

Made in Italy towards Sustainability. From Tradition to Futures

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Abstract

The Made in Italy towards Sustainability. From Tradition to Futures exhibition presents a systemic vision of sustainability, rooted in Italian tradition but oriented towards future scenarios. Moving beyond standardized models, Italy interprets sustainability through the fusion of aesthetics, ethics, and local craftsmanship. The exhibition establishes a dialogue between sixteen iconic products and sixteen contemporary prototypes, highlighting how technological innovation – from artificial intelligence to smart materials, additive manufacturing, and augmented reality – intertwines with cultural values, social responsibility, and circular production. The sixteen thematic areas illustrate the research directions of the MICS projects, outlining a multidimensional interpretation of sustainability capable of addressing environmental, social and cultural challenges. The exhibition design, enriched by an videomapping, gives a generative reinterpretation of Italy's figurative heritage, activating visual memory as a design resource in contemporary practice. Strategically, the exhibition is situated within the MICS framework, serving as a platform showcasing research outcomes through an immersive experience and highlighting the project's goals. In this context, sustainability is not a trend but a structural imperative of Italian design thinking, offering alternatives to dominant global models. Made in Italy is presented as an open, evolving laboratory in which tradition and technology coexist, generating sustainable and inclusive pathways for the future.

Keywords

Made in Italy

Exhibit design

Cultural sustainability

Immersive storytelling

Possible futures

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INTRODUCTION

It is evident that a universally applicable blueprint for sustainability does not exist; each country exhibits distinct characteristics shaped by geography, climate, and socio-cultural contexts. Renewable energy, for instance, is closely linked to local environmental conditions, exemplified by Dutch wind farms or Moroccan photovoltaic plants. Yet, sustainability choices are further influenced by resource availability, production models, and cultural frameworks. The Italian approach to sustainability will never mirror the German one, nor should it aspire to do so. In this framework, the “Made in Italy” paradigm (Lotti, 2022) has historically embodied a form of sustainability, rooted in a tradition that integrates aesthetic excellence with ethical responsibility. Italian craftsmanship has long prioritized the judicious use of limited resources, respect for labor, attention to detail, and the production of durable goods. This approach emerges from a broader cultural model based on the respect for nature, intercultural exchange, the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, territorial specificities, social responsibility, civic entrepreneurship, and the ongoing contribution to shaping new behavioral models and enhancing quality of life. “Made in Italy” is not merely an economic label or a mark of quality; it is a cultural device, a way of being, making, and thinking. Strategically, the exhibition “Made in Italy towards Sustainability. From Tradition to Futures” is situated within the MICS project, serving as a practical platform that translates the project’s research insights into an immersive, experiential form, demonstrating the strategic goals and directions of MICS. The strong link between Italy’s production districts, the foundation of the national industrial system, and models of symbiotic economy, or the structural scarcity of resources that fosters circular economy practices, exemplifies this embedded sustainability. As Benini (2018) highlights, aesthetics and style in Italy continue to represent the most effective lens for interpreting ethics, values, and societal choices. This resistance to the separation of ethics and aesthetics distinguishes Italy within a global system oriented toward mass consumption and disposability. The Italian design culture has contributed significantly to the scientific debate on sustainability, positioning design as a catalyst for change. From early theoretical reflections to critical interpretations of design practice, and through a vast historical-critical literature, Italian design has consistently engaged in self-reflection. This continuous re-examination sustains the dynamism and responsiveness of Italian design. Scholars such as La Rocca and Lucibello (2015) describe this approach as a form of “complex modernity” where even the most mundane product becomes a distillation of thoughtful inquiry. Imbesi (2011) further emphasizes the socially engaged nature of Italian design, where every project is embedded within and transforms the relational dynamics of daily life. Pioneers like Tomas Maldonado warned early of the environmental risks posed not only by nuclear weapons but also by uncontrolled population growth and waste generation. Counter-design movements such as 9999 proposed radical visions, as seen in the Vegetable Garden House, that reimagined technology-nature relationships as ecological survival mechanisms. Ezio Manzini’s *Artefacts: Towards a New Ecology of the Artificial Environment* (1990) remains a milestone in sustainable design theory, advocating for complex solutions that integrate high technology, traditional craftsmanship,

and local knowledge. Similarly, Luigi Bistagnino's systemic production model, developed at the Politecnico di Torino, conceptualizes virtuous resource flows between agricultural and industrial processes, drawing inspiration from natural systems and fostering territorially rooted economies (Bistagnino, 2009).

These reflections are complemented by other critical works, such as Lotti's *Il progetto possibile* (1998), which argues for a radical rethinking of design's role in confronting environmental crises, making sustainability a shared societal responsibility rather than the concern of a few environmentalists.

FROM TRADITION TO FUTURES

The PNRR PE11 – Made in Italy Circular and Sustainable (MICS) project represents a decisive step forward in Italy's contribution to sustainability, marking a shift from incremental innovation to systemic transformation enabled by advanced technologies. Digital solutions, circular materials, smart and customizable products, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, new business models, industrial symbiosis, and advanced design practices are strategically integrated to enhance the environmental, social, and cultural sustainability of the Made in Italy model. This integrated approach has direct implications for the competitiveness and resilience of the national industrial system.

The exhibition *Made in Italy towards Sustainability. From Traditions to Futures* exemplifies this evolutionary trajectory. It showcases the deep interconnection between Italy's historical sustainability practices and the technological and design innovations developed within the MICS project. Through the pairing of 16 iconic historical products with 16 proof-of-concept prototypes, the exhibition highlights a dialogic process where tradition informs innovation, and where contemporary solutions are grounded in longstanding values of sustainability **Fig. 1**.



Fig. 1
Overview of the exhibition setup, featuring videomapping and selected pairings of the showcased projects.
Credits: Ann Kereselidze

In a sense, this exhibition highlights the characteristics of Italian Design as an evolutionary process both cultural and project-based (Bulegato & Scotti, 2024), rather than as a single product, emphasizing the relationship between research and practical applications.

This synthesis reinforces Italy's original and distinctive contribution to addressing contemporary global challenges. It presents Italy as an open laboratory where nature and artifice coexist, where memory becomes a catalyst for design, and where tradition and innovation are continuously reinterpreted to engage meaningfully with global discourses. Italian design, thus, articulates a culturally rooted but forward-looking vision of sustainability, one that is capable of speaking to the complexities of the contemporary world and proposing alternative futures rooted in responsibility, beauty, and social cohesion.

EXHIBITION CONCEPT AND CURATORIAL FRAMEWORK

The exhibition concept is structured around a carefully curated selection that establishes a dialogue between contemporary design experimentation and historical artefacts of Italian design heritage. This curatorial approach foregrounds a fundamental principle: making visible the continuity of innovative tensions that, albeit in evolving forms, have characterized both the present and the historical trajectory of Made in Italy.

As Piacente (2022) highlights, exhibitions serve as interpretive frameworks that communicate ideas and foster reflection, not just display objects.

The curatorial narrative is articulated through eight thematic areas, each explored via two key conceptual statements, for a total of sixteen pairings. These function as cognitive nodes linking current research trajectories with the foundational values of Italian design culture. The exhibition is conceived as a kind of laboratory table, where Made in Italy is observed as an ecosystem of values and practices balanced between memory and experimentation. This setting makes visible the relationship between its longstanding tradition of sustainability and the many innovations emerging in contemporary design research.

Each key statement is paired with a historical product from an Italian company and a contemporary proof of concept **Fig. 2**. These pairings do not aim to establish a linear evolutionary path. Instead, they reveal the qualitative transformations that shape design over time. Within this laboratory-like environment, the key statements operate not only as conceptual frames but also as principles that connect different eras and design paradigms.

A central idea emerges from each encounter: sustainability is a design culture, not a technical add-on. Through materials and processes, gestures and technologies, Made in Italy reaffirms its identity as an open experimental platform, an active workspace in which memory and tradition become tools for imagining possible futures.

perspectives, design embodies an ethical vision that integrates well-being, sustainability, and innovation.

Lightness is a core principle of sustainable design, emphasizing minimal material use and precision. “The Quality of Lightness” pairs Giò Ponti’s *Leggera* chair with the Glueless project, showing how aesthetic refinement and ecological responsibility intersect.

Craftsmanship and digital design converge to reduce excess and connect tradition with future possibilities **Fig. 3**.



Fig. 3

Pairing Giò Ponti’s *Leggera* chair with the Glueless project within “The Quality of Lightness”.

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“Glimpses of Possible Futures” links Vico Magistretti’s *Atollo* lamp with the Beyond the Space Life living lab concept. The lamp’s geometry and light promote a considered approach to space, extended in extreme environments where technology ensures comfort, well-being, and beauty. In both cases, form and technology serve human experience, reflecting Italian design’s ability to anticipate transformations in living **Fig. 4**.



Fig. 4
Pairing Vico
Magistretti's Atollo
lamp with the Beyond
the Space Life living
lab concept within
"Glimpses of Possible
Futures".
Credits: Ann
Kereselidze

The narrative then shifts to eco-design strategies, explored through the key conceptual statements "The Soul of Things" and "Reimagined Nature". These strategies redefine the relationship with nature, treating it as an active partner and co-designer in the development of solutions. At the same time, design addresses the immaterial and value-laden dimensions of products, embedding

meaning, empathy, and durability. Sustainability here goes beyond technical functionality, fostering ethical and conscious relationships with both the environment and society.

In “The Soul of Things”, Ettore Sottsass’s *Bianco Nera* ceramics for Bitossi dialogue with EMOTIONAL, a project using augmented reality and data visualization to explore the immaterial identity of objects. Both works show how materials can narrate stories, revealing production processes and human craftsmanship, while technology gives voice to the object’s “soul” and fosters emotional connections.

“Reimagined Nature” links Ross Lovegrove’s *Supernatural* chair for Moroso to BIOPIC, where natural principles inform both form and structure. The chair’s organic geometry aligns with bio-inspired, additive-manufactured prototypes, combining lightness and strength. Biomimicry bridges artificial and biological systems, continuing the Italian design tradition of translating nature into sustainable cultural and production practices.

Other areas of inquiry addresses green and sustainable products and materials, explored through “Nature as Designer” and “Zero Waste” which reframe industrial production cycles. Bio-inspired and sustainable materials become central to circular industrial processes, embedding intelligence in production and enhancing system-wide sustainability. In this framework, waste becomes a resource, creating new design and industrial opportunities. In “Nature as a Designer”, Anna Castelli Ferrieri’s *Componibili Bio* for Kartell connects to the Cycloplastic Economy project, where bacteria transform CO₂ into biodegradable biopolymers. Both illustrate how design can drive scientific innovation and environmental research, reinterpreting plastic through circular, biologically inspired processes.

“Zero Waste” brings together Paolo Ulian’s *Vago* vase for UpGroup alongside Wood, not oil!, emphasizing waste reduction. Stone cut without residues and algae converted into bioplastics show how by-products can be transformed into valuable resources, exemplifying circular design principles.

The exhibition also investigates smart, circular, and augmented industrial materials, emphasizing waste valorization and the concept of Smart Things. Here, waste materials are used to develop advanced, sensor-enabled systems that monitor processes and people in real time via artificial intelligence, enhancing safety and efficiency.

“Smart Things” links Bruno Munari’s *Falkland* lamp to SOLARIS, a project exploring circular leathers and biomaterials. Munari’s inventive approach resonates with experimental chemical-technological methods that give new value to tanning by-products. Together, they illustrate how formal creativity is deeply intertwined with process intelligence.

“Waste as a Value” juxtaposes Favini’s *Crush UVA* paper, made from grape waste, alongside FoRWARD, a project that regenerates wood residues and develops circular, locally rooted supply chains. Both demonstrate that value resides not only in the recovered materials but also in the collaborative networks, shared knowledge, and communities they generate. In this context, “imperfection” acquires both environmental and social significance, transforming waste into a meaningful resource.

Further key conceptual statements examines closed-loop, sustainable, and inclusive production systems, driven by interdisciplinary knowledge and

collaboration. This context fosters design approaches capable of adapting to environmental, economic, and social changes.

In the domain of production processes, “Innovation through Knowledge” links Antonio Marras’s archival garments to Fast4C, a project integrating traditional sartorial expertise with 3D printing and digital workflows. This approach highlights continuity not merely in form but in understanding: knowledge of materials and the human body extends from the tailor’s hand to parametric algorithms.

In “Resilient Projects”, the *Vespa GS* by Piaggio engages with VAIA Play, showing how Italian design transforms crises into opportunities. From post-war industrial design to the regeneration of wood damaged by Xylella, both examples frame sustainability as a collective form of renewal.

The exhibition narrative also incorporates the theme of additive manufacturing as a transformative factor in the Twin Transition, supporting localized and flexible production.

Particular attention is given to durable products and their ties to local contexts. In this context, enduring values of Italian design, such as longevity and territorial specificity, are reaffirmed within an innovation framework that enhances local and cultural specificities.

“Built to Last” pairs Mario Botta’s *Bricolages* stools with DATiFF, combining the tactile simplicity of handcrafted wood with the precision of titanium 3D printing. Both highlight durability, showing that longevity can be both ethical and aesthetic.

“Cultural Assets” links the Campana Brothers’ *Vermelha* armchair with 3D printing research on viscous mixtures. Hand-weaving is translated into algorithmic logic, demonstrating how craftsmanship can evolve through digital processes while retaining its human expressiveness.

Parallel to this, the exhibition explores innovative business models that foster resilient, circular, and culturally rooted supply chains. Cultural assets act as resources for competitiveness and sustainability, transforming supply chains into collaborative ecosystems.

The themes “Symbiotic Supply Chains” and “Territorial Connections” emphasize the collaborative nature of Made in Italy. Missoni’s *Patchwork* jacket and From Textile Waste to Resource illustrate how chromatic, material, and production differences can coexist harmoniously, with recovered materials acquiring expressive and narrative significance. Similarly, Rifò’s regenerated cashmere and Cultural Value Chains demonstrate that sustainability relies on local communities and industrial districts, where proximity becomes both a cultural and competitive advantage.

The final thematic area investigates the design and management of digital factories using artificial intelligence and data-driven methods. This section addresses the creation of inclusive, quality-focused work environments. The resulting concept of quality work is founded on competence, responsibility, and well-being, proposing a design culture that anticipates social and environmental needs beyond purely economic imperatives.

The section explores the digital transformation of work, translating the humanistic tradition of Italian industry into artificial intelligence. “Quality Work” links Olivetti typewriters to the Human Digital Twin, using technology to enhance employee well-being and restore the qualitative dimension of labor.

“Outside Market Logic” pairs Zanuso and Sapper’s *Algol 2* television with the End-to-End project, where data interpret consumer values and emotions, continuing the Algol’s legacy of anticipating future visual languages and societal aspirations.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND PROOF OF CONCEPT

Each of the sixteen thematic areas is further explored through two proof-of-concept case studies. These design outputs translate theoretical constructs into concrete, experimental applications, paired with historical Made in Italy design objects selected for their thematic and design-process coherence. This juxtaposition creates a dialogue between Italy’s design heritage and contemporary research trajectories.

This curatorial strategy not only highlights continuities and transformations over time but also demonstrates how the founding values of Italian design continue to inspire contemporary innovation, maintaining a dynamic balance between tradition and the future, between design culture and emerging technologies. Sustainability and innovation are thus framed not as recent trends but as structural imperatives, deeply rooted in the way Italian design has historically integrated material culture, industrial vision, and social sensitivity. A distinctive added value of the exhibition lies in the creation of a systemic association between MICS research projects and iconic products from Italian companies, creating a coherent picture that reveals continuity, resonances and transformative changes within the tradition of Made in Italy production.

A NETWORK OF MEANINGS: BEYOND LINEAR NARRATIVES

The resulting narrative deliberately avoids a linear historiographical approach, instead constructing a constellation of relationships. Each object, whether historical or contemporary, functions as an active node within a network of meanings traversing materials, forms, values, and aesthetics. This network reveals design not as a mere problem-solving activity but as an exploratory practice capable of generating new possibilities through the interplay of memory and projection.

As Argan (1974) asserts, design, as a mediating act between art and technique, assumes in Italy a historically specific form, in which material culture and territorial identity become integral components of the creative act. In this light, the so-called “creative traditions,” alongside the richness of local material and productive culture, comprising distributed knowledge, collaborative networks, and artisanal practices, constitute, as Manzini (2015) highlights, a fertile ground for sustainable innovation.

In this perspective, the exhibition positions itself as an open system of reflections, illustrating how sustainability, responsible innovation, and the evolution of design languages are long-standing structural dimensions of design culture. Rather than nostalgically celebrating the past, the exhibition fosters a critical and generative dialogue with present transformations, demonstrating how the Italian design tradition continues to act as a catalyst for responsible and human-centered innovation.

THE EXHIBIT PROJECT AS A RELATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF KNOWLEDGE

In continuity with the curatorial approach of the exhibition – based on the dialogue between contemporary design practices and historical memory, between design languages and cultural heritage – the exhibit design will serve as a narrative and symbolic mediation device, capable of making the dynamic relationship between tradition and innovation physically tangible (Dernie, 2006). It will not be conceived as a neutral backdrop or a merely functional infrastructure, but rather as a relational architecture designed to reveal conceptual correspondences between past references and future hypotheses, to activate interpretive connections, and to encourage visual comparisons among the works on display (Latour & Weibel, 2005). The spatial layout will be structured to stimulate a multi-perspective and immersive reading of the content, physically translating the curatorial principle of the “constellation” into a spatial arrangement that invites the gaze to shift among analogies, contrasts, and continuities (Didi-Huberman, 2009). Each contemporary project will be paired with a historical object from the Made in Italy tradition, following a non-hierarchical but dialogical logic that highlights shared trajectories, symbolic persistences, and the transformations of material knowledge over time (Manzini, 2015).

The installation will develop around a central rectangular platform that will encircle the two main columns of the exhibition hall. On this platform, the design outputs developed within the MICS programme will be displayed, each juxtaposed with a carefully selected historical object from Italian design history, chosen for its typological, semantic, or technological resonance. This arrangement will make the conceptual and cultural relationships between temporal polarities immediately perceptible, emphasizing the evolutionary identity of Made in Italy as a historical and transformative process, rather than as a fixed stylistic canon (McLean, 1999). The exhibition structure will be completed by a lightweight modular system, built with modular scaffolding components, conceived to be both functional and symbolic: its essential grid will support a series of vertical banners communicating the key concepts and thematic categories around which the curatorial narrative is structured. These banners will not function as mere captions, but as active semiotic elements, guiding visitors through thematic clusters and design relationships, and offering multi-layered interpretive keys (Lefebvre, 1991).

The overall spatial apparatus will be designed to foster a non-linear interpretive experience, in dialogue with the visual elements, which collectively shape the exhibition’s narrative as a holistic and multi-sensory device (Bishop, 2005). The goal is not limited to exhibiting, but rather to activating – positioning design as a critical space in which symbols, memories, and visions are continuously redefined through a spatial language aligned with the project’s transdisciplinary and transtemporal ethos (Rogoff, 2003; Dunne & Raby, 2013).

THE DIGITAL ECHOES OF NATURE. NARRATIVE AS A LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY AND FUTURES.

A pivotal element of the exhibition design is the videomapping installation *The Digital Echoes of Nature*¹, which envelops the entire display area, transforming it into an immersive environment where the symbolic and sensorial dimensions of the curatorial project materialize. Rather than serving as a mere scenographic apparatus, the projection functions as an authentic device of cultural translation, a narrative instrument capable of transposing the central concept of the exhibition into visual and auditory languages: innovation understood as a form of generative continuity between memory and future, activating a perceptual dialogue where images, lights, and sounds become narrative material (Cervellini & Rossi, 2011).

The narrative unfolds through a sequence of visual tableaux punctuated by the dynamic rhythm of the soundscape, creating an immersive journey that traverses mythical genealogies, cultural iconographies, and layered bodies of knowledge. This narrative does not progress in a linear manner but rather manifests as a constellation of thoughts, where images from the past are not simply evoked but activated as critical tools for interrogating the present and envisioning future scenarios. As in Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*² (1866–1929) or Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk*, the images are not arranged chronologically but instead configured as "constellations of thought," revealing a network of relations between past and future, between cultural heritage and design practice (Benjamin, 1986).

In this sense, the videomapping behaves as a cognitive device similar to an iconographic assembly, where meaning emerges from the tension between images rather than from their linear succession **Fig. 5**.



Fig. 5
Storyboard of the first scene of the videomapping.
Credits: by authors.

¹ Visuals designed by Lisa Cantini and soundscape design by Francesco Pellegrino.

² It represents Aby Warburg's final theoretical project: a visual atlas that explores the persistence of iconographic motifs from antiquity to modernity through the juxtaposition of images.

The videomapping symbolically traverses three major thematic scenarios: the origin of form, the reinterpretation of nature through artistic sensibility, and the convergence of scientific knowledge with contemporary digital languages. Along this trajectory, design emerges in its full trans-historical dimension: not as a practice anchored to a specific temporal context, but as a generative field capable of bridging biology and artifice, matter and symbol, craftsmanship and scientific inquiry. This constitutes a continuous flow between past and future, where innovation is rooted in memory, and tradition becomes the living matter of design practice.



Fig. 6
Narrative
videomapping merging
natural landscapes on
the walls and pairing
“Symbiotic Supply
Chains”.
Credits: Ann
Kereselidze

Through painterly animations, archetypal quotations, and transitions that merge natural landscapes **Fig. 6**, architectural elements, and Leonardo-

inspired drawings, the exhibition space itself is reconfigured as a narrative environment.

The sequence of images and sounds constructs a visual atlas that expands the exhibition beyond its physical artifacts, rendering visible the symbolic and imaginative fabric that connects contemporary design practices to the cultural roots of the territory. Thus, the immersive scenography assumes an epistemic function rather than a decorative one, becoming the landscape in which the profound relationship between design, memory, and transformation is reshaped into sensorial expression.

VISUAL ATLAS AND ICONOGRAPHIC MONTAGE AS A DESIGN METHODOLOGY

The narrative construction of the videomapping was developed through a methodology based on the composition of visual atlases: boards of images, symbols, architectural details, and figurative traces drawn from heterogeneous contexts, juxtaposed according to associative, analogical, and thematic logics rather than strictly chronological sequences. This approach enabled the exploration of a trans-historical dimension of heritage, where iconography is not treated as a repertoire to be cited, but as a living language to be analyzed, reinterpreted, and, at times, decolonized (Mirzoeff, 2015), reactivating its symbolic potential within a contemporary visual grammar. Iconographic montage, understood not only as a compositional technique but as a critical tool (Didi-Huberman, 2009), proved to be a generative design practice. Each preparatory board functioned as a visual meaning device, where significance does not reside in the individual images but emerges from the network of relationships, dissonances, and resonances they establish within the montage space. In this process, the videomapping becomes an extension of the visual atlas itself, an animated montage where images – natural, artistic, scientific, and digital – are transformed through a process of continuous transfiguration, embodying a continuum between origin and becoming.

Fragments of frescoes, botanical details, decorative motifs, architectural structures, and archetypal figures were articulated into compositions capable of producing new interpretative layers of Italian cultural heritage, unveiling latent semantic levels and opening the possibility of creative re-inscription. This practice facilitated the creation of an immersive, non-linear narrative, inviting the viewer to personally experience an open visual constellation that does not merely illustrate a predetermined discourse but exposes the audience to multiple interpretations.

In line with Georges Didi-Huberman's assertion, montage becomes "a cognitive gesture that produces visual thought" (2009): not a synthesis, but a tension from which the contradictions and stratifications of time emerge. Likewise, videomapping operates as a perceptual montage, where transitions such as fades, overlays and gradual transformations construct a symbolic dramaturgy that reconnects what is distant, from the cosmic impulse of origins to the digital languages of the present and the future.

Within this framework, the visual atlas is not to be understood as a simple representational tool but as a field of cultural activation, capable of generating new imaginaries. It acts as a projectual platform where memory, vision, and transformation converge, and where heritage is not merely displayed but interrogated and transduced. The videomapping becomes the spatial and immersive actualization of this atlas, a mental landscape where memory is not nostalgia but an active material of design, regenerating itself through the encounter between nature, technology, and cultural imagination of the future. (Manzini, 2015; Branzi, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The article proposes a deep reflection on the link between Italian design culture and sustainability, highlighting how the *Made in Italy* model is not only an economic brand, but also a cultural paradigm rooted in values such as responsibility, aesthetics, territoriality and innovation.

The Italian tradition of design, always attentive to the balance between beauty and function, has developed according to a logic of a circular economy ante litteram: conscious use of resources, durability of products, local supply chains. In this sense, sustainability in Italy is not a recent fashion, but a structural condition within its production and cultural system.

The *MICS* project and the exhibition *Made in Italy Towards Sustainability*.

From Tradition to Futures reinterpret this heritage in light of current challenges, combining advanced technologies and artificial intelligence with a human and territorial approach. The exhibition, through a dialogue between historical objects and contemporary prototypes, tells the story of a cultural evolution even before it was technological: from linear models to regenerative systems, from products to ecosystems of meaning.

Design and sustainability are thus understood as complex cultural practices, capable of activating new imaginaries and transforming not only what we produce, but also how we live, consume and collaborate. Italian design, in particular, is confirmed as a strategic actor in generating responsible innovation, rooted in memory and projected towards the future.

Ultimately, the challenge of sustainability is also, and above all, cultural. And *Made in Italy*, if read as a project of meaning and not only as a label, can offer the world an alternative model of development: evolved, sustainable, but profoundly human.

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