

City in exhibition

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Abstract. Scientific studies are trying to measure well-being and happiness by analysing the synergies and the positive-cumulative effects that are related to the prolific relationship between art and architecture. Their combination is an ever-increasing source of endlessly diversified stimuli, but functional to increase the cultural level, well-being and quality of life of the community. Ten golden rules emerge from many years of research work.

Keyword: Creativity, art-architecture integration, competitive development, visual experience.

Sunto. Gli studi scientifici stanno cercando di misurare il benessere e la felicità analizzando le sinergie e gli effetti positivi-cumulativi che sono legati alla feconda relazione tra arte e architettura. La loro combinazione è fonte inesauribile di stimoli infinitamente diversificati ma funzionali ad aumentare il livello culturale della comunità, il benessere e la qualità della vita. Da un lavoro pluriennale di ricerca emergono dieci regole d'oro.

Parole Chiave: Creatività, integrazione arte-architettura, crescita competitiva, esperienza percettiva

1. Art-Architecture in the Naples underground

In the urban landscape, to qualify the public spaces makes better the citizens and “everything that makes us the best, is useful” (Ordine, 2013). Citizen who live in a city that is intellectually vibrant, creatively active and in continuous renewal, live in a favourable environment for the creation of well-being. Scientific studies are trying to measure well-being and happiness by analysing the synergies and the positive-cumulative effects that are related to the prolific relationship between art (expressed in different artistic forms) and architecture (designed in order to satisfy habitat needs of civil society). The attitude of a place to merge and combine in artistic expression, the ability of government bodies to stimulate and encourage artistic production on an urban scale and the ability of citizens to accept, welcome and embrace such places and such expressions of culture are all phenomena that can be evaluated in terms of the well-being and happiness of a community. They are closely related to the level of quality of life.

In the pyramid of human needs, Culture represents a unstable vertex if it is not based on the solid foundation of basic needs (housing, employment, health, justice); but those societies that gave value to their history, traditions, art and culture have created better living conditions and prerequisites for a competitive development.

A higher qualification of otherwise anonymous and utilitarian public spaces increases people’s perception and in a way educate then to appreciate and take care of such work. Therefore, art, when integrated in this context, becomes an added value.



Fig. 1. Toledo Station - Oliviero Toscani, Human Race, 2013. LED light box - inkjet print on PVB
(Source: www.anm.it)

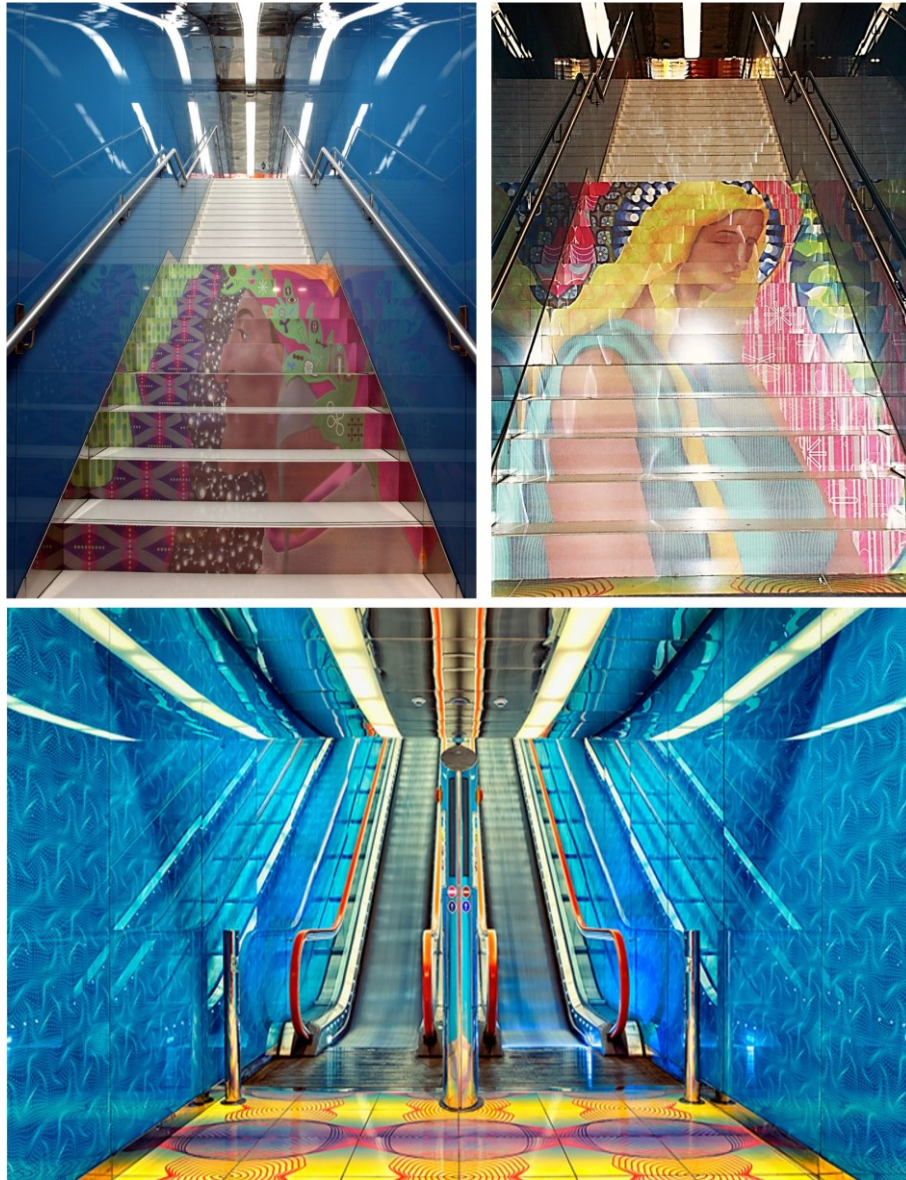


Fig. 2. University Station - Karim Rashid: Dante and Beatrice, 2010. sublimated prints on Stone
(Source: www.anm.it)

“The observation of the multitude of experiences that through art, produce positive outcomes of recovery of the places, suggests to identify art as a driver of an economic and social development. The relationship with a work of art from individual becomes a relationship between people who recognize as a common good the artistic experience”
(Caterina, 2016).



Fig. 3. Dante Station - Jannis Kounellis, Untitled, 2001. Steel sheet metal, iron beams, shoes, coat, hat, toy trains.
(Source: www.anm.it)

In this effort to reach high levels of “widespread aesthetic usability”, architecture, with its public exposure in the streets and squares, helps to indicate which ways to follow to deservitize art, starting from its public spaces to private architecture, also realizing, with painting and literature, the effects that the public seeks in the cinema. In a city like Naples, which since the post-war period has seen the growth of privileged artistic fields such as cinema and theatre, art has found its foundation in a social universe governed by original rituals of expression that involve figures, characters and places, always different expression of “Neapolitanity”, which is a real “art of living”. Art is free from utilitarian purposes; it tackles continuous battles against the dictatorship of profit.

If the architect uses the creative composition as a tool for the “If you do not understand the usefulness of the useless, you do not understand the art” (Ionesco, 1965).

Art and Architecture, when combined accordingly influence people’s behaviour. The contemporary city generates and nurtures creativity, offering infinite insights, which can be reflected in the architectural design of the place. If the architect uses the creative composition as a tool for the design, the user can then use the creative perception as an innovative tool of relationship with the urban landscape and the other users. In this way Architecture is an inexhaustible source of stimuli, which are perhaps seemingly useless but infinitely diversified and functional in order to increase happiness and quality of life.

The research explains the appeal and singularity of the Naples Underground, where the integration between art and architecture found a new way to display the town's creativity. The main place of this process is the stations' architecture and the surrounding urban open spaces rehabilitated with art works (an innovative way to conceive the urban lexicon): an innovative open museum of archaeological and contemporary works.

The real value of this work increases with the high use of this "city in exhibition" linked to the travellers' daily flux that crowds the underground stations. In this way, citizens are exposed to an aesthetic experience that contributes to educate them through the integration of art and architecture.

The idea of incorporating art to the underground stations transcends that of the mural in the city and provides an enriched visual experience to citizens. In the specific case for the Napoli's underground stations there's a strong evidence of the intention of creating spaces -the very objective of architecture- that are not only well defined but also useful and meaningful, giving people a sense of place. Thus, the art, which is apparently a useless trinket, becomes a useful tool to provide quality, culture and beauty to the urban space. In other words: quality of life!

2. Ten golden rules to increase cultural benefits

From the study conducted, a series of reflections arise on the possibilities that art has to enhance its function as a creative stimulus and cultural growth. The sense and purpose of the work of all those who collaborate in urban enterprise changes, in this perspective, tools and strategies. But the fundamental idea is the search for a way to awaken the creativity not only of artists but also of all those who, moving in a culturally privileged context, as ordinary citizens can contribute to enhance the creative sense of living the city, even in the complexity inherent in the place.

Ten golden rules is proposed below as a key to understanding the multiplication of benefits arising from the integration of art-architecture in consolidated urban contexts.

1. Visual quality. The importance of visually conveying ideas either historical, artistic, geographical through the language of art in a playful way, increases the value and significance of any urban and architectural space.

2. Art and Architecture when combined accordingly influence people's behavior. The idea of incorporating art to the underground stations transcends that of the mural in the city and provides an enriched visual experience to citizens.

3. The semiotics of education. The intrinsic value of art itself as a powerful mean for education has an impact in children's education since they're exposed to a context which is meaningful and memorable.

4. Adding value. The higher qualification of otherwise anonymous and utilitarian internal spaces increases the perception of people and in a way educates them to take care of such art work.

5. Color. Undoubtedly the colorful rendering of walls in a contemporary approach of art that encompasses kinesiology is much more in tune with the use of the space and more consistent with it in all regards.

6. Time. The contemporary architecture -pavilion-like structure- and the use of metal and glass introduces a dialogue with the already existing materials of the adjacent buildings -mostly stone- where also its lightness is juxtaposed with the heaviness of the solid structures (for instance in Napoli but also in Milano).

7. Design as a tool. The use of geometry, sculptural shapes, for the design of objects like benches, and waste baskets alludes to a certain minimalism which becomes a statement in terms of design specially when addressed in conjunction with lighting and a concept for cleanliness and the validity of combining artistic values with more utilitarian ones that may belong to the industry (I've got good pictures of all of this I'm writing about to eventually support the arguments made).

8. Sense of place. In the specific case for the Napoli's underground stations there's a strong evidence of the intention of creating spaces -the very objective of architecture- that are not only well defined but also useful and meaningful, giving people a sense of place.

9. Thoughtfulness. The subtlety of some subliminal messages through design features like lettering alluding to urgent and relevant components of our immediate reality sustain the principles behind the design concepts when alluding to some reflections about themes that are critical for our contemporary world.

10. Comprehensive continuity. The ability to continue the artistic discourse outdoors gives continuity and coherence to the whole idea while signing accordingly the presence in the city. This becomes a particularly clever way of understanding design, history and urban landscape as a whole, which is achieved in a masterly way in Naples (Salvatore Rosa Station) by incorporating the explanation about the archaeological features of the place.

Since the contemporary city feeds and nourishes itself with creativity, offering infinite ideas of vision and knowledge, which are concretized in the design of the architectural place, if the technician uses the creative composition as a tool for the design, the user uses the creative perception as an innovative tool of relationship and interaction with the urban landscape. Architecture thus becomes an inexhaustible source of stimuli that vary infinitely. (Hui et al, 2008)

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