

Melting sights

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The workshop involved students of the course "Design Thinking" held by Patrizia Ranzo and Carla Langella, of the degree course in *Design for Innovation*, of the Department DICDEA, Second University of Naples.

The history of Naples is characterized by the alternation of domination since its origins: Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Swabians, Angevins, Aragonese, Bourbons have all influenced the architecture, somatic characters, language, sounds and the life style of the city. Naples, one of the principal harbour hub of the Mediterranean, has been multi-ethnic since its origin and maintain this character today in its current demographic composition. However, this multi-ethnic character has not nourished the expected social and cultural enrichment since it has not truly permeated through people consciousness.

Nowadays the attractive character of this city for migrants does not reside in the welcoming attitude of people, which is mainly manifested for tourists than for migrants, but rather the weak social control, the tolerance for the promiscuity. A kind of opacity in the sights that reduces risks and induces immigrants to linger.

Naples is a cloud of sounds, colors, flavors and traditions coming from every provenance. However, often these varieties of cultures are parallel worlds with rare, particularly touching and amazing, intersections. Foreign communities rarely communicate with each other and often do not interact with locals. In the alleys is now easy to come across hairdressers specialize in the typical African hairstyles, Islamic butchers, ethnic restaurants and clothing stores with typical products coming from distant lands. But there are very few Neapolitans who choose to live the experience offered by these places, custodians of distant cultures. The various neighbourhoods of Naples populated by immigrant communities transform the look of the city. Neapolitans tolerate it but do not integrate it in their lifestyle. They mainly show indifference unless they are forced to watch and, in those cases, indifference can become warm alliance or racism and intolerance. The *laissez-faire* attitude of many Neapolitans that does not indulge the curiosity, and therefore the knowledge, creates alienation and therefore prevents the city to derive value from its multi-ethnicity and to take advantage from this opportunity for its growth.

Many of the projects developed by students in the workshops are aimed to enhance consciences of Neapolitans to their rich multi-ethnic environment exposing them to anthropological values, human capital, culture and experience that migrants bring with them. Several projects are framed into public places and daily activities, such as eating, urban journey, queuing, to capture the attention of Neapolitans. In this way they are forced to look at migrants under a different light starting wondering about the different identities, attitudes and dreams. This intersection of gazes, words and colours, even if forced, brings about a reaction, that could be of opening but also of closing, which in each case generate actions, therefore transformations. Only through this process of fluid or forced comparison hybridization and contamination paths could be generated.

The method used in the workshop starts with a direct investigation phase by students to look deep into area, people and situations that previously they considered only as “backgrounds”. Later, with the help of tutors and associations, they developed their project ideas that were verified in their feasibility with manufacturers and artisans who have supported them to realize the prototypes.

Students at first have shown a resistance to immerse themselves in cultural contexts that they felt extraneous although physically close. They tried to avoid experiencing situations that they felt as sad or dangerous. But pushing themselves to overcome the initial sorrow and start discussing and deeply observing the migrants life young design students have realized there were many precious values for their growth .

Neapolitans are warm, emphatic and very curious, so a conscious effort could be useful to demolish the walls of prejudices that separate them from migrants. In the workshop we understand that design can act as a facilitator in initiating processes of integration and hybridization, in interpreting these continuously changing realities and to make them more elastic and fruitful.

But to act in this delicate scenario design must be driven by experts that are involved in these processes by long. The contribution of the associations like Dedalus and CEICC was crucial for the development of the course as they allowed students to learn about specific methodologies, statistic figures, experience story telling gained in years of activity into the intercultural world.

They helped the young design students to deeper grasp the needs that emerge in this scenario, and in particular to verify the applicability of their ideas.

The course was supported by the contribution of researchers and designers, who conducted activities of academic tutoring guiding students in their projects through their different specific competencies. An hybridization of skills also took place between the same tutors, that initially where involved

mainly in projects related to their specific skills, but during the course they experienced to share their contributions improving the results both in terms of quality of design and multidisciplinary. Specifically Francesco Dell'Aglio, PhD, designer and art director of design-oriented companies, conducted seminars on the subjects of Design Culture a mentoring activity in the projects connected to product design and urban design. Enza Migliore, PhD student and designer, conducted seminars on the subjects of experimentation about materials and interaction between user, material and product and a mentoring activity on projects connected with material experience. Nicola Di Costanzo, multi-disciplinary designer with an appetite for creativity and innovation across all formats and media, expert in experimental typography and graphic design, conducted seminars on the subjects of Design Thinking methodology and a mentoring activity in the projects connected with visual graphic design and visual communication. Paolo Emilio Colombo, historian, expert in performing arts and digital storyteller, conducted seminars on the subjects of "Orientalism" and a mentoring activity in the projects with a component of anthropological and conceptual.

We wish to acknowledge the support of: Cooperative Dedalus, in particular Roberta Ferraro and Glauco Iermano for their contribution in the projects; the CEICC and Noi@Europe, Comune di Napoli, in particular Rosa Giordano and Alain Michel Nzisabira for their contribution in projects; Città della Scienza, in particular Anne Marie Buyas for the organization of workshop “meet the associations”, Luca Simeone for bridging the connection between SUN and CCA, Carla Giusti, Alessandra Drioli and Antonia Auletta for the final exhibit organization in Città della Scienza; PAN (Palazzo Arti Napoli), Comune di Napoli for hosting the workshop “Feasibility”; Association i'mPerfect for hosting the workshop “Feasibility” inside the exhibition “i'mPerfect story on design” curated by Monica Massera with the collaboration of Francesco Dell'Aglio; Francesco Amato for realizing workshop photos; Teatro Le Nuvole for their contribution in the HBO – Human Being oproject. The precious contribution of Francesco Dell'Aglio, Nicola Di Costanzo, Paolo Emilio Colombo, Enza Migliore for their tutoring is deeply acknowledged.