the anthropological gaze, in the views of scientific research and the investigations into marginal cultures. In this process the finished product, the new “order of things”, as Foucault has it<sup>1</sup>, is actually the revealing of the potential of the things, themselves apparently innocuous but not for this any less definitive: the things begin to appear for what they may be, until they slowly materialise as what, in effect, they *already* are. In the stories of Superstudio what is foreshadowed is the fulfilment of their destiny.

This is the reason whereby, logically, there is nothing utopian in the work of Superstudio. Certainly, in the *catalogues*, the narrative form through which the Florentine group brought together and presented architectural and design drawings and projects, reference is frequently made to a linear, perspectival history, as in *Un viaggio nelle regioni della ragione*, a kind of ritual of initiation to the formal archetypes of architecture and a true metaphor for Superstudio’s entire oeuvre.<sup>2</sup> However, this is an historical dimension annulled in the very structure of the story, that is, in a narrative dimension that, containing and structuring it, confers upon the sequence of episodes an absolute and ahistorical character, revealing itself as *system* of its operation.

Rarely in the history of architecture has the relationship between writing and image been so circular and close as in the work of Superstudio. Suspended between art, literature, science and philosophy, the architectural narration of Superstudio in fact appears as a carrier of value in itself, with no need of referencing an outside truth, a more or less secret content, a promise, a salvation. It is, in the end, nothing more than a *system of measure* – a common denominator for many of Superstudio’s design devices – a mechanism of comparison and therefore verification, of the capacity for the circulation and exchange of ideas, of their potential for transforming the economy of the discourse, of their statues as finite, limited, desirable, useful good; goods that, far from being reducible to the innocuous horizon of the ephemeral, pose the true problem of power, in this sense constituting, as Foucault says, “the object of a struggle, of a political struggle”<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Order is, at one and the same time, that which is given in things as their inner law, the hidden network that determines the way they confront one another, and also that which has no existence except in the grid created by a glance, an examination, a language; and it is only in the blank spaces of this grid that order manifests itself in depth as though already there, waiting in silence for the moment of its expression. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*, Gallimard, Paris 1966; Eng. trans. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Vintage Books Edition, New York 1971, xix

<sup>2</sup> Superstudio, *Un viaggio nelle regioni della ragione* (1969), pp. 96-99

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *L’archéologie du savoir*, Gallimard, Paris 1969; Eng. trans. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Routledge, London and New York 2002, p. ??.

«Society's myths take form in the images that society produces. The new objects are both things and images of things<sup>4</sup>. Superstudio's debut together with Archizoom in Florence in 1966 is both a declaration of intents and a lucid analysis of the context in which the architect works. These were the years of the triumphant crisis of modernism with all its political, social and cultural implications: from the *mythologies* of the everyday, listed by Roland Barthes<sup>5</sup>, to the figures personifying the tumultuous spirit of the time, from John Fitzgerald Kennedy to Nikita Khrushchev and through to Martin Luther King. And then, obviously, the prophets of the music of the masses, Dylan, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones. For architecture, these were the final, intensive years of the masters of the Modern Movement, Mies, Gropius and above all Le Corbusier, the most awkward of all and whose death symbolically opened a dense and controversial season of theoretical reflection within the discipline: the books by Aldo Rossi and Robert Venturi, both published in 1966 were signs<sup>6</sup>. The terms of the discourse were those that Guy Debord listed at the start of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), paraphrasing the opening of Marx's *Capital*: «In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.<sup>7</sup> Life, society, modernity, production, accumulation, representation. Such are the conditions for the departure and the *catalogue of tools* of Superstudio and its travelling companions in the so-called radical architecture movement.<sup>8</sup>

This is why the two most significant aspects of Superstudio's work – on the one hand the narrative invention and on the other the scornful and radical criticism of the role of architecture in contemporary society, through to the calling into question of its very foundations – should be kept and understood together. The entire career of Superstudio, on closer inspection, may be thematically divided into a series of passages that investigate in ever greater depth the relationship between representation and criticism of the system. The premise is that architecture, from the dawn of modernity onwards dispersed in a riot of technical specialisms, can only perform the ideological role of *representing* this condition, foreshadowing the (dramatic) consequences. In a celebrated essay from the period, the historian Manfredo Tafuri emblematically defined this process as *the adventures of reason*<sup>9</sup>, dating it to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the emergence of those constants of *Illuminist dialectics* destined to characterise the entire development of modern art and architecture: «the formation of the architect as the ideologue of the "social", the identification of the appropriate field of intervention within the urban phenomenology, the persuasive role of form with respect to the public and self-criticism with respect to their own research, dialectics – at the level of formal research – between the role of the architectural "object" and the role of urban organization.<sup>10</sup> The *social* mission of the bourgeois intellectual thus immediately presents itself as

<sup>4</sup> Archizoom, Superstudio, *Superarchitettura* [1967], *infra*, p. 4

<sup>5</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Editions du Seuil, Paris 1957; Eng. trans. *Mythologies*, Paladin, London, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1966, and Aldo Rossi, *L'architettura della città*, Marsilio, Padova 1966; new edition Quodlibet, Macerata 2011. Le Corbusier died in the waters off Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, Côte d'Azur, 27 August 1965.

<sup>7</sup> As is well known, for the beginning of his book Debord reprised the opening of Marx's *Capital*, replacing the terms *goods* with the term *spectacle*. Guy Debord, *La Société du Spectacle*, Buchet-Chastel, Paris 1967; *Society of the Spectacle*, Black and Red, 1970, p. ?.

<sup>8</sup> In the wake of the experience of Archizoom and Superstudio that period in Florence saw the formation of the Ufo, 9999 and Ziggurat groups and the figures of Remo Buti and Gianni Pettena came into the limelight; the Florentines were flanked in Milan by Ugo La Pietra, in Naples by Riccardo Dalisi and in Turin by the Gruppo Strum. The mentor of the movement was Ettore Sottsass jr., who from 1957 was artistic consultant for Poltronova di Agliana (Pistoia), the company that produced the first object by Archizoom and Superstudio. The term *radical architecture* was coined by Germano Celant in 1971 in the essay "Untitled", published in the monographic issue of the magazine *in* curated by Archizoom and Superstudio and devoted to the question of *The destruction of the object*. Celant referred to a *Radical reading of the system of making and being in architecture* and to an expansion of the philosophical-intentional value of architecture. Hence not only projects, objects and manufactures are architecture, but also clients, the media, information, writing and the architects themselves. Germano Celant, "Senza titolo", *in. Argomenti e immagini di design*, 2-3, March-June 1971, pp. 76-81.

<sup>9</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, "Per una critica dell'ideologia architettonica", *Contropiano*, 1, 1969, pp. 31-79; later republished in *Progetto e utopia. Architettura e sviluppo capitalistico*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1973, pp. 5 sgg.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 7.

that of *distancing the anxiety* produced by the perception of the liberty of the modern individual with respect to the mechanisms generated by the new social condition, in particular that associated with the urban dimension. Modern art and architecture were thus brought up in the bosom of the metropolis, an alienating but necessary machine. Tafuri claims that in their respect, the ethical imperative is that of *understanding and assimilating* the causes of this anxiety. A duty that, far from being a mere question of aesthetics, is configured as true *work*: mediating and managing the process of crisis underlying the mechanisms of production (and reproduction) of the capitalist system.

It is this light that the work of Superstudio, in all its variegated and unconventional sequence of products (posters, installations, performances, stories, printed matter, projects, manufactures, design objects and so on), appears anything but an escape from the presumed duties of architecture.<sup>11</sup> Quite the contrary in that it represents the most advanced position of architectural reflection and action, not only from the historical point of view, as the final chapter in the long story of the avant-garde movements, but as a development in its own right: an exploration of those *provinces of reason* in which architecture, while moving on the basis of individual petitions, reveals its eminently rational nature and, through a process of systematic self-criticism of its own research, illuminates the sense of its practice and therefore its role in society.

***Text taken from the book Superstudio Opere 1966-1978 published by Quodlibet***

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<sup>11</sup> It has to be said that Manfredo Tafuri proved incapable of appreciating the contribution made by the Florentine avant-garde, as emerges from the pages of *Progetto e utopia*, to the point where he actively obstructed them. This is surprising as their positions (above all that of Archizoom) were close to the approach of the Rome historian, at least in the beginning. Cf. Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy. Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism*, Buell Center / FORuM Project-Princeton Architectural Press, New York 2008.





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A timeless material, unique of its kind and with vast expressive potential, Alcantara partners with art and architecture to open itself up to new interpretive languages.

After the success of the three exhibitions *Can you imagine?*, *Shape your life!* and *Playful interaction* (fully described in a dedicated catalogue) the partnership between the Italian company that has been producing the homonymous trademark material for nearly forty years and the national Museum of 21st century arts goes on.

During the three years of its existence, the Alcantara-MAXXI project has seen two institutions – museum and company – work together and apply themselves in a continuous exchanges of skills and experiences. This generated a collaboration-and-dialogue model of enormous creative intensity and, over the years, has involved more than twenty well-established designers and young international talents.

*“The partnership between MAXXI and Alcantara is strategic and works on a new form of collaboration between a museum and a company,”* says Giovanna Melandri, President of the MAXXI Foundation. *“While both MAXXI’s and Alcantara’s core business includes supporting and promoting up-and-coming creative talents, this kind of joint venture goes far beyond the traditional concept of sponsorship, opening the way to a creative alliance that enriches all those involved.”*

*“It’s our firm belief,”* states Andrea Boragno, President and CEO of Alcantara S.p.A., *“that today the meaning of an efficient relationship between a company and a museum is in their concrete will to explore new expressive spheres, disengaging themselves from their role as a simple patron and, rather, choosing to establish a true cooperation, which stems first and foremost from an exchange of knowledge.”*

This vision is shared by Margherita Guccione, Director, MAXXI Architettura, who states that, *“Alcantara-MAXXI is a new model of collaboration between a company and an architecture museum. The interchange gives both of them an opportunity for sincere dialogue focused on a common, innovative vision. Thanks to the involvement of 21 international designers we have over the past three years looked to the future and experimented, in MAXXI’s exhibition spaces, with the creativity and versatility of this incredible material.”*

Founded in 1972, **Alcantara** represents a prime example of Italian-produced quality. As registered trademark of Alcantara S.p.A. and result of a unique and proprietary technology, Alcantara® is a highly innovative material, offering an unrivalled combination of sensory, aesthetic and functional qualities. Thanks to its extraordinary versatility, Alcantara is the choice of leading brands in a number of application fields: fashion and accessories, automotive, interior design and home décor, consumer-electronics. These features, together with a serious and certified commitment in terms of sustainability, make Alcantara a true icon of contemporary lifestyle: the lifestyle of those who want to fully enjoy their everyday life, respecting the environment. Since 2009 Alcantara is certified “Carbon Neutral”, having defined, reduced and offset all the CO2 emissions derived from its activity. In 2011 the analysis was extended to the whole product lifecycle, including also use and disposal phases (“from cradle to grave”). To mark out the path of the company in such a field, every year Alcantara draws up and publishes its own Sustainability Report, certified by TÜV SÜD international authority and available also on the corporate website. Headquartered in Milan, Alcantara production site and R&D department are located in Nera Montoro, in the heart of Umbria Region (Terni).

Press Release No. M004/16

San Donato Milanese, 23 February 2016

**MINI and MAXXI, a partnership in the name of design**

The partnership between the Museum and MINI is being announced during the presentation of the MAXXI exhibits and activities for 2016.

A MINI-branded reading room will accompany visitors during their cultural visit to the Museum.

**San Donato Milanese.** Starting with the classic Mini designed by Sir Alec Issigonis in 1959, every MINI has been much more than a simple automotive icon. It represents a veritable existential philosophy, a vital space, a recurring feature of the urban scene, and – we could even say – an artistic creation. To reaffirm its vocation, MINI has entered into a partnership with the Rome-based MAXXI, a reality with which it shares values linked to the world of design, art, and new trends.

The partnership is being announced today, 23 February 2016, during the press conference at which the President of the MAXXI Foundation, Giovanna Melandri, together with Artistic Director Hou Hanru, will be presenting the exhibits and the activities the Museum has scheduled for 2016.

“The collaboration with MAXXI is a natural for us, because we share with the Museum not only a passion for design, but also the artist who designed this magnificent place, Zaha Hadid, who also designed our plant in Leipzig. Moreover, it is particularly significant,” explains Sergio Solero, President and CEO of BMW Italia S.p.A., “that this partnership is beginning in 2016, just when we are celebrating the BMW Group’s 100th anniversary and the 50-year presence of BMW in Italy. We are proud to cooperate with the most important cultural institutes in the country, and the MAXXI is one of these.”

The MAXXI National Museum of the Arts of the 21st century is the first national institution devoted to contemporary creativity, offering a well-endowed program of exhibits, workshops, conferences, labs, shows, projections, and teaching projects in which MINI is a prominent feature.

**MINI and MAXXI**

MINI is the transposition of a global and transversal lifestyle that is adored by persons of differing cultures, languages, and social extraction. Always attentive to art and design, MINI is very well disposed to research and innovation, anticipating the latest trends. These are values that it shares with MAXXI and that the compact British premium car displays anew today with the New MINI Clubman.

“MINI has a strong sense of heritage, but at the same time it has always been fertile ground for creative experiments,” explains Federico Izzo, Head of MINI, “and has decided to join MAXXI as a place for exploiting cultural heritage and also, at the same time, as a laboratory for experimentation, innovation and the production of new and contemporary aesthetics approaches and features.”

The partnership offers MINI a new opportunity to adventure once again beyond the confines of the mere “automobile as an object”. For this reason, together with MAXXI, a special Manifesto has been written to highlight the common values on which the partnership is based:

*“Opposites only in name, but mirror images in terms of the values that inspire them.*

*Just as MINI has always challenged the cultural canons of the time, so MAXXI has now become part of the age-old city of Rome, affirming itself as an open space where artistic practices become the laboratory for the*

# MINI

## CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

*future.*

*It is therefore here that their paths aimed at promoting cutting-edge approaches, experimentation, and innovation meet, in a voyage that seeks to contribute to the creation of new languages and to the vision of new worlds."*

### **A cultural learning space powered by MINI**

MINI, partner of MAXXI's Public Programs, that is, all the events that form part of the program for in-depth study and enrichment of the subjects developed by the exhibits, has decided to set up a reading room to provide an added value to the cultural experience for visitors to the Museum. As a matter of fact, an itinerant space will be created for meetings and talks on art and design, serving also as a place for sharing that is always available to visitors and where they can find informative material about the exhibits. During the course of the year, specific initiatives will be organized to make the most of the two worlds, MINI and MAXXI, and to bring their respective clients and visitors closer together.

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### **The BMW Group**

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2015, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.247 million cars and nearly 137,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2014 was approximately € 8.71 billion on revenues amounting to € 80.40 billion. As of 31 December 2014, the BMW Group had a workforce of 116,324 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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Monteroberto, 18 April 2016

## **Gagliardini.**

### **History of a business and a cultural enterprise**

Gagliardini Srl is a company that supplies goods and services linked to living, building and design, founded in 1958 by Vittorio Gagliardini. Based in Vallesina, in the province of Ancona, Italy, for over twenty years the company has flanked its corporate mission with a publishing and cultural project that focuses on contemporary art, architecture and design. The project began with the *Progetti* magazine, which evolved in 2012 into *Mappe*, a registered publication that has become a point of reference for professionals in the sector and for the community that lives both in the Marche region and also on the other side of the Adriatic. The brainchild of Vittorio Gagliardini, the magazine has enhanced and promoted the quality of local architecture by means of a widely acknowledged, precise and disciplinary series of articles on the subject. By constantly and generously investing in cultural programmes, it has fostered exhibitions, conferences, events, seminars and workshops, all useful platforms around which to reflect, plan and build.

The decision to invest in culture, strategic for the development of the business, has led to the development of a publishing project structured in interconnected formats that characterize the **Mappelab system**: *Mappe* which comes out every six months – editor in chief Cristiano Toraldo di Francia; *Demanio Marittimo-Km-278* – a cultural event staged with the contribution of an impressive infrastructure of public/private, national and international relations; the social commerce *Mstore*, which brings together designers and manufacturers, and invests a steady amount in young talent contests.

The company – and the products displayed in its showroom – represents the very best of national and international production, distinguished by its innovative approach to service, sales, relations with its customers, project development, process quality, reputation and prestige.

Considered a cutting-edge company in Italy, it is a constantly changing laboratory where presentation, commercial consultancy and cultural background offer both brand and style experience. The strength of its business model lies in the close attention paid to consumer desires and needs, as demonstrated by its long-standing partnerships with leading furniture and design brands, and its relations with Italy's top manufacturers.

Vittorio Gagliardini's offspring – Mario, Cristiana and Francesca – work alongside their father in the governance of the company, confirming a successful handover from one generation to the next.

[www.gagliardini.it](http://www.gagliardini.it)

# ASSOCIAZIONE DEMANIO MARITTIMO. KM-278

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Jesi, 18 April 2016

The **Associazione DEMANIO MARITTIMO.KM-278** was set up on 10 June 2013 in Monteroberto. Its mission is to promote the development of cultural enterprise and dialogue between the various players on the contemporary design scene – art, architecture, design, business, cultural production networks – with activities and initiatives in the local area in partnership with institutions, universities, research centers, businesses, public and private institutions. The body of founding members reflects the transversality and the wealth of processes that the Association sets out to foster and support. The panel of people involved reflects a series of individual stories, experiences of innovative enterprises distinguished by quality, sustainability and social responsibility policies, by the participation of networks of associations and institutions that proactively favor and support the modernization of the area.

The governance of the Association, which has legal headquarters in Jesi, is organized with an Executive Committee chaired by Cristiana Colli; a Scientific Committee of independent experts with links to design, culture and contemporary enterprise; a panel of Honorary Members that includes representatives of the most closely involved local Authorities – the Region, universities and the various autonomous bodies charged with the organization of the State.

Since its inception, the Association has been involved in staging **Demanio Marittimo.Km-278**, an event/project that started in 2011 and is renewed every year in the month of July for just one night – 12 hours, 6 pm/ 6 am.

The basic idea behind this project is that beaches are public spaces, and that the Adriatic is the sea that represents the most pressing issues of our time, the geopolitical and cultural epicentre, node and hub of the anthropological, demographic and religious transformations taking place today and the plans for the Europe of tomorrow, which is looking East.

**www.mappelab.it**

<http://www.mappelab.it/mappe/demanio-marittimo-km-278/associazione/>

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## SKY ARTE HD

- SKY CHANNELS 110, 130 and 400 -

**PAINTING, SCULPTURE, MUSIC, LITERATURE, DESIGN, ANCIENT AND  
CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF EXPRESSIONS:**

### **ART AND KNOWLEDGE ARE THE HEART OF THE PLATFORM**

**SKY ARTE HD** it's the first Italian TV channel dedicated to art in all its forms and it's now available to all Sky subscribers (who have HD in their subscription) on channels **110**, **130** and **400** of the platform. Painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, theater, design and all forms of artistic expression are found within a single schedule dedicated not only to the fans who have the opportunity to deepen their interests, but also to the curious ones than can get closer to art in a brand new way, through both the major international productions (Sky Arts, BBC, Channel 4, Arte, PBS, Sundance Channel) and the original ones of the channel. Sky Arte HD tells the infinite resources of the world's artistic heritage, with a special consideration for the Italian extraordinary tradition and our artists' talent and it uses a contemporary and never didactic language, characterized by the contamination of genres.

The channel hosts all the languages of art. On the one hand, the Sistine Chapel, which was presented on Sky Arte HD in all its expressive power thanks to the original production ***Michelangelo - The heart and the stone***, broadcast on Sky 3D with an exclusive documentary on the Sistine Chapel, on 1<sup>st</sup> November. On the other hand, the channel tells the provocations of Marina Abramovic and the charm of conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, or rock legends as Jim Morrison, eclectic talents as Tom Ford and the queen of photography Annie Leibovitz.

Among the **original productions**, there are programs especially created for children, such as ***Art explained to kids***, which uses cheerfulness to help children and parents to discover art as an element that can be part of everyone's life; furthermore, there are travels in the contemporary world, as ***Potevo farlo anch'io*** hosted by Alessandro Cattelan and Francesco Bonami, who travel with us among the wonders and the paradoxes of the greatest masterpieces of contemporary life, with an ironic approach. Local events have a great relevance on the channel: exhibitions, shows and retrospectives will be told in the report ***Great Exhibitions***, which describes step by step the complex mechanism of an exhibition, from the transport of works to the vernissage.

On the occasion of the Salone and Fuorisalone 2013, Sky Arte HD realized the original production ***De.sign***, which led the audience in the heart of Milan design week with **daily capsules** dedicated to the **Fuorisalone**, with a **final report** on the whole **2013 edition** and an important doc series on the history of design. Another Sky Arte HD original production is ***Bookshow***, a show entirely dedicated to books that tells their story through a simple but in-depth tripartite structure: **a book, a place, a guest**. ***The crossed destinies hotel*** is a carefree colorful cartoon which talks about particular meetings that have changed history; the set is a hotel where the room doors open and close on the fate of the protagonists. In June, Sky Arte HD presented ***Contact***, another

original production that takes an extraordinary and fascinating journey in the forbidden city of photo proofs, near the **famous photographers of Magnum Photos**, the legendary agency founded in 1947.

In October, Sky Arte presents **Unveiled Masterpieces: Greta Scacchi** will explain how a great artist, as well as an extraordinary artistic interpreter, can also be a **real storyteller of her time**. In November a new season of **Contact** and **Street Art**, an original production dedicated to the world of street art, will be broadcast on Sky Arte.

Sky Arte HD relies on the contributions of Enel, main sponsor of the channel and of its flagship shows, as *Michelangelo – Il cuore e la pietra*. Enel participates actively in the creation of ad-hoc productions, such as *Corti di luce* and the specials dedicated to *Enel Contemporanea*, the contemporary art project sponsored by the company, now in its 6th edition.

Sky Arts HD has also signed some important partnership with the Istituto Luce-Cinecittà and with festivals, exhibitions and fairs to tell the main Italian cultural events, such as the Festival della Letteratura of Mantova, the RomaEuropa Festival and Artissima. Sky Arte HD will be a media **partner of the MAXXI**: starting from the month of October, there will be some original productions which will describe the main exhibitions of the season of the National Museum of the Arts of the XXI century (MAXXI).

In line with modern language of programming, the channel has a strong presence on the web and on social networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), thanks to the website [www.skyarte.it](http://www.skyarte.it) and Sky Go, the **streaming service program that allows you to watch Sky on PC and smartphones. The main contents of Sky Arte HD are also available on the Sky on Demand service.**

*«We are making a big commitment – says Roberto Pisoni, head of of Sky Arte HD – because talking about arts on television, with all its facets and in a brand-new and original way is a great bet. Art, in its various expressions, both ancient and contemporary, both cultured and popular, is a life-changing experience, that offers an infinite source of exciting stories. We are proud to offer it to the Sky audience.»*

Sky Arte HD Press Office

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