

ITALIA
expo shanghai 2010
上海世博会意大利馆

City of man



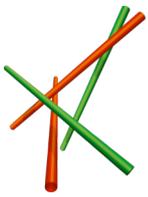
Italy has produced a civilization which is essentially urban. The Italian city has given birth to a cultural model which has deeply influenced the development of western society. As far back as roman times the elaboration of the concept of the city as both ‘urbs’, that is, the physical place for man to settle down, and as ‘civitas’, that is, a community of individuals, tied by the rational bond of laws, has given us the basis of an urbanized area which can still be seen today. Italian tradition affirms that the city, therefore, consists in a number of people who belong to a space for which they develop an attachment. This is the first step towards the love for ones country and stimulates a virtual phenomenon of participation, solidarity and dynamism.

Originally the city was surrounded by protective walls and was different from the other places, where people spoke another language and were therefore barbarians, and from the rural territory where the savages lived. Ancient experience tells us that barbarians and savages do not participate actively in the process of civilization. This is the idea of progress elaborated by city folk. On the other hand, the word ‘civilization’ has the same etymological root as the term ‘civitas’.

The evolution of Italian history has confirmed the role of the city as the engine of the nation’s development and has seen small urban towns rise to the role of world powers (Venice, Florence, Amalfi, Genova, Urbino, Pisa, Mantova, etc). The highly civilised and influential Italian cities of the Renaissance had a fundamental characteristic which was not a question of territory or the number of inhabitants of that city, nor the capacity it had to show aggression, but the cohesion and system of rules that united the citizens and favoured the creation of a harmonious society with a flourishing economy and a sophisticated culture.

**Commissariato Generale del Governo
per l’Esposizione Universale di Shanghai 2010**

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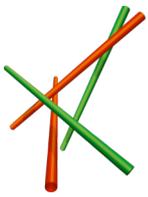
Even in more recent times, the territorial aspect of Italian industrial areas, which greatly contributed to the post war economic development, gives us, yet once again, an example of the uniting force of the urban context. A context which is the source of all experiences, planning and experimentation, but also a place where one can share well-being, progress and the quality of life. In short, the ‘big’ cities are, from an Italian point of view, not so much large cities but more cities that offer their residents the best conditions for development, which satisfy the needs and exalt their potential; cities which have been moulded to man’s needs; cities which are liveable and stimulating: beautiful and efficient cities in which one can live happily.

Cities, however, are alive and alter continually reflecting the state of the society that they convey. The progressive urbanisation of the populations of the world poses the dramatic question of the future of cities. While it seems necessary to ask about the inevitability of such a phenomenon, we must take on the challenge made that the city tends to develop positively.

The big cities that grow rapidly with the primary objective of housing new inhabitants, have unsustainable social and environmental costs, both for logistic reasons connected to the infrastructures and services, and for social and psychological reasons tied to the integration of new citizens.

In order to make the megalopolis well accepted by its inhabitants, today we have sophisticated instruments which are not only scientific and technological, but also political-administrative and cultural. Therefore, architects and urban experts are asked projects of buildings and residences which pay tribute to modern building techniques are eco-compatible; suggest a reasonable use of resources, with particular regard to water and energy and which play an important part in the creation of an aesthetically and functionally attractive habitat. From the public managers who have to face the new problems of accessibility, multi cultures and safety, we expect infrastructures and social services that guarantee the same level of mobility, health, education and work opportunity to all citizens.

There are still valid proposals which emerge from the ideas produced by Italy over the centuries of the ideal city: what emerges above all is the suggestion to take into account both the material aspect of urban society and the abstract ambitions of those who question themselves on what is best and on the future. Bearing this in mind, one needs an equal weight of fantasy and solid ideas to produce a synthesis between planning and utopia which allows us to bear the pressure of the dynamics of urbanisation at the beginning of this third millennium.



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The interest in the Italian case resides, on the one hand, in the synthesis which is produced between the cultural inheritance and the creative quality of the mind, and on the other, the progress made by science and technology, the enthusiasm of research and the capacity of innovation. In the Italian Pavilion in Shanghai, there is an example of possible architecture and avant-garde building techniques. On show will be the most sophisticated novelties of the national productive system in the sectors regarding urban environment: from new building materials to home automation, to transport which does not pollute to the production of renewable energy, from emerging tendencies in industrial design to the potential applications of nanotechnology, and more.

Furthermore, Italy is interested in sharing the experience of its own cities that have maintained their importance for thousands of years and which have repeatedly faced the dual problem of the reconciliation of modernization of the city with the protection of its historical inheritance and to guarantee a correct and productive rapport with the area outside the city. Regarding this, Italy, which has been favoured by a natural environment and has an enormous artistic patrimony, offers a unique laboratory of ideas of which the universal exhibition 2010 will present the most significant results.

The city of the future will be densely populated and extend over a large area so it will become necessary to assimilate the suburbs and insert them in the global network of communication giving them the possibility, through technological eco – compatible renovation a guarantee of utilising what culture offers and integrating it with the community. There are scientific and economic means that allow us to control and put to our advantage the variable dimension of the new city, but only if the philosophy of the development of the city is founded on the respect of human nature and keeps as its focal point man, his dignity and his ambitions.