

## COMMON ARCHIVE – La Notte Bianca del Progetto

*On 24<sup>th</sup> April, for one evening only, and together for the first time, Milan's historical design and architecture archives will open to the public. A Salone del Mobile Observatory initiative dedicated to a living heritage that belongs to the city but speaks to the world*

There are cities that tell their stories through monuments. Milan, more subtly, tells its story through its archives. Not the institutional archives of official memory, but those in which a design takes shape before becoming an object, a space, a shared image. Drawings, laid out or folded; models and maquettes, both perfect and imperfect; photographs, notes, variations, trials: everything that precedes a finished work and preserves its potential. A heritage that is unique in both value and richness.

As part of **Common Archive – La Notte Bianca del Progetto** – an initiative organised by the **Salone del Mobile.Milano Observatory**, supported by **the Lombardy Region and the Municipality of Milan**, in collaboration with the **School of Design at the Politecnico di Milano** – **these places are being made accessible, in a single programme of guided tours and free events. From 6.30 pm to 11.00 pm on 24<sup>th</sup> April**, during the most international week of the year, **Common Archive** will transform this network of knowledge into a **framework for interpreting and sharing a heritage**, which is also – and perhaps above all – a **method**, underscoring **archives as active spaces: critical infrastructures** in which design is deposited, organised and made accessible for renewed perusal.

For this first edition, through an open call, **Common Archive** has involved the main nodes of the city's archive system, which represents one of the highest concentrations of design memory at international level. From the **Cittadella degli Archivi**, with its almost industrial scale of conservation, to **CASVA – Centro Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive** in its new premises designed by **Piero Bottoni**, and on to institutions such as **Triennale Milano** with the **Centro Cuore** and **the Politecnico di Milano**, the itinerary also takes in **association and museum archives**, such as the **AIAP Centre for Graphic Design Documentation** and the **Compasso d'Oro Historical Collection at the ADI Design Museum**, the vast **Fondazione Fiera Milano Archive**, and culminates in the treasures held in **the Bertarelli Print Collection at the Sforzesco Castle**. These institutions conserve, study and make accessible over **150 collections and archives**.

The programme for the first La Notte Bianca del Progetto would not have been complete without the **studio-homes, archives and foundations** of the leading figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – from **Achille Castiglioni to Franco Albini, Vico Magistretti to Gae Aulenti, Giovanni Muzio, Gio Ponti, Giancarlo Illiprandi, Bruno Danese and Jacqueline Vodoz** – figures whose spaces reveal a more intimate dimension of design, in which practice intertwines with daily life and the narrative is sometimes entrusted to the younger generations of the family, through anecdotes that no printed monograph can convey.

**Maria Porro, President of Salone del Mobile.Milano**, had this to say: *“Common Archive shifts the focus beyond the object and the built environment. Towards what lies behind them. Towards the conditions that make design possible. With this initiative, Milan will present itself for one evening, not as a stage, but as a living memory, an essential legacy for research, education and the transmission of knowledge. My thanks go to all the organisations that have joined the initiative, and to Francesca Caruso, Councillor for Culture of the Lombardy Region, and Tommaso Sacchi, Councillor for Culture of the Municipality of Milan, for the enthusiasm with which they have welcomed and sponsored it”*.

*“Common Archive is a project that makes accessible a heritage that is normally kept out of sight, but which is pivotal for understanding the art of design in Milan. The archives are not just places given over to conservation, but spaces for work, study and the transmission of knowledge, in which processes, relationships and skills are stratified. Putting them online and opening them to the public, in a single evening, means offering a concrete tool for reading the city and its cultural system. The project, curated by the Salone del Mobile Observatory, contributes to strengthening Milan as an open platform, capable of sharing the quality and complexity of its cultural heritage with an international audience,”* said **Tommaso Sacchi, Councillor for Culture of the Municipality of Milan.**

**Francesca Caruso, Councillor for Culture at the Lombardy Region,** had this to say: *“Common Archive – La Notte Bianca del Progetto” is an invitation to enter into the most authentic heart of Lombard creativity, where ideas are born, take shape and become visions. Throwing open the archives means not only unveiling the story of design and architecture, but also the passions, experiments and dreams of those who have made them possible. It is a hugely generous cultural gesture, which will enable memory to become live, shared experiences. The Lombardy Region is proud to support an initiative that restores this extraordinary heritage to the public, making it accessible and capable of inspiring the new generations, strengthening the profound link between identity, innovation and the future.”*

**La Notte Bianca del Progetto** stems from the **Salone del Mobile.Milano Observatory** research project, commissioned by the **Politecnico di Milano School of Design** to conduct a systemic analysis of the city’s cultural design output in 2025, culminating in the **2025 Milan Design (Eco) System Annual Report.**

*“More than a presentation, Common Archive represents a threshold: the transition from mapping to a shared experience. La Notte Bianca del Progetto is not just a special free opening, but a mechanism that connects archives, people and knowledge with the international Salone Week public,”* said **Susanna Legrenzi, Curator of the initiative and Head of the Salone del Mobile.Milano Observatory.**

**Giampiero Bosoni,** Full Professor at the **Politecnico di Milano,** added: *“Without history, and therefore the archives that are its living (and not ‘dead’, as some would say) testament, there is no future. This is what our teachers have taught us, and however obvious this statement may seem, it needs to be constantly reiterated because it is often forgotten. Such a blunt and immediate statement may also strike many as a cliché that means everything and nothing, which is why there is a greater need than ever to save and preserve the archives. But beyond the essential act of safeguarding, we need above all to bring them back to life as a fundamental tool of knowledge capable of speaking to everyone through the various and ever-expanding, forms of dissemination available to us today”.*

Also on **24<sup>th</sup> April,** alongside the guided tours and talks, **Common Archive** will hold a **special evening opening** of the exhibition at the **Fabbrica del Vapore, INTERDEPENDENCE: past, present, future,** an exploration of design as a tool for interpreting the past through educational projects at the Politecnico di Milano and 50 international design schools, in dialogue with a selection of design pieces from the CASVA archive.

## **Common Archive – La Notte Bianca del Progetto**

24<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 6.30 pm – 11.00 pm

A Salone del Mobile.Milano Observatory initiative

Supported by the Lombard Region and the Municipality of Milan

Curated by Susanna Legrenzi (Salone del Mobile.Milano Observatory)

With Massimo Bianchini, Stefano Maffei, Francesco Zurlo (Politecnico di Milano)

#CommonArchive #SalonedelMobile2026

Free entry events with mandatory advance registration, subject to availability.

Registration link: [https://salone.it/common\\_archive](https://salone.it/common_archive)

## **Programme**

### **ADI Design Museum – Collezione storica del Compasso d’Oro**

Piazza Compasso d'Oro, 1 – @adidesignmuseum

**Guided tour** 6:30 pm

The ADI Design Museum was created around the Historical Collection of projects related to the Compasso d'Oro award, created in 1954 by Gio Ponti to promote design culture. The museum hosts temporary exhibitions, meetings and initiatives to advance the awareness and dissemination of the award nationally and internationally. During the Notte Bianca del Progetto, it offers a guided tour to discover this heritage which spans over 70 years of Italian design, from 1954 to the present. A journey through iconic objects and innovative projects that demonstrate the evolution of design and society, offering visitors an informed perspective on the role of design in everyday life.

### **AIAP – Centro di Documentazione sul Progetto Grafico**

Via Amilcare Ponchielli 3 – @aiap\_ita

**Talk** 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

The AIAP – Italian Association of Visual Communication Design – Graphic Design Documentation Centre preserves materials and promotes initiatives related to the culture and history of graphic design and visual communication design. It currently holds more than 120 collections of varying sizes and types, dedicated to both well-known and lesser-known figures. During the Notte Bianca del Progetto, it offers two talks, each accompanied by viewings of original materials exhibited for the occasion (posters, printed materials, sketches). The talks will focus on political graphics (for April 25th) and Made in Italy (for the Salone Week).

### **Archivio Eugenio e Mario Quarti – Archivio Mazzucotelli**

#### **Raccolta delle Stampe A. Bertarelli – Castello Sforzesco**

Piazza Castello – @grafiche\_castellosforzesco

**Guided Tour** 6:30 pm

The Eugenio and Mario Quarti Archive consists of thousands of drawings, photographs, and models relating to the two architects' work, documenting their furniture and interior design projects between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Mazzucotelli Archive is a collection of projects by Alessandro Mazzucotelli, a specialist in wrought iron art. It documents Art Nouveau production in Milan between the 19th and 20th centuries. The guided tour includes access to the archival spaces that are usually closed to the general public, and it offers the opportunity to view a representative selection of original

materials: drawings, models, samples, and photographs for an immersive experience that provides a tangible insight into the architects' work and the historical context in which they operated.

### **Archivio Gae Aulenti**

Via Fiori Oscuri 3 – @archivio\_gae\_aulenti

**Guided Tours** 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

The Gae Aulenti Archive is located in her home and studio in Brera, an extraordinary place where the traces and references to a life of inquiry, rich in collaborations, are collected and layered. With the home on one side and the studio on the other, a constant dialogue is generated between private and professional life, each drawing inspiration from the other. The guided tour of the archive is an invitation to discover all that she kept and lived with: documents, projects, drawings, correspondence, books, art, literary texts—in other words, everything that was Gae Aulenti. In design, in architecture, and more generally in design culture.

### **Archivio professionale Carla De Benedetti**

Via Procaccini, 4 – @casvamilano

**Free admission, until 10:00 pm**

The Carla De Benedetti Archive adds to the CASVA collections and supplements an important perspective on interior architecture and design in the mid-twentieth century, a period of exceptional development for these fields, enabling a comprehensive study of architectural design. The exhibition, held at the Fabbrica del Vapore, presents archival photographs in projections that bring the rooms to life-size, allowing viewers to experience the designer's interiors at a 1:1 scale. Work tools complement the exhibition, to show the substance of the profession, which is made up of objects, relationships, and contacts. Contemporary documentation will accompany the visitor through these visionary interiors.

### **Archivio Muzio**

Via Barbavara, 7 – @archiviomuzio

**Lecture** 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

The Muzio Archive preserves the graphic and photographic documentation relating to the professional activity of Giovanni Muzio (1920–1981) and Lorenzo Muzio (1960–1992). During the twentieth century, Giovanni Muzio designed over 50 works in Milan that profoundly impacted the city, shaping its fabric with a new vision. From the Università Cattolica, in the context of Bramante's courtyards, to the Palazzo della Triennale, all his buildings adhere to the principle that Muzio remained faithful to throughout his life: "There is no architecture without urban planning." Lorenzo Muzio, also an architect, designed numerous buildings, including the Turati Tower. A short lecture will introduce some of the archive's original materials, drawings, and photographs.

### **Politecnico di Milano – Archivi Storici**

Via Candiani 72, Building B1 – @polimi

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 7:15 pm – 8:00 pm – 8:45 pm

The Historical Archives of the Politecnico di Milano preserve and make accessible materials from the University Historical Archive. It is the custodian of memories accumulated since Politecnico's foundation in 1863, as well as of approximately 60 archives of important architects, designers, graphic artists, and engineers – testaments to the university's scientific and humanistic culture. During the event, visitors will visit the Archi Passanti exhibition, featuring five archives—Steiner, Ghianda, De Carli, GPA Monti, and Crespi Grisotti. Visitors can browse the notebooks and sketches of graphic artists,

designers, and architects, and see their projects for the Biennale and Triennale exhibitions, trade fairs, and associations such as ADI, as well as for companies such as La Rinascente, Bonacina, Kartell, and Fontana Arte.

### **Associazione Giancarlo Iliprandi**

Via Vallazze, 63 – @giancarlo.iliprandi

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 7:00 pm – 7:30 pm – 8:00 pm – 8:30 pm

The Giancarlo Iliprandi Association was founded in 2019 to protect and share the praxis of the Milanese designer's extensive professional experience. It is located in the designer's studio, headquartered at Via Vallazze 63, in a historic building designed by Gio Ponti in 1957. The interior of the space has remained unchanged and offers an in-depth exploration of Iliprandi's graphic production. Through the extensive materials on display, visitors are guided toward the discovery of Giancarlo Iliprandi's complex history. His design research, in fact, not only encompasses the various areas of graphic design, but also continually intersects with adjacent fields, from photography to illustration, from set design to product design, from typography to travel design.

### **CASVA - Centre for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts**

Via Isernia, 5 – @casvamilano

**Guided Tours** 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm

CASVA, the Cultural Institute of the City of Milan, is an "archive of architects' archives," becoming a centre for studies in architecture, design, graphics, figurative arts, visual arts, and design as a whole. It pays particular attention to the cultural phenomena that have progressively shaped our society in the twentieth century. Among the more than 40 archives preserved in the new headquarters at QT8 are those of Enzo Mari, Vittorio Gregotti, Roberto Sambonet, and numerous others. The guided tour of the exhibition De Pas, D'Urbino, Lomazzi. Fantasticamente effervescenti is an invitation to discover visionary forms of housing, such as pneumatic domes, residential hypercubes, and radically innovative holiday homes. As well as some icons that have shaped the history of design.

### **Cittadella degli Archivi**

Via Ferdinando Gregorovius, 15 – @cittadella.degli.archivi

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm – 9:30 pm

The Cittadella degli Archivi is the archive hub of the City of Milan. It houses approximately 80 linear kilometres of documents, half of which are stored in a fully automated facility managed by a special archivist, Eustorgio, a state-of-the-art robot equipped with artificial intelligence, who contributes to making the Cittadella one of the largest automated archives in Europe. During the Notte Bianca del Progetto a guided tour is offered of Eustorgio's area of knowledge and work, including a tour of the mechanized facility. The visit will continue with a viewing of specially selected documents (plans, elevations, drawings, correspondence, etc.) by great architects who were also designers. Including works by Gio Ponti, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Ettore Sottsass, and Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni.

### **Fabbrica del Vapore – INTERDEPENDENCE: past, present, future**

Via Giulio Cesare Procaccini, 4 @interdependence.polimi

**Free admission until 11:00 pm**

On the occasion of the Notte Bianca del Progetto, Politecnico di Milano and CASVA invite you to a special evening opening of the exhibition INTERDEPENDENCE: past, present, future, an exploration of design as a tool for interpreting the past, addressing the present, and imagining possible futures,

through projects created by students from the Politecnico di Milano and 50 international design schools, in dialogue with a selection of historical design pieces from the CASVA Institute archive.

## **Fondazione Achille Castiglioni**

Piazza Castello, 27 – @fondazioneachillecastiglioni

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

The Foundation was established in the studio where Achille Castiglioni worked for 40 years to promote his professional activity. Castiglioni's design journey is shared with the public through temporary exhibitions. Visits are a way to immerse visitors in the world of Castiglioni, accompanying them through the studio's rooms, making visitors feel at home, step by step, year after year.

## **Fondazione Jacqueline Vodoz e Bruno Danese**

Via Santa Maria Fulcorina, 17

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm

The Foundation preserves a collection consisting of works, objects, photographs, and documents collected by Jacqueline Vodoz and Bruno Danese since 1957. The collection divides into two main sections: the Historical Design Archive (DEM Danese Meneguzzo Collection from 1955 to 1957 and the Danese Collection from 1957 to 1991) and the Art Collections. For the Notte Bianca del Progetto, the Foundation presents a small exhibition featuring some archival pieces on display for the occasion, as well as short video interviews produced by the Vodoz Danese Foundation, entitled Fare il design: le realtà produttive intorno alla Danese 1957 – 1991. This collection features documentation of the collaborations between DANESE and the companies, artisans, and professionals involved in the production process.

## **Fondazione Fiera Milano**

Largo Domodossola, 1 – @fondazione\_fiera

**Guided Tours** 6:00 pm

The Historical Archive of Fondazione Fiera Milano preserves documents produced since 1920 – the year of the first “Fiera Campionaria”. Posters, photographs, catalogues, newspapers, books, films, and various archival paper collections all tell many other stories too – those of exhibiting companies, visitors, exhibitors, and workers. Through images from the photographic collection (over 500,000 shots) and other documents preserved in the archive, the curator of the Historical Archive will illustrate the role of the Fiera Milano as a privileged centre from which to observe the evolution of Italian design. The journey will also have a digital dimension, with access to heritage materials that have already been digitised and catalogued.

## **Fondazione Franco Albini**

Via Saffi, 27 • @fondazionefrancoalbini

**Guided Tours** 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm – 9:00 pm – 10:00 pm

The Foundation was established in Milan in honour of the architect Franco Albini. It is dedicated to promoting Albini's work and recognized as a historical heritage site. The aim is to explore the aspects of his work that are especially relevant today, drawing on a collection of archival documents, including approximately 22,000 drawings, over 6,000 photos, 2,500 slides, and other materials. The guided tour of the new headquarters of the Franco Albini Foundation—just a few meters from the historic studio on Via Telesio—is an opportunity to discover the work of a master of rationalism, including models and written documents, prototypes and objects, and design icons: from the 1951 Margherita armchair to the

tubular handrail for the stations of Milan Metro Lines 1 and 2 which won the Compasso d'Oro Award in 1964.

### **Fondazione Studio Museo Vico Magistretti**

Via Vincenzo Bellini, 1 – @fondazionemagistretti

**Guided Tours** 8:30 pm – 9:30 pm

The studio where Vico Magistretti worked throughout his life is now a studio-museum open to the public. Here, conservation, research, enhancement, dissemination, and promotion of the archive and his work as an architect and designer coexist and interact with original elements of the place where he worked for over sixty years. For the Notte Bianca del Progetto the Foundation is offering a guided tour of the exhibition Vico Magistretti e il Giappone with curator Davide Fornari. Organized in collaboration with ECAL/Ecole cantonale d'art de Lausanne, the exhibition explores the elective affinities, formal references, and conceptual connections between the work of the Milanese architect and designer and Japanese aesthetics.

### **Gio Ponti Archives**

Via Giuseppe Dezza, 49 – @giopontiofficial

**Talk** 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

The Gio Ponti Archives are located in spaces that were once part of Gio Ponti's studio. Its purpose is to support studies on the life and work of Gio Ponti, the creation of publications, the organization of exhibitions, and the re-edition of works by him. It has a database consisting, together with Gio Ponti's photographic archive, of images and materials produced or collected by Salvatore Licitra. For the Notte Bianca del Progetto, the archive presents Lavori in corso: a talk to illustrate the archive's work, its branches of activity and its commitments, with particular reference to recent initiatives and projects. It concludes with a brief commentary on Ponti's building, the headquarters of the Gio Ponti Archives.

### **Politecnico di Milano – Design Philology**

Via Durando, 10 – @polimi

**Guided Tours** 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Design Philology is a historical-philological research project that chronicles the evolution of design at the Politecnico di Milano through an interactive digital archive. Based on documents and statements, it is structured into explorable narrative paths, giving rise to publications and the Design Convivio exhibition, which brings together masters of design, highlighting memory, research, and innovation. Visitors can explore the digital archive with the support of the research team and visit the Design Convivio installation, which stages an imaginary conversation between eight masters of the Politecnico – Gio Ponti, Franco Albini, Carlo De Carli, Marco Zanuso, Achille Castiglioni, Vittoriano Viganò, Alberto Rosselli, and Raffaella Crespi—on the project's key themes.

### **Triennale Milano**

Viale Alemagna 6 – @triennalemilano

**Guided Tours** 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

For over a century, Triennale Milano has promoted culture as a meeting place through design, architecture, and the visual and performing arts. Inside the Palazzo dell'Arte, home to the Triennale, in addition to the Museo del Design Italiano, there is Cuore – the study centre, archives, and research space – where the institution's archives and research centre are accessible. During the Notte Bianca del Progetto, guided tours will take place as a journey through the Palazzo dell'Arte and its exhibition



spaces. The tour begins with a welcome and an introduction to the Palazzo and the Triennale International Exhibitions. The tour continues by exploring the various floors of the building, discovering architecture and works from the 1930s to the present. The tour concludes on the park level, with an overview of the installations in the Triennale Milano garden.