

EXERCISES IN STYLE

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ABSTRACT

The paper is meant to explore that particular phase in the design process when the guide idea of the project is defined. This moment is particularly difficult and important for the interior design of cruise ships and represents therefore an interesting challenge in the training of the future designers. The aim of the paper is therefore to think about the peculiarities of the interior design of ships in an academic context, showing some examples.

1. INTERIOR DESIGN

The interior design changes a place, giving it value and characterizing it. The interior design modifies the behaviours of the space users and represents an essential element of success or failure of a public oriented activity.

The crucial moment in the definition of the nature of an interior environment is represented by the concept, where the term "concept" is meant as "a general idea used to formulate a plan", it's the underlying logic, thinking, and reasoning for how you'll design anything. The concept is the frame for all the following design decisions.

The concept is defined and consolidated downline of a phase of gathering ideas, references, suggestions. In case of the architecture, an important source of inspiration is the geographic, historic, cultural context where the building is placed, in case of an object it is the connection with the people, the study of alternative uses, the in-depth analysis of different technological solutions.

When we work in architectural field, the variables concern therefore the place (with all its richness), the destination, or programme, and therefore the connection with the activities and the people and other specific elements. It is used to refer to the three P: People, Processes, Physical Evidence, where People indicates the wide world of the researches linked to the interpretation and to the listening of the needs, desires and volitions of the people, Processes refer to the programme, to the functional contents the object must reply to, Physical Evidence refers to what we have available in terms of physical envelope, any building or ship.

For example, in order to design the place of a Company, we take into consideration the activity flows (Processes), the people and their complexity (People), the spaces available inside the given building (Physical Evidence), but, in order to give "the soul" to the project, it is necessary to have something else: In the most interesting examples, the concept defining the nature the environments will have later is born by the company values. Examples as the Google place, as well as Heineken or Leo Burnett, witness the power of a concept interpreting the soul of a society, that is represented in the brand.

As concerns the contemporary hotels, the competitive battle among hotel chains is played on the interior design.

In some interesting cases the concept is born by the signature of archistar: the first example has been the Silken Puerta America Hotel in Madrid. It is a unique project that has gathered 19 among the best architects and designers' offices in the world, of 13 different nationalities.

The origin of the Hotel Puerta América begins from the management of Hoteles Silken who aimed to the creation of an hotel, unique in the world, that should gather different ways of seeing the architecture, the design and the art. A project where we have worked intensively with an investment of about 75 millions of euro. The wide available surface, more than the 34 thousand square metres, has allowed to welcome artists of different nationalities and cultures. All together are involved in an ambitious idea whose aim has been to become a meeting point with the creative freedom as its flag. All the floors show the same distribution, with a central lobby in front of the lift exit and a hallway from which the bedrooms branch out from one side and from the other. The aim was to offer a space where each of the architects involved could express the best of himself, of his work and in many cases of his culture and his way of understanding the world through not only the architecture and the design, but also the photography or the literature. The designers, who are involved in this project, have been Jean Nouvel, Javier Mariscal and Fernando Salas, Arata Isozaki, Richard Gluckman, Kathryn Findlay, Ron Arad, Jason Bruges, Jason Bruges, Marc Newson, Victorio & Lucchino Plasma Studio David Chipperfield Zaha Hadid, John Pawson, Norman Foster, Christian Liaigre, Harriet Bourne e Jonathan Bell, Teresa Sapey Arnold Chan Felipe Sáez de Gordoia (SGA Estudio). Oscar Niemeyer has created a sculpture placed in the next park. Each space of the hotel offers a unique experience, that has been made possible by the ability of the designers to follow with coherence a strong idea, conducted with determination.

2. THE PECULIARITY OF THE INTERIOR DESIGN IN CRUISE SHIPS

The interiors of the cruise ships are designed with the aim to astonish the travellers and bring them to a completely different dimension compared to the usual one. The interior design removes the guest from his daily existence and creates the impression to live in a different place and time. The romanticism of a Villa of the Renaissance, a palace of the eighteenth century, or an hotel in an exotic place are all achievable: for few days or for some weeks the guest can feel himself as a part of the system that brings him outside his life, brings him to holiday, according to the original meaning of the word.

According to Michele Serra: "The cruise is a scenic preparation for poor who at least for ten days per year want to feel themselves rich: the decks are named Montecarlo, Vienna and Verona, the restaurants and meeting places are named Michelangelo and Brunelleschi and seep marbles and brasses as the hall of an international hotel aiming to the Arabian guests, the free-shop has its shining airport vagueness..." (as in M. Serra, 2005).

The ship is the stage for the preparation of the ritual of the perfect holidays. The enormous scenic machine is continuously managed by teams of operators who change the scenes, organize the times, give the rhythms of the day, in a continuum passing through the hours of the voyage and the hours of the landing. Behind the scenes, telling other places, other times, other classes, other educations, the ship is beautiful, impressive and it expresses its being a complex and sophisticated organism (as in L. Guerrini, 2006).

The design of ships, since the first ten years of the last century, was based on models that imitated patrician houses or luxury hotels and restaurants with the aim to hide the real truth of the ship as self-propelled object in an hostile environment. The sea was lived as dangerous and the environment on board had to distract the guests and entertain them. In the most recent ships the aspect of danger is not more felt – even if the reports sometimes witness tragically the contrary – and the fabulous and fantastic atmosphere of unreality is underlined with more force.

The ships of the Compagnia Costa are characterized by a main theme, that is declined in different ways in the different areas of the ships. The design of the Costa Magica is inspired to the most known Italian touristic places, as Capri, Portofino, Bellagio or Maratea. The Sicilia casino, the Pordenone library, the Saturnia thermal baths, the Capri exhibition ... and so on, by using the stereotypes linked to the evocation of such places.

On the Costa Atlantica, launched in the year 2000, the 12 decks are dedicated to the films by Federico Fellini (Deck 1: Variety show lights, deck 2: The sweet life, deck 3: The road, deck 4: Rome, deck 5: The clowns, deck 6: Amarcord, deck 7: Interview and so on up to the deck 12, The Cabiria nights) and the signs of the decks are illustrated by the drawings of Milo Manara.

The Costa Serena is “the ship of the gods”, and we find references to the gods of the classic ancient times, from the Clio Library to the theatre dedicated to Jupiter. The Costa Fortuna, of the year 2003, is inspired to the big Italian ocean liners of the past, with the Rex theatre 1932, the Conte di Savoia bar 1932. The models of these ships are exhibited in the public spaces, while in the hall there are the models of 26 ships of the past that belonged to the Costa Crociere crew. Its passengers decks are dedicated to the most famous international ports: Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santos, Genova, Lisbona, Caracas, Vigo, Napoli, Barcellona, Cannes, Funchal and Las Palmas.

The Costa designer, Joseph Farcus, defines his style “eclectic” and states: “I conceive a frame connecting in its whole all the varieties and I call it “central idea”. This idea / concept creates a logic that unites in some ways the different interior designs. For example in the next delivery by Fincantieri, the Carnival Conquest, the central idea will be the impressionist painters. In this way every public hall makes reference to a particular impressionist painter. The way to express all this varies enormously, but there is a kind of central theme that gives compactness to the total drawing that at the end I see as an artistic creation” (as in F.Steinbach Palazzini, 2002).

All the rules of the post modern, defined on end by Loredana Parmesani (as in L. Parmesani, 1998), even though some ten years since the 80’s have passed, can be recognizable in the great majority of the interiors in the cruise ships.

The author lists the central rules of the modernity, representing the idea that each period has its own style; the history as a Darwin succession of events; the formal and functional strictness; the simplicity, the purity, the rationality, the uniqueness. Such rules are called into question by post modern, that compares these principles with the stylistic and linguistic multiplicity; the actuality as oblivion of the past and moment in which past, present and future are grouped; the appearance of the ornament and of the decoration; the complexity, the multiplicity, the contradictory nature, the temporary nature, the nomadism.

In particular we note *the actuality as oblivion of the past and synchronic moment and the stylistic and linguistic multiplicity* in the co-presence of liberty, floral, the 1800s, high tech environments; the *appearance of the ornament and of the decoration* in the intentionally excessive language, using with ability the stereotypes of the showy luxury (as in F.La Cecla, 2007). The use of mirrors, shiny brasses, optical effects represent a patrimony of tricks able to make the environments higher, bigger, more involving. We think to explain the not polite taste of a naive public working on the theme of the surprise, designing too much decorated environments, full of contradictory messages, that create a big visual cacophony.

3. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

In the language of “design thinking” each project is born by a “gap”, by a gap to be filled.

The research on how to help the students to develop their own vision sees in the ships interior design an exceptional training, determined by the remarkable difficulty the task requires. The gap has been described in the previous paragraphs: we refer to the difficulty to create a concept that anticipates a quality project in a specific one that, in synthesis, it cannot use:

- A definite physical, geographical, historical and cultural context, since the ship, that is even similar to a condominium, is an “object” that has no references and lives in different landscapes;
- The reference to a historical development of the interior design discipline: the ships design, except for some sporadic cases, - we can mention, in Italy, Ponti and Zoncada, Gregotti and Canali, the Studio De Jorio- has not had connections with the cultural development of the project as it was developing in other areas, both of industrial product (it is enough to think on the golden period of the Italian design), both of the architecture and of interior architecture.

The idea therefore has been to suggest to the students, in the Laboratory of Interior Design, Laurea Magistrale course Design Navale e Nautico, University of Genoa and Politecnico di Milano, Polo di La Spezia, a.y. 2011-2012, teachers S.Piardi, S.Tiegghi, a.y. 2012-2013,

teachers S. Piardi, L. Zanolari Botteli, A. Villa; a.y. 2013-2014, S.Piardi, A.Villa, L., a starting point, an hypothesis on which it is possible to begin to develop a design concept.

The first year, four years ago, the teachers suggested the study of ten contemporary designers: through their works, their biographies and their declarations, the students had to detect force lines, to be applied in the project. A not secondary aim was to make the students approach to the in-depth analysis of the languages of different contemporary authors.

The results have been interesting, there has been neither an imitation nor an unoriginal quote: each designer has been "used" to build, from the side of the students, a personal approach to the theme, the design of an area on three decks destined to restaurant. The students had to define the type of food, the lay-out and the atmosphere of the environments.



Figure 1. The interpretation of the work of Matteo Thun by Laura Avogadri, Luigi Cirillo, Marvin Modonesi, Oris Martino D'Ubaldo.

The following year in the same Laboratory of Interior Design, we have suggested the study of the languages of some fashion stylists, below there is a passage of the descriptive report of the project.

"The project is inspired to the collections of the stylist Issey Miyake, characterized by geometry, innovation and technology. His art broadens in different fields: clothing, accessories, furniture. The deck 9 is inspired to the paper-folding world, to which the same stylist makes often reference in his works.

Such area is dedicated to the restaurant-finger food Origami Restaurant, that is reserved for the lunch time; the environment is neutral, the white rules and the unique leading actor is the food that characterizes the space with its colours. The geometry of the paper-folding is the inspiration both in the finishing texture of the balcony ceiling, of the counter and of the columns, that, through their aspects, recall an open paper-folding. The organization of the map is on the contrary inspired to the geometry and to the Japanese numerology, a distinctive and constant side in the oriental cultures: the interior part is geometric and regular, with a clear reference to the ki of the ground, while the disposition at the sides of the hall is more lively, recalling the ki of the water.

The deck 10 shows the restaurant designed for the dinner, the Pleats Please Restaurant, where there is a clear reference to the collections of clothes of Miyake, that are innovative both for the

material and for the technology; such restaurant is dedicated to the non traditional cooking, in particular nouvelle cuisine and molecular cuisine. The moment of the dinner becomes a moment of show when a chef serves these particular and scenographic foods directly on the table in front of the customers.

The positions shown in the plan support the shape of the molecules, indeed they are a group of united regular geometric shapes.

The deck 11 is dedicated to the lounge bar before and after dinner, inspired to the collection of bags by Bao Bao, where a very geometric texture rules. Also the furniture has been studied starting from the base module: the triangle¹.

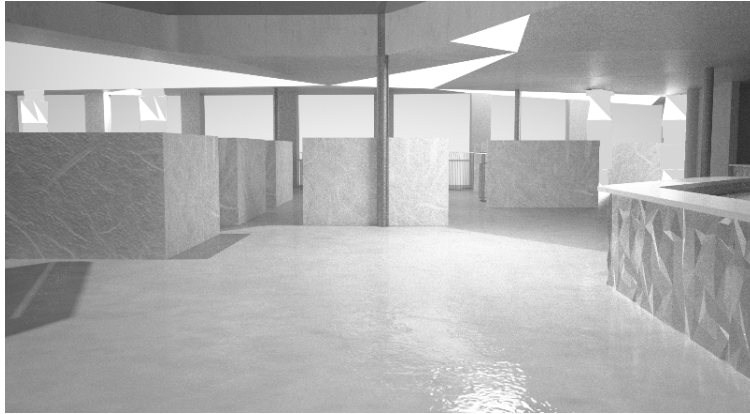


Figure 2. Origami restaurant.



Figure 3. Pleat Please.

Another project has been inspired to the stylist Kenzo, whose style is immediately recognizable for some characteristic elements: colour, light, nature and movement originate from the meeting of two different cultures, the Japanese culture on the one hand and the international culture of the haute couture on the other. Kenzo does not deal only with fashion but, through different sectors, faces the themes of the domestic objects and of the perfume shops.

¹ Taken by the design report di O. Copur, A. Mazzolari, A. Passarello, R. Testori, 2013.



Figure 4. Inspiration, students: M. Cappellazzo, M. Piro, G. Rogante.

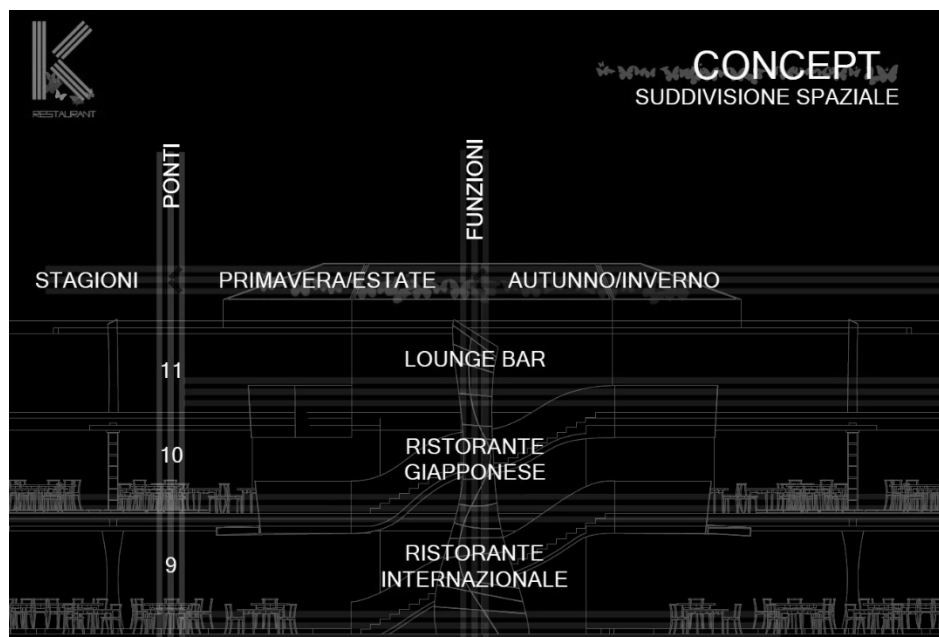


Figure 5. Concept, students: M. Cappellazzo, M. Piro, G. Rogante.

The following year and the one after we have tested another approach: the request was consisting of the study in depth a comics author and his works: the colours palette, the connection background/figure, the type of telling and its rhythm, the environment and the characters, these have been all inspiration elements for the design of a part of public space developed on three decks in the first year and on a lounge space in the following year. The same author, Moebius, French author, painter and cartoonist, has been source of inspiration for two groups of students, who have reached very different design definitions.

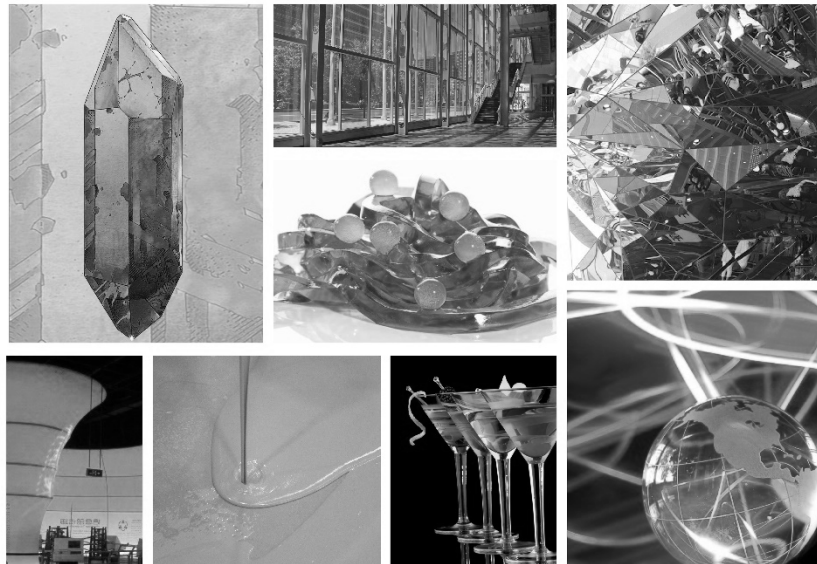


Figure 6. Mood Board, students: A. Abraciano, G. Barbieri, P. Montemurro, A. Minari Varese.



Figure 7. Design sketches, students: A. Abraciano, G. Barbieri, P. Montemurro, A. Minari Varese.

R. Agliati, S. Panicucci and A. Rolla, have detected their key words “Escape – Imaginary – Shades”, and on these they have suggested fantastic and poetic atmospheres.

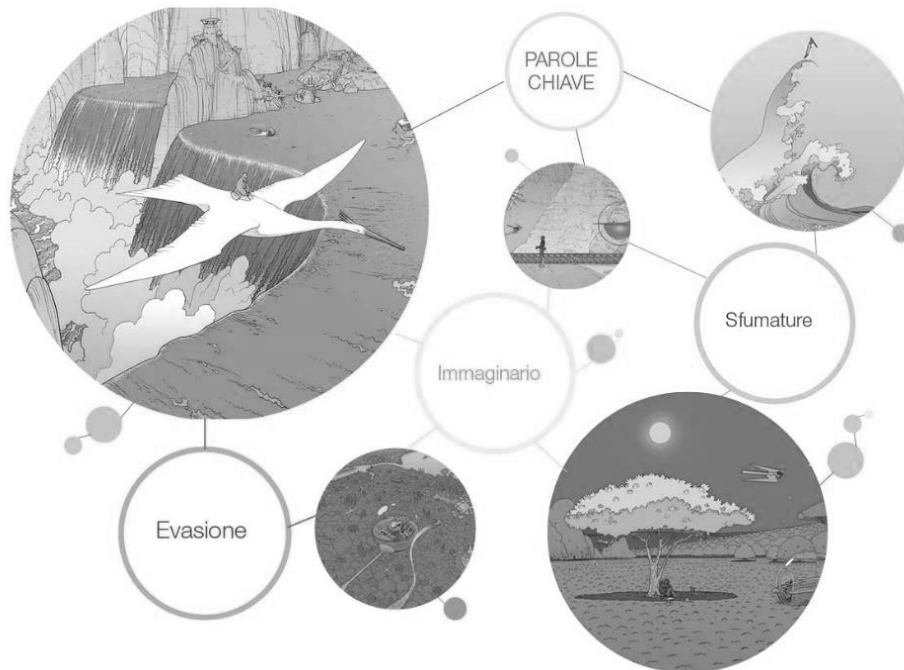


Figure 8. Key words, students: R. Agliati, S. Panicucci and A. Rolla.



Figure 9. Render of Deck, students: R. Agliati, S. Panicucci and A. Rolla.

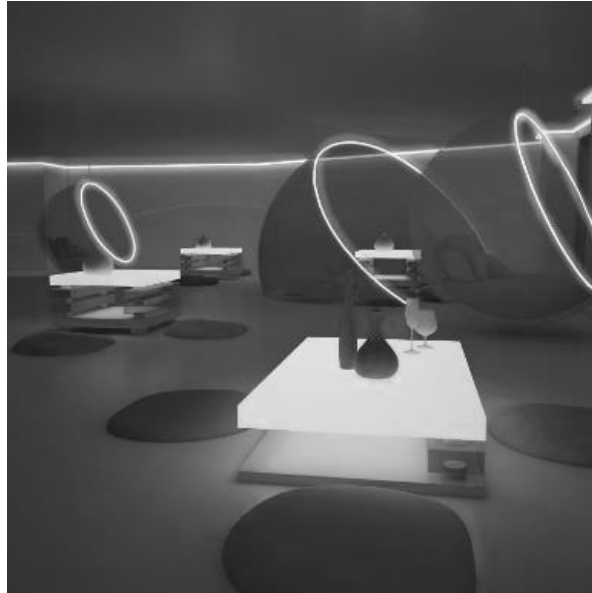


Figure 10. Render of Deck, students: R. Agliati, S. Panicucci and A. Rolla.

To end, the last example, by P. Cardinetti, F. Rocchetti, G.i Tancioni, starting from the atmospheres of “Sin City” by Frank Miller, published in the year 1991, that recalls the German expressionism and the atmospheres of the thrillers of the 50’s, changes the lounge of the cruise ship to a mystery place. The inspiration is the graphic novel, characterized by atmospheres balancing between an extreme dark style and a polished noir style.



Figure 11. Mood.



Figure 12. Colours detection.

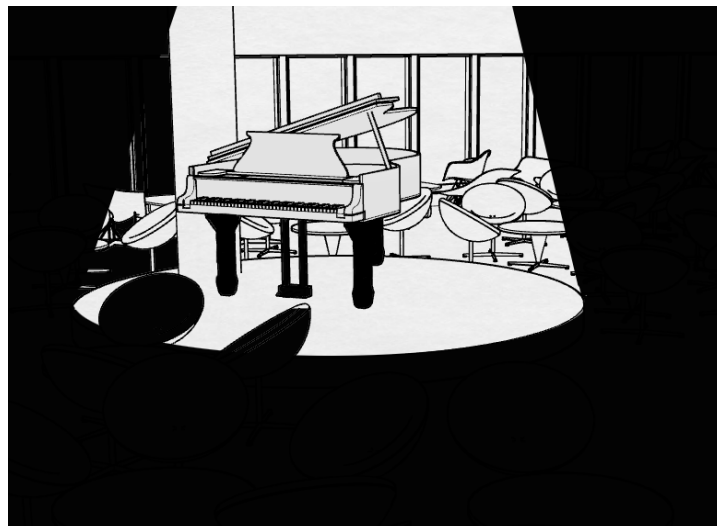


Figure 13. Piano Bar.

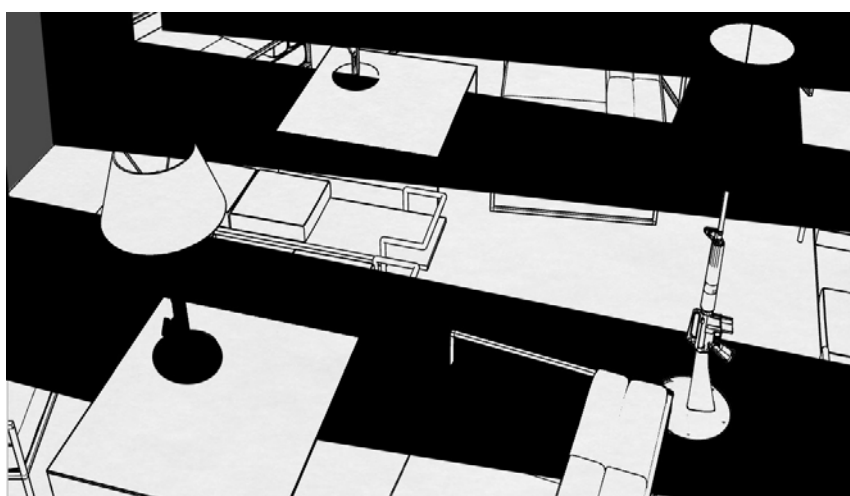


Figure 14. Piano Bar.

The interiors of the cruise ships have to be characterized by intense atmospheres, that recall to unconsciousness scenarios that are far from the domestic ones and nearer to the stage equipment than to the usual amusement places "on ground". The deep analysis of authors operating in other creativity contexts can help the designers under training to face the theme and to build with strictness and intelligence the lines of their action. The interior coherence of the project represents that quality that can make the difference.

The exercises in style we have proposed, quoting Queneau (as in R. Queneau, 1947), make us reflect on the expressive richness and on the creative possibilities that can be developed in academic contexts, trusting in the students, once their training is completed, to bring design quality in the contexts where they will have the opportunity to work.

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