

# Activity-Based Habitats

for blended working and learning interiors



School of Design | Politecnico di Milano

Interior and Spatial Design Course | Contest Design Studio | 2020/2021

Sect. I2 - Professors: Barbara Camocini, Marco Bencivenga, Francesca Foglieni, Michele Zini

**B|aBh**  
For working and learning





Merge Architects, MIT Beaver Works (Cambridge, US), 2013





## Activity-Based Habitats

for blended learning and working

A wide collection of settings to be shared, fixed/flexible **spaces**, that support individual/team **activities**, creating blended environments for learning and working.

Systemic **environments**, activity based habitats, will be the final outcomes of the design process, enabling spaces where the balance of **settings** provides **valuable experiences** for the **users**.

## 1. **Activity-based habitats**

wide collection of settings, to be shared, each with a specific use, aimed at freeing users from fixed workstations.



Merge Architects, MIT Beaver Works (Cambridge), 2013



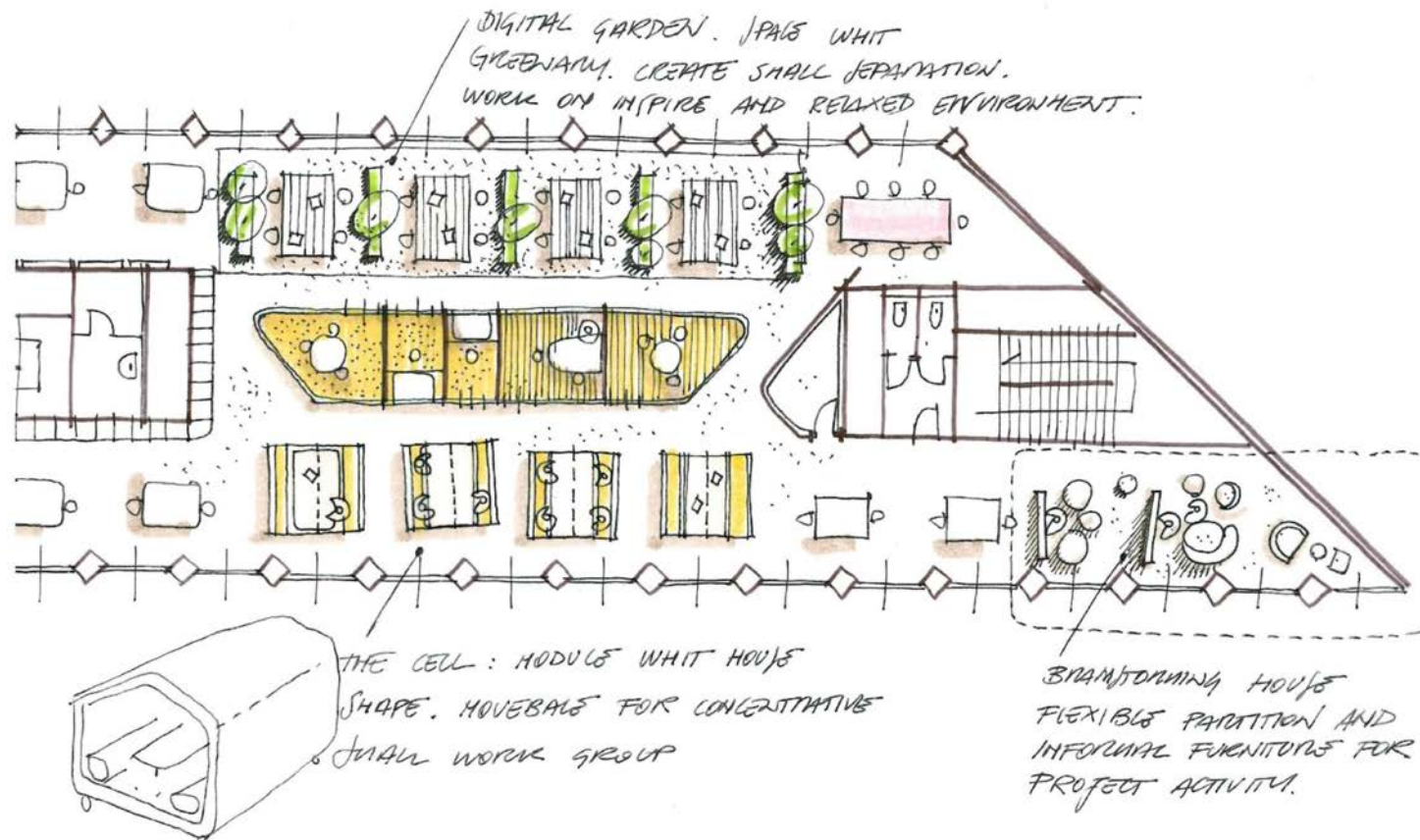
## 1. **Activity-based habitats**

wide collection of settings, to be shared, each with a specific use, aimed at freeing users from fixed workstations.

## 2. **Blended working and learning interiors**

with different relationships between the two categories of uses.





## 3. Systemic environments / interior landscapes

the resulting connective space is dedicated to transit and encounter (with its own functions) where autonomous and free standing settings are immersed.





Photos: Jeremy Bitterman



Microsoft with Studio O+A, Meeting exagon, Washington Envisioning Center, 2016

The Design Studio takes place in a post-pandemic period which has altered our expectations about how, where and when we work.

Imagining a scenario where the office place is still necessary for certain activities, while others can be done remotely, brings us to think of what hybrid working could look like post-pandemic. Covid is creating new challenges and conditions suggesting new approaches to the design of workplaces.

\_What kind of working/learning activities will still need to take place in a workspace, and why?

\_How are working spaces going to change?

\_What is the right balance between working in the office and working remotely?





## **EMPOWERED CO-WORKING/LEARNING SPACE**

*Spaces for sharing equipment and services  
(used individually or by business task forces)*

Talent Garden, Fab Labs, ....

## **RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTERS**

*Spaces for doing research, learning, start ups,  
for humanity sake*

Advanced Research Centers, Living Labs, ...

## **COMPANIES' REDEFINED WORKPLACES**

*Spaces redefined mixing on-line/off-line models*

Business office places, ...

## **Application THEMES**

- Scientific research
- Mechatronics and engineering
- Digital Technology
- Content Production
- One-to-one services
- Administration and finance
- Artisanship and E-Commerce

► **CONTEST: EACH GROUP DESIGNS A SETTING  
for the same specific function** (i.e meeting, counseling, etc...)



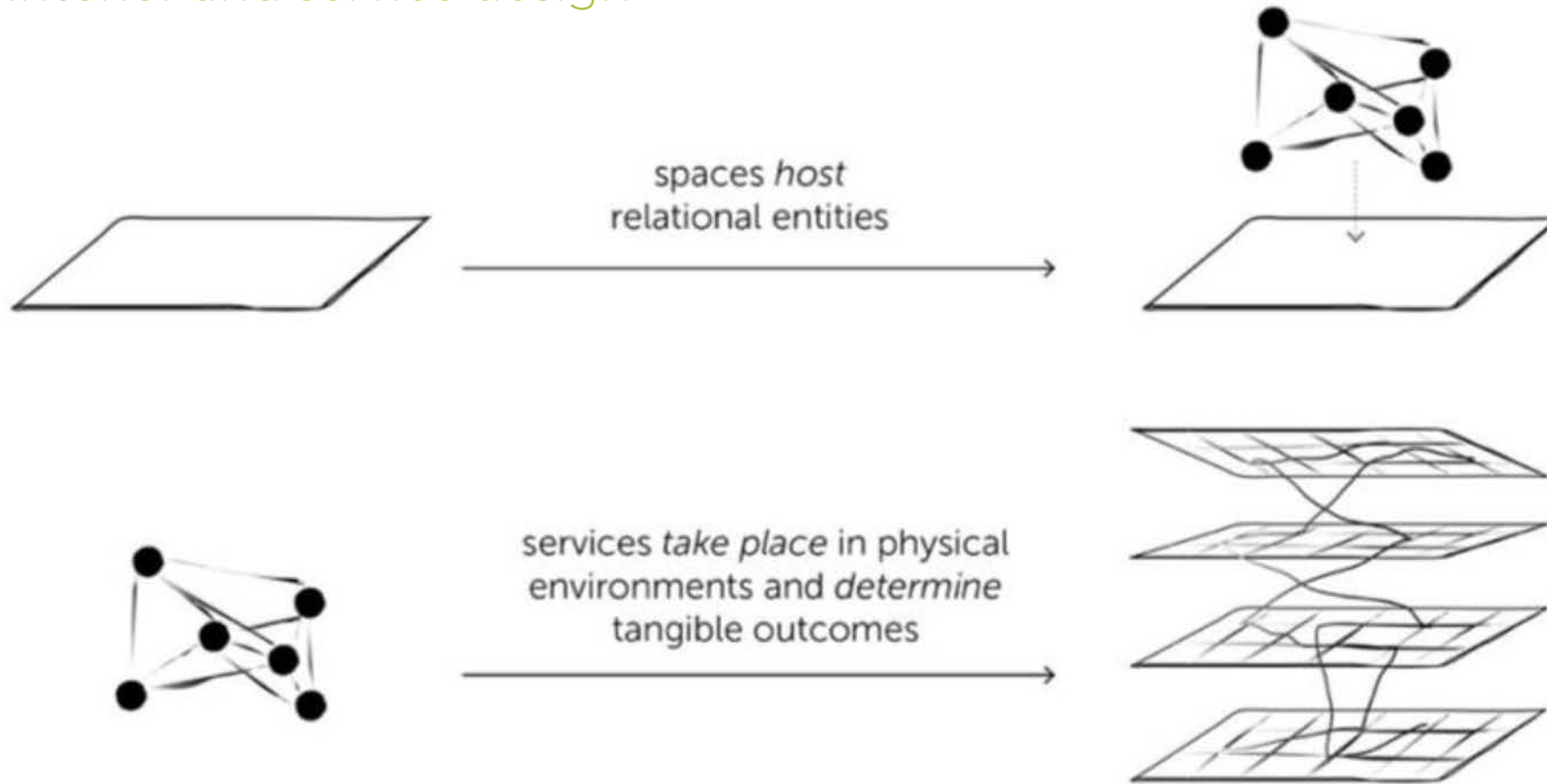
Herman Miller, American company that produces office furniture and equipment, and home furnishings.





## From needs, to experiences, to spaces

Integrating interior and service design



## From needs, to experiences, to spaces

Integrating interior and service design

- **Human-centered approach**

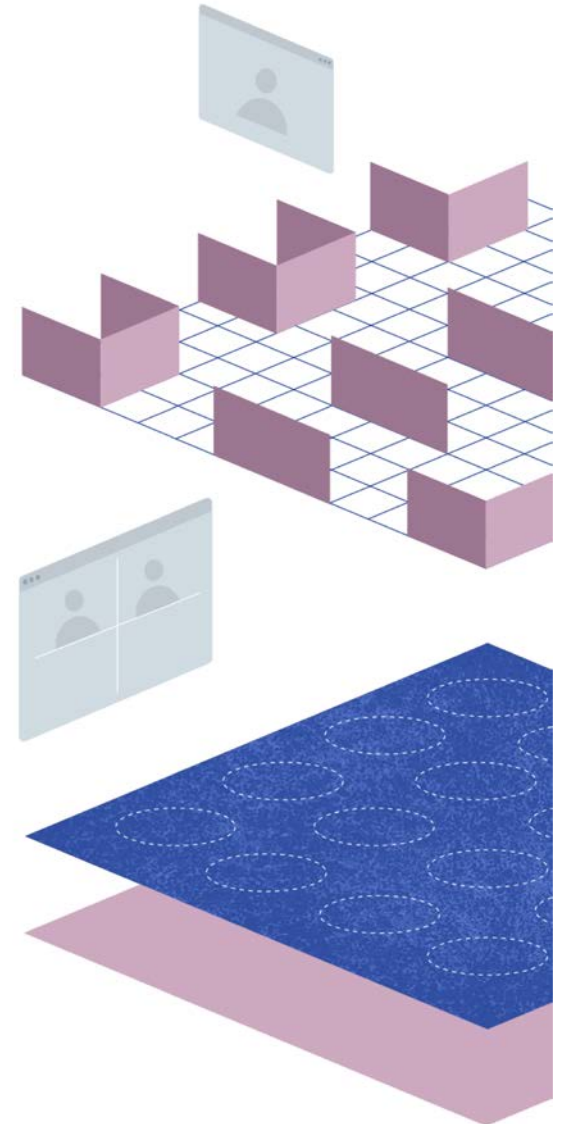
The design process will start from an exploration of user needs and contemporary societal trends useful to address and support design choices toward innovative spatial solutions

- **Focus on user experience**

The initial exploration on needs and trends will enable the design of experiential spaces/spatial experiences

- **Integrated interior+service concept**

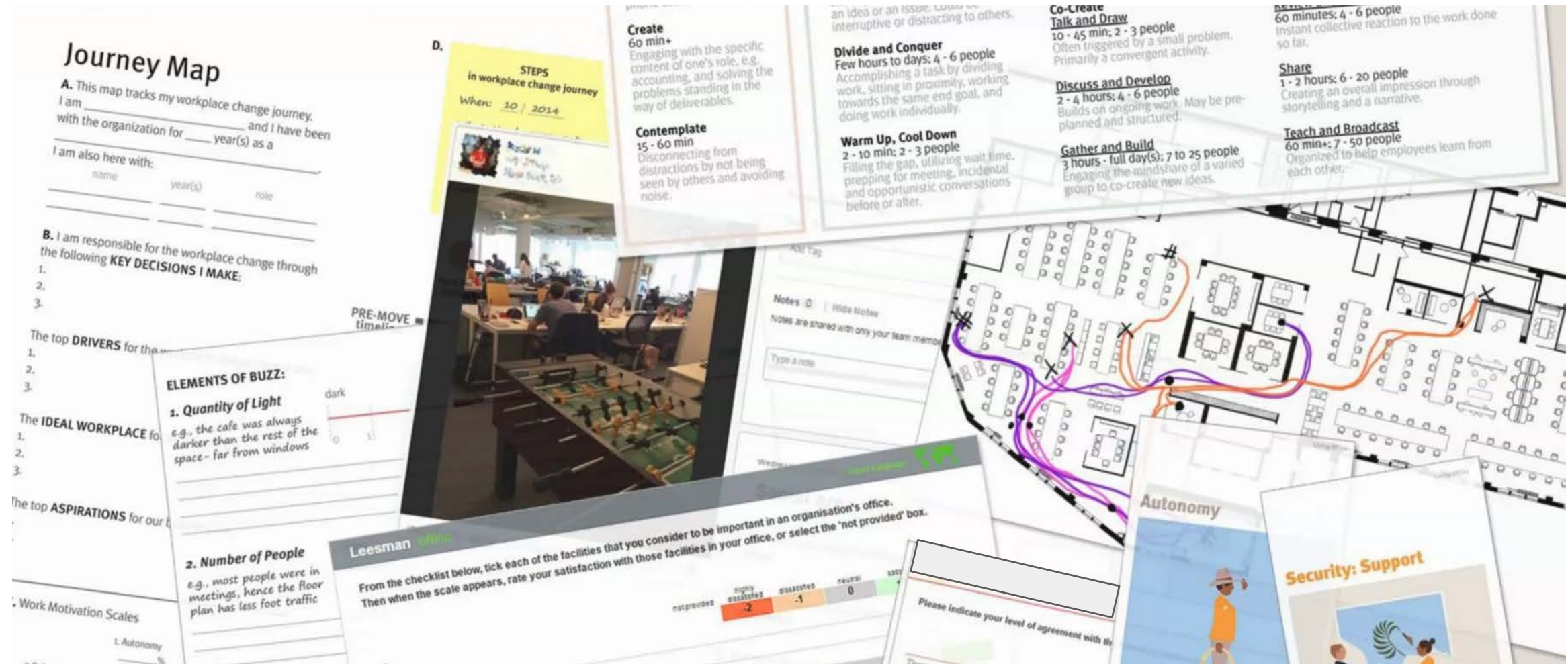
The projects will involve the conceptualization of both the visual identity of the space together with an original mix of services and functions the space will provide





# Ethnographic research

Quantitative and qualitative data + case studies



## Idea generation and prototyping

### Workshops

- **Data crunching**  
Collected data will be selected and crunched
- **Define insights**  
The insights will support the definition of the brief

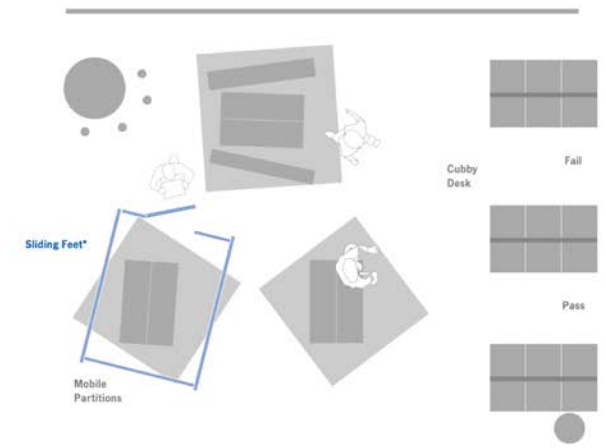
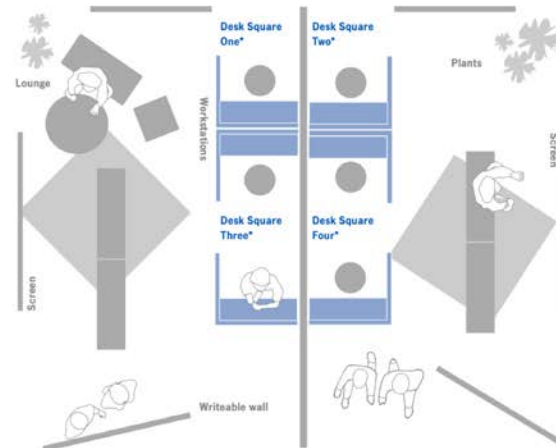




## Idea generation and prototyping

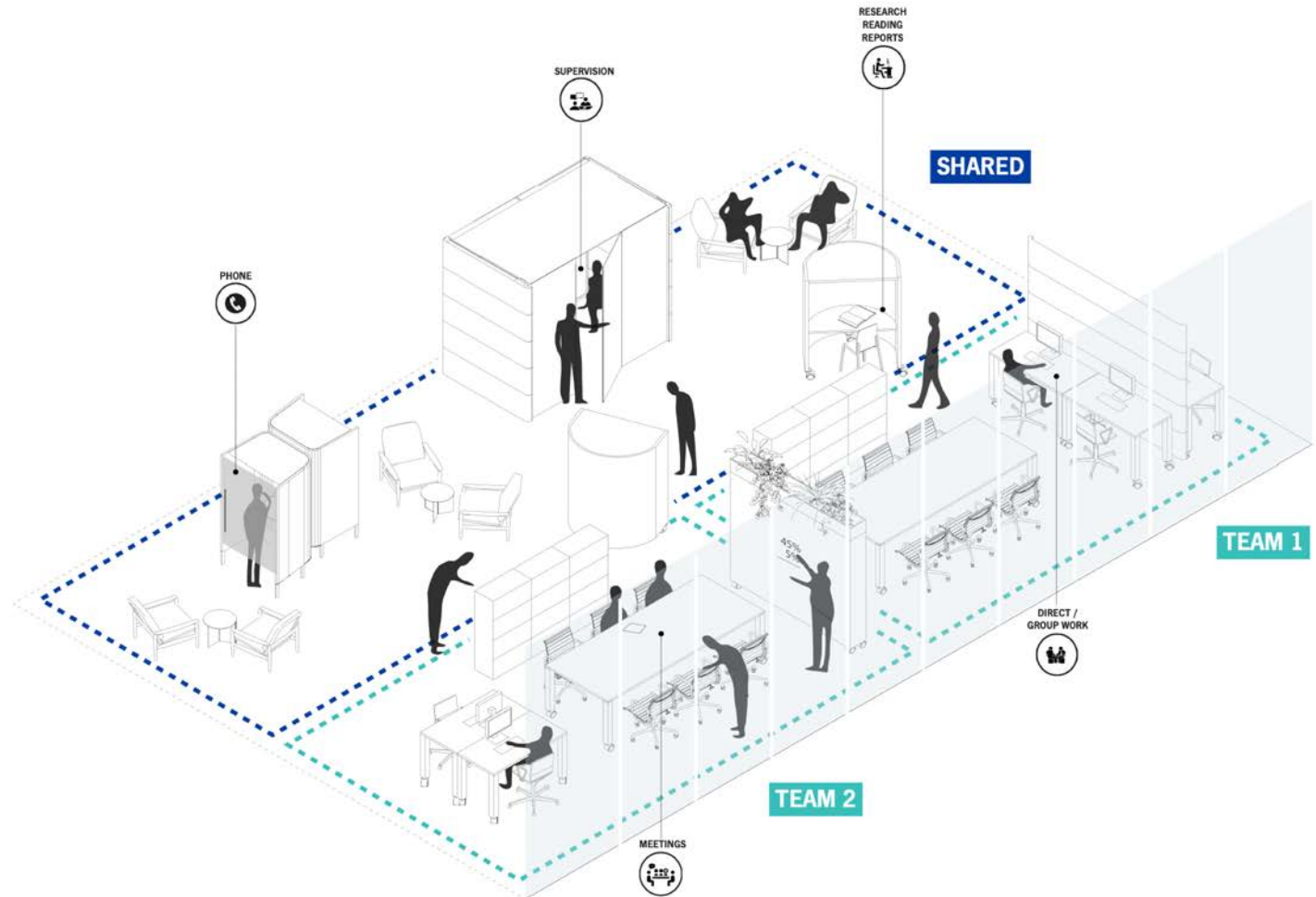
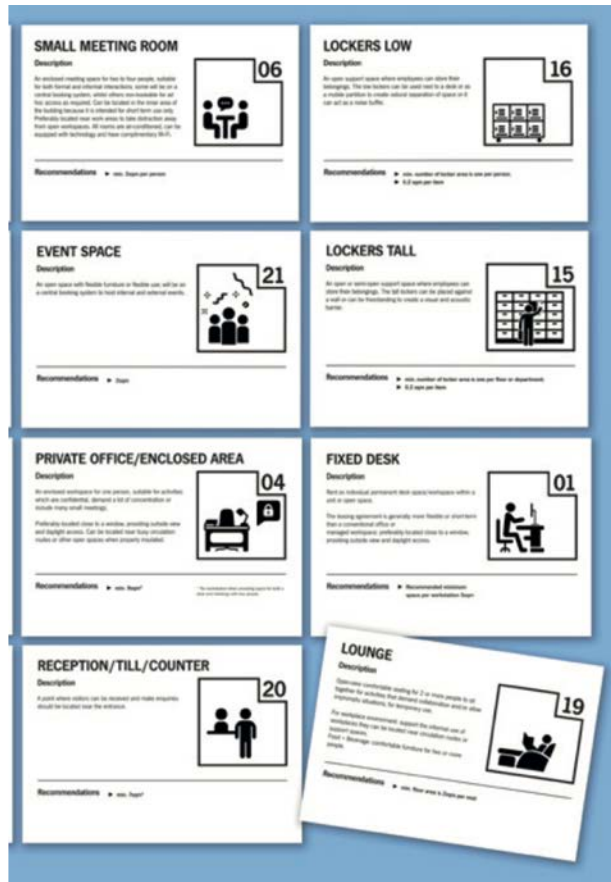
### Workshops

- **Spatial concept**  
Testing spatial ideas via rapid prototypes
- **Settings+Activities**  
The insights will support the definition of the brief



# Activity based habitats

Blending service and spatial design in the space





## Wellbeing

Holistic approach

- **Ergonomics**

Physical, cognitive and social ergonomics

- **Phygital**

"Physical" and "Digital" engaging hybrid experience.

- **Materiality**

Spatial qualities and atmosphere  
CMF (colour, material, finishes)



MATERIAL CLOUD



Glass



Perforated metal mesh



Aluminium panel



HPL Laminate



White acrylic panel



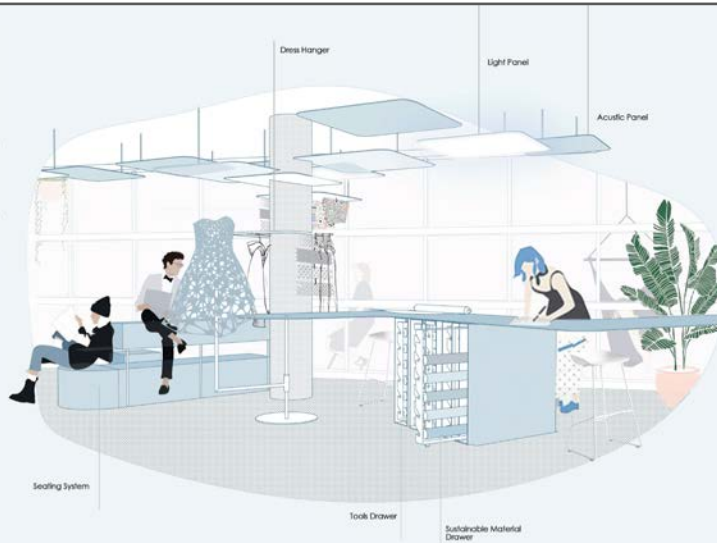
Light Blue Linoleum



Concept  
Moodboard  
Functional layout  
Colours  
Lights  
Finishes  
Furniture

....  
**Identity**

Assembly table x... Productive Space



Images from  
“Digital Fashion” project  
by Jakupi F. | Mirashi G. | Peng S. | Zhou Y.  
A.y. 2018/19





Hortec A.y. 2017/18



MiX.mi A.y. 2019/20



Newtrition A.y. 2019/20



Market Base 2018/19





Mind Base A.y. 2018/19



Green Up A.y. 2018/19



OnYou A.y. 2018/19



Zao Lab 2017/18



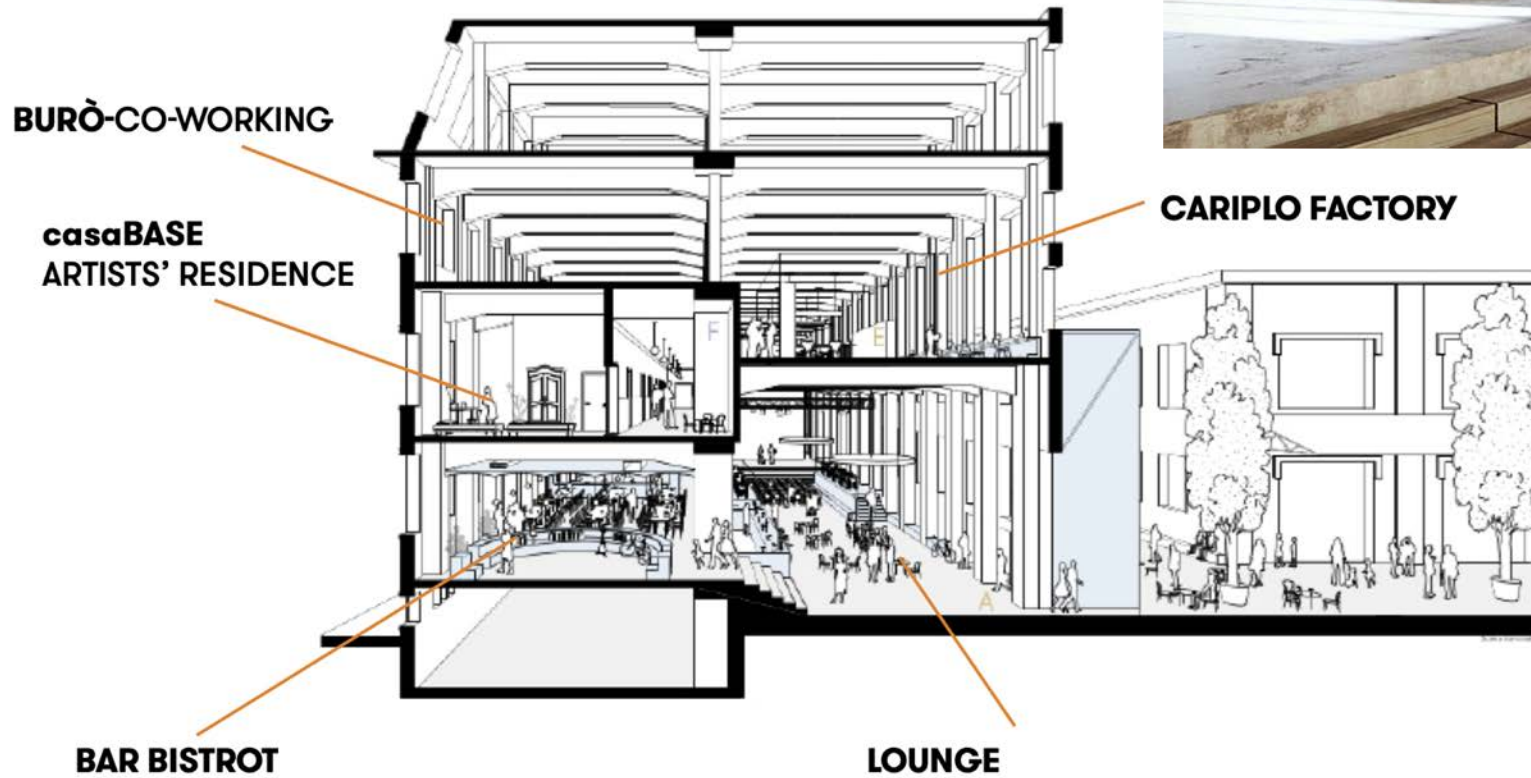
# A PLACE FOR CULTURAL PROGRESS



BASE is a project for cross-pollination between the arts, enterprises, technology and social innovation.

Mission: to generate new reflections for 21<sup>st</sup> century cities, establish new connections between different arts, disciplines and languages, and boost Milan's status among the great capitals of creative production.

<https://base.milano.it/en/about/>





## **Phase A** // 14.09 – 08.10

### *a.1 Preliminary Research*

*about activity-based  
working and learning*

### *a.2 Thematic Research*

*desk and field  
on the thematic focus /*

*function*

*targets and needs*

## **Phase B** // 12.10 – 12.11

### *Workshop (b.1 + b.2)*

#### *b.1 Concept generation*

*experience and functional*

*areas*

#### *b.2 Identity Research & Construct.*

*spatial qualities and atmosphere*

### *Concept & Identity development*

*# contest kick-off 26.10*

## **Phase C** // 16.11 – 17.11

### *c.1 Project detailing*

*lay-out definition and detail  
selection*

### *c.2 Project views*

*spatial & identity representation*

### *c.3 Final presentation*

*including concept*

*# contest submission 26.11*

# Structure, Objectives & Exam

	week	date	h	morning	afternoon
SEPT.	1	14.09	4	Lesson /Introduction	
		19.09	8	Team building + Kick-off <b>1 Task</b>	Tutoring
	2	21.09	4	Lesson	
24.09		8	Lesson / Tutoring	Tutoring	
OCTOBER	3	28.09	4	Lesson + Guest	
		01.10	8	Tutoring	Tutoring
	4	05.10	4	Lesson + Guest	
		08.10	8	<b>1 Submission - Research</b>	<b>1 Submission - Research</b>
	5	12.10	4	Lesson Guest + Kick-off <b>2 Task</b>	
		15.10	8	WS Concept generation	WS Concept generation
	19.10	4	Lesson		
6	22.10	8	WS Space Identity building	WS Space Identity building	
	7	26.10	4	Lesson + Guest + Kick-off Contest	
29.10		8	Tutoring	Visits?	
NOVEMBER	8	02.11	4	Lesson + Guest	
		05.11	8	Tutoring	tutoring
	9	09.11	4	Lesson	
		12.11	8	<b>2 Submission - Concept &amp; Identity</b>	<b>2 Submission - Concept &amp; Identity</b>
	10	16.11	4	Lesson + Kick-off <b>3 Task</b>	
		19.11	8	Tutoring	Tutoring
	11	23.11	4	Lesson + Guest	
26.11		8	<b>Submission Contest</b>	<b>Submission Contest</b>	
DECEMBER	12	30.11	4	Lesson + Guest	
		03.12	8	Tutoring	Tutoring
	13	07.12	///	Sant'Ambrogio	Sant'Ambrogio
		10.12	8	Tutoring	Tutoring
	14	14.12	4	Tutoring/lesson	
		17.12	8	<b>3 Submission - Project Develop.</b>	<b>3 Submission - Project Develop.</b>
	15	21.12	///		
		??	8	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	

## Organization

- Lectures (professors and guests), tutoring, visits, collective presentations.
- Classes on Monday and Thursday.
- Teams of 4 people, mixed skills and origins (suggested).

## Assessment

- Intermediate evaluations through shared criteria
- Final mark based on: intermediate evaluations + final delivery assessment
- Extra points according to active participation and commitment



## Exam Delivery

- *Slide Show Presentation*
- *Set of integrated drawings, including plans, sections, diagrams, sketches, 3d views, color/material/mood boards, and a short abstract, describing the design proposal*
- *Mock-up/video*
- *Case studies booklet*
- *Poster A1*

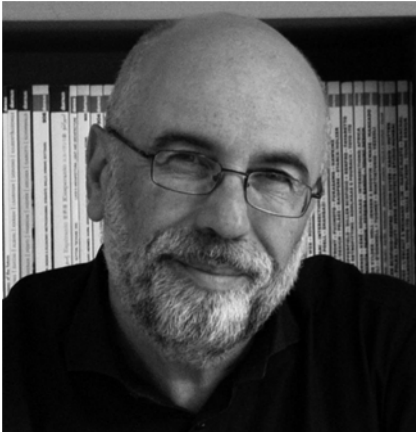
## Objectives

Students will manage the different phases of the project, in personal and creative way, from the analysis of trends and case studies, the field research, the definition of scenarios and concepts, up to detailed design.

The design studio aims to provide skills and tools to manage complex interior projects, responding to the needs and use of spaces in line with the current urban context, both on a functional and aesthetic level, starting from the immersion in a real project situation.

# Teaching Team

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## Francesca Foglieni

*works as a consultant and lecturer in the field of service design and design research. She holds a PhD in Design and currently collaborates with different kind of organizations to support the development and the evaluation of innovative service solutions, and foster the adoption of a user-centered approach. She is also in charge of the educational program of the Specializing Master in Service Design of POLI.design.*



## Barbara Camocini

*PhD in Interior and Setting Design, is an Associate Professor at the Design Department of Politecnico di Milano.*

*Her research topics concern the contemporary human environment, changing through Adaptive Reuse processes, and the resulting strategies upon interiors and urban renewal, reconciling the distance between original functions of spaces and emerging needs. She is also interested in the History of Design with reference to the Italian culture and its design approach.*





## Michele Zini

*Architect and designer with ZPZ Partners, He carries out professional work and research in architecture and design. He covers diverse thematic fields and project scales focusing on designing innovative systems, as concept and language, and covering the entire design process: from metaproject to works direction. The professional work focuses primarily on designing public and community service spaces (like nurseries, schools, hospitals), commercial spaces (shops, commercial centers, hotels), residential quarters, and on furnishing systems for schools, communities, public places and home.*



## Marco Bencivenga

*Architect specialised in workplace design with a transdisciplinary approach, works across industries investigating the way people interact with each other and the space.*

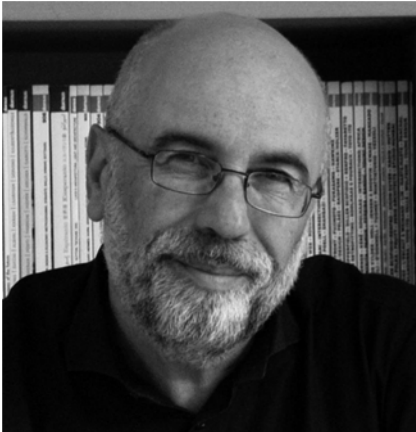
*His research blends service and spatial design to develop strategies, designing creative and collaborative environments, delivering projects via design thinking methodologies.*

*He is the creative director of Colla, a social enterprise focussed on public realm projects through socially-engaged design processes with a hands on approach.*



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