L'ABITARE SOSPESO

a cura di
STEFANO FOLLESA e **FRANCESCO ARMATO**

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L'abitare sospeso
Come cambierà il nostro rapporto con gli spazi

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"Tutti i fenomeni naturali che accadono in cielo e sulla terra e che lasciano sospesi e spaventati gli uomini, mortificando i loro animi per la paura del divino e schiacciandoli a terra, hanno una precisa spiegazione materiale. Ma l'ignoranza delle cause induce gli uomini a riferirli all'arbitrio delle divinità e a sottomettersi al loro potere".

Tito Lucrezio Caro, *De rerum natura*

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New rules and standards:
social design in a crisis

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Introduction

The world is returning to its usual rhythm after a pause during the pandemic.

For the first time since the second world war, European countries had to face such unexpected and dramatic situations of self-isolation to prevent the spread of a deadly virus. That has forced the population to think about rules and standards people's lives are arranged in the coming months and years. The general sense of vulnerability in the face of an invisible danger is causing several trends that will influence the emergence of new rules for interaction and standards for safe social and cultural space planning.

Six months ago, the fundamental idea of many designers was to create a "new," "unusual" product and experience. And today, many are returning to the basics – the foot of the Maslov pyramid – the basic needs of people – the needs for security and social belonging.

The professional design community is forced to respond to the pandemic and its consequences, which will require the use of available tools and practical developments to cope with the crisis. One of these useful tools is social design.

By definition, social design involves the design of complex socio-technical systems and processes in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, that is, in a "crisis". The situation is aggravated by the economic crisis rising around the world, which will lead to changes in economic activities in the future and a difference in the technological mode.

Global adjustments to everyday life are inevitable. Humanity is already going through a painful meltdown. Experts from various fields of activity give a variety of forecasts, from which several trends stand out.

First of all, we will see the rehabilitation of traditional institutions – there will be a kind of rollback in various directions. The government will strengthen while raising the market collapsed by the epidemic. At the same time, its supervisory potential will be enhanced, introducing into our lives a reality hitherto known only by dystopias. The *coronavirus* will give a particularly healthy boost to all digital technologies, which will become even more tightly integrated into the healthcare system, public administration, and security, dramatically transforming the labor market. There will also be social changes: much of what was necessarily implemented in our lives due to quarantine measures- the sum of remote technologies-will continue to exist in one form or another in the post-coronavirus world; the structure of society and the nature of social interaction will also change.

Today, the concept of human life security comes to the fore, which can be provided by various means and methods of protection, as well as contactless interaction in society. It will undoubtedly lead to some trends based on the combination of such often opposite concepts: *Safety and comfort, Isolation and immersiveness, Virtuality and reality, Simplicity and variability, Eco-friendliness and creative, Transformability and adaptability.*

These concepts will form the basis for creating future socio-cultural spaces. As mentioned above, social designers, in most cases, deal with "crisis" situations in which people need help and support in unusual, extreme circumstances, and most often in conditions of lack of resources. The key topics covered in this area are working with refugees and people affected by disasters, rebuilding communities, and, finally, developing "resilience" and "viability".

Changing the social situation associated with the need for social distancing requires new tools in design, engineering and education.

Socially-oriented approach in design is a new tool for social change

The basic principles of social design are the priority of human-centered design and a systematic, interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving. Social designers have succeeded in finding local, modular, sometimes very simple-looking solutions to complex problems at the level of solving global

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human issues. And it contributes to the spread of productive practices in communities. Let's look at several examples that demonstrate how it works.

Even today, we can see how social distancing, which has become a leading measure and condition for social cohabitation, has affected the pandemic's situation as an absolute necessity.

This is not the first time that creative professionals have faced the challenge of radically revising the approach to designing public spaces throughout history, says Rami El Samahi, head of the Boston-based architectural design firm OverUnder and an associate professor at the MIT School of architecture and planning (Giacobbe, 2020). As an example, El Samahi cites the project for the Ottomanization of Paris, implemented in an attempt to harmonize the settlement of a growing number of residents, as well as the rapid spread of epidemics associated with the imperfect city planning. And revision of London infrastructure design after a cholera epidemic in the 1846-60es, when it turned out that the spread of the disease was caused by contaminated water, which people collect in a city column (and not through airborne droplets via the so-called "miasmata," as previously thought), led to the construction of better sanitary facilities [Paneth et al., 1998].

While various ideas about environment transformation have already been formulated, the moment for the action has already come, and we have to act quickly. So, for example, David Devane's ideas, promoted by him even before the beginning of the pandemic, seem to be successful: "rooms of solitary work" (original "deep-work chambers"), designed in such a way as to eliminate the distraction factor characteristic of open spaces (open offices), and to target the person to a deep concentration on their work [Keller, 2018]. It can be assumed that to halt the infection spread between people in an exponentially growing world, such measures as social distance and creation of other formats interaction that do not involve personal communication are necessary conditions for designing a safe environment for the future. The current situation will most possibly lead to changes in future design, especially since the practice of the current location shows that past forms of interaction are obsolete and can be replaced with new ones with no less success. Reducing the frequency of business trips can reduce the
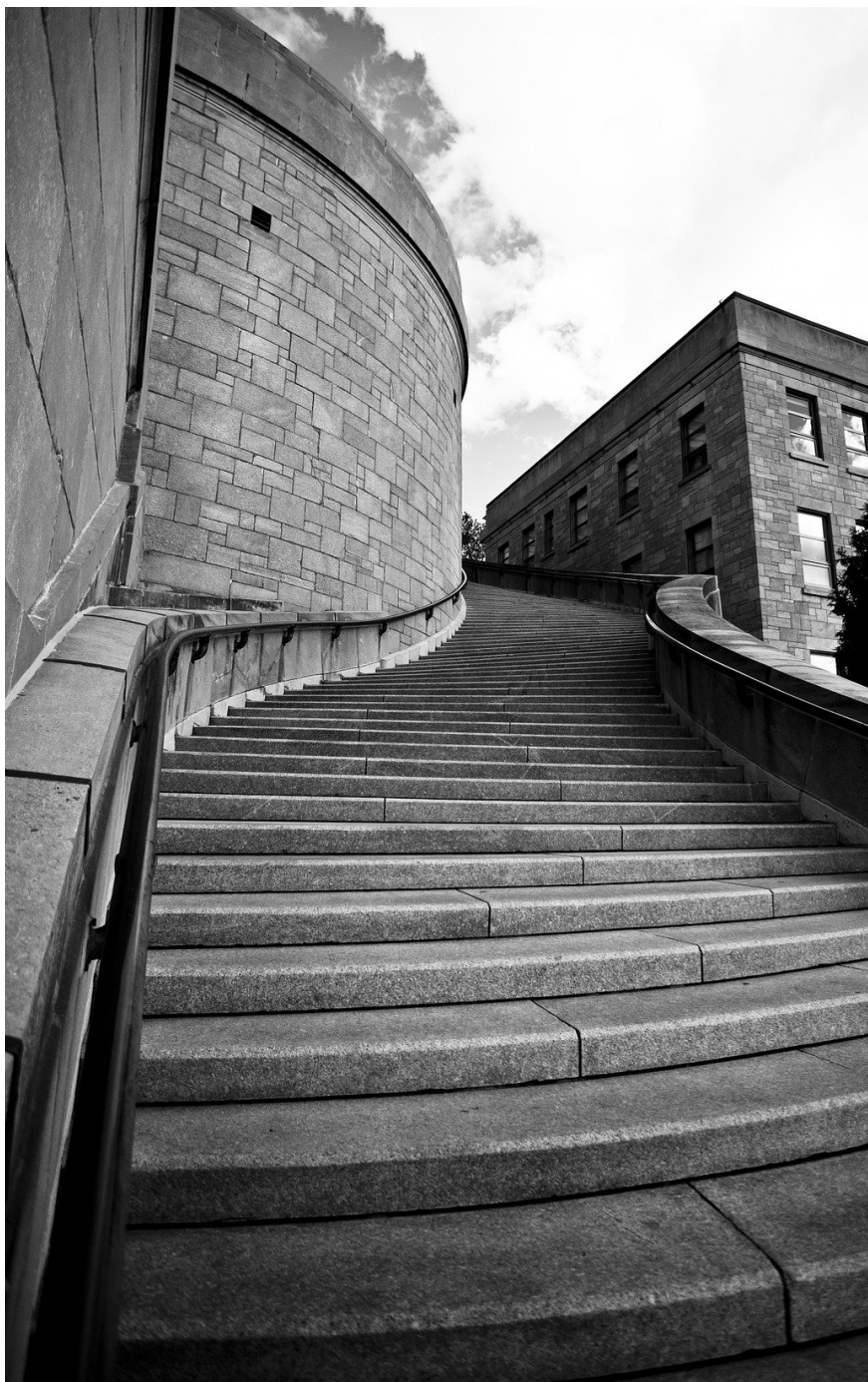
demand for air travel, but it will also encourage the development of IT and communication technologies that allow people to solve issues from different parts of the world safely, faster and effectively. The experience of this pandemic shows that a large proportion of the population can work remotely in "virtual," home offices, allowing organizations to save on rental space and many other related costs. Moreover, new forms of communication and "labor devices" will help reduce the load on the transport network. It seems that these are the issues that modern designers will and should face now: a fundamental revision of the organization of interaction between people.

As soon as the epidemic escalated into a pandemic, the design community has reacted to the possible uncontrolled spread and also the development of crisis management measures. For example, the design studio HKS has developed a series of concepts for converting spaces into temporary medical centers. They created detailed plans to counter the pandemic: reorienting hotel rooms, educational institutions, and other buildings to field hospitals, considering space use, operational issues, and others to support the authorities' efforts to play out critical scenarios, [Schrer, Evans, Shelton, 2020]. Needless to say, space reorganization is a more inexpensive alternative to costly construction from scratch.

Similarly, Arup creative studio created a ready-to-use, modular designed field-hospitals, that can easily be attached to the existing healthcare infrastructure. In a situation where there is no time for contemplation, modular solutions are radical but practical. Jupe Health is a series of three modular recuperation spaces designed for healthcare professionals and patients Jupe, Inc. [Stone, 2020]. Such areas are easy to put implement because they are made of ready-made blocks that are simple to manufacture. All above examples are socially-oriented practices that are aimed at providing solutions to complex global problems, not solely and only at market needs. These are innovations aimed at making things in a better way for the sake of making good for people. A few more narrowly focused examples of the response to the pandemic are worth mentioning. For instance, AlTibbi company is a digital platform for residents of Central Asia and the North-African region, created to provide the most up-to-date information about the health system to residents

of these countries (includes a medical Glossary, many medical articles). In collaboration with the Ministry of health, AlTibbi has launched a project – a coronavirus hotline that is accessible to all Jordanians and provides an opportunity to receive prompt telemedicine (remote) consultations with doctors (*Altibbi steps to offer a Corona hotline (111) for all Jordanians*, 2020).

The current situation also forces the development of digital technologies, in other words, technologies that allow people to control something without touching: the automatic opening of doors, elevators and various switches, activation of which is done by voice, systems for blocking the entrance to hotel rooms controlled from a smartphone, and others. Examples of technologies developed just this year are not few: elevators with contactless control, interactive menus in restaurants, complex systems based on artificial intelligence technology for recognizing faces in protective masks on employee cards at the entrance to the building, excluding additional interactions (*Covid-19 gives a boost to 'contactless' technology in Japan*, 2020). All these require close cooperation with the end users to deliver sustainable solutions, to co-design the new way of living together with all stakeholders, considering the context and needs and interests of all parties.

In a crisis, many other familiar things require radical revision. For example, the organization of the voting process is also considered by the design Studio Ideas42 and Nonvoter innovation lab from the perspective of changing habitual stereotypes and behavioral psychology. Together with several US government officials, the Studio is developing individual solutions designed to help build confidence among voters in an unusual way of voting, especially in the context of disinformation and panic (*Our response to Covid-19*, 2020). It is important that the emphasis was not so much on creating a workable system that is as accessible as possible to the entire population, but also on working with an audience that still needs to be persuaded to use this system, for which the use of ideas from the field of behavior science seems more than successful.

This systematic approach, which reflects the work at many levels, shows that innovation is most effective in the conditions of joint design and in terms of applying a human-oriented approach. Lots of examples from current social design

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practice prove that thesis again an again. Worth to mention efforts of designers from Mass Design group, GeoHazards International, Build Change, The Heritage Foundation of Pakistan, Frog design, IKEA.org etc.Lots of social designers came from the field of architecture. To name a few, Sergio Palleroni worked on reconstruction after the Mexico City earthquake, Christian Benimana, architect dedicated to addressing the rapid growth and urbanization of population of Africa and lots of others.Thus, Designer or architect is taking the central role is making a better space, better cities for everyone, involving all stakeholders in the dialog, creating new opportunities to collaborate, transforming the way we interact and the way we can use the surroundings.

I.e. with only $200 dollars at hand, Al Borde studio developed the 3 "Hope Projects" with close cooperation with the local community of fishermans of Ecuador. That is more, the community-based approach demonstrated to people that the resources (both human and natural) to design and build were already present in their community. Working closely with the target audience, creating simple prototypes to test the effectiveness of ideas, and organizing feedback are necessary conditions for building in the context of universal design. It would seem that the cases described in the article have little in common and relate to entirely different issues and aspects of design in crisis and disaster situations. However, we would like to highlight a golden thread that runs through each of them:

• maximum study and use of local resources in the set conditions;
• marking the problem and all key-related elements in the overall context;
• design not as a solution to a problem, but as part of it: providing tools for the answer, not just a single solution but creating a self-help system;
• active collaboration with the local community;
• close cooperation with local authorities;
• public awareness of "sustainable solutions" and raising advocates among residents.

It is not a full list of those characteristics to describe social design but necessary principles of successful socially-oriented approach in design. These traits demonstrate a human-oriented approach to design, involving active collaboration with all stakeholders. It suggests that the role of the designer

becomes not "expert-mentoring," but "motivating-exploring". When approaching the field of system design, designers do not become authors of such systems, but proactively participate in their evolution and transformation. And the general approach practiced by social designers can be described as the formation of a flexible and "sustainable community".

New approaches in the design of environmental spaces
The current reality of object design presupposes a brand-new approach to solving these problems.

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Problems and possible solutions:
1) Contactless entry and exit to premises, transport (using "smart" tracking systems, f. e., with control via a mobile phone, excluding contact with door handles, locks, keys).
2) Housing Security-organization of entrance halls where you can remove protective clothing without entering residential premises. The maximum autonomy of a living cell is the organization of autonomous garbage chutes, without combining them into main ones, and the same applies to ventilation.
3) The comfort of the interior is the maximum approximation to the natural environment-winter gardens, mini-greenhouses, vertical green walls, a new fashion for mini – waterfalls, aquariums, and home farms. The design should rich in rough textures of stone, wood, natural linen and cotton fabrics, mats, wicker furniture. It all will make it easier to fill the gap between nature and the setting.
4) Light variety – both in the location, type, and dimensions of devices and in the color of lighting-Biologically and Emotionally Effective Lighting (Human Centric Lighting – produced by MGK "Light Technologies") – lighting designed with "circadian rhythms" in mind. It is especially crucial in self-isolation conditions when a person may not go outside for several days, losing the feeling of day/night change. Decorative lighting – with variable chroma light will allow you to bring dynamics and variety to the interior design – various types of disinfection lamps-irradiators and bactericidal lamps, ultraviolet.
5) Transformativeness, the dynamism of space (this applies especially to interiors of a small area) allowing you to change the volume of the part of the interior in which a person is currently located in connection with these more attention

to the development of furniture-transformers, folding, sliding types.

In public spaces:

6) Disinfection booths-sanitary treatment of not only hands, face, but also clothing.

7) Safety of general transport-in addition to reducing the density of passenger loading, it is necessary to install fencing screens and organize ventilation – in the "top-down" direction-and not in the horizontal direction (as at present) – from open windows.

8) The problem of protecting children in nurseries and schools. For healthy psychological development and social adaptation of a child, it is necessary to interact with peers, verbal and non-verbal communication, development of communication skills, participation and socialization. It is possible that the organization of detached courtyards, condominiums, coworking places, unfortunately, will exacerbate the isolation and stratification of society, but will partially protect users by providing the opportunity to communicate outside the family.

Benefits:

1) the transition to online communication has dramatically expanded the borders – including international ones – which will undoubtedly contribute to the development of various collaborations: in learning, creativity, design (most likely, there will be an adaptive simplification of English, bringing it closer to Esperanto).

2) Reduction of CO_2 emissions due to reduced transport activity.

3) the Appearance of free time (spending time on the road, standing in traffic).

4) Careful, reasonable consumption (financial crisis/ limited space/recycling problems, etc.).

5) Attention to your home and family.

The situation in distance education

When they talked about distance learning before the coronavirus, they meant first of all lectures from "the best teachers," which in the future should replace a lot of "not so high-quality lecturers". And this idea caused serious objections, mainly consisting in the statement of the impossibility of high-quality transfer of knowledge by unilateral influence, without interaction with students, without taking

into account their characteristics and the specifics of their request. However, practice during the forced transition to distance learning in schools and universities has shown that the tasks and problems of distance learning are quite different. First, it became evident that distance learning causes faster fatigue than face-to-face training. Second, for productive feedback and interaction between the teacher and students, groups should be smaller (not larger) than in full-time practice. Third, the role of auxiliary materials increases because the teacher sharply loses the ability to hold the attention of listeners and transmit information in non-verbal ways available in face-to-face contact. In short, institutional training with the transition to distance learning has highlighted many issues.

On the other hand, if you do not make this learning method reproducing the same class-based system at a distance, its advantages become apparent. It leads directly to time savings due to the road to the place of classes, the ability to work in a comfortable home environment, the ability to move the schedule, the ability to record and review the lesson, the ability to choose and learn from a teacher located in another city or country, if it suits you, the ability to expand the range of teachers and listen to the same lesson from several, taking from each of its strengths, looking at the topic from different sides, seeing possible approaches and methods of its development and disclosure.

The transfer of knowledge will always involve direct interaction; you can only really teach from the request and question of a particular student – but this interaction does not have to be limited to a joint presence in a specific place at a specific time. It is important to note not only the potential of social design in crises but also the prospect of working through issues in the field of preventive design, which reduce the chances of undesirable situations. It is essential to pay due attention to engineering in post-crisis situations as well when solutions are required when the lack of resources for this purpose is one of the main conditions of tasks.

A future without hydrocarbon fuels and a life with limited natural resources is also not far away, which will inevitably change all world economies. To imagine now what it will look like, what tasks humanity will face at such a moment, and how they can be solved, this is one of tomorrow's tasks, which we need to start working on today.

Living in our home

Jean-Pierre Charbonneau
Urban Planner - Paris FRANCE

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Nella pagina seguente:
Foto dell'autore
Parigi

"To inhabit is to inhabit its dwelling, but also to inhabit its territory and the planet"
As the crisis reminds us crudely

Living in our home
I was like everyone else confined in my apartment for two months. I live in Paris and have lived only what everyone has lived. With the good fortune that my children no longer live with me and that we were able to lead an almost normal domestic life while working remotely. I sadly thought of those in Paris, who lived together with children in little rooms, whom I saw at the end of the street lining up early in the morning in front of the supermarkets while respecting the 1m distance.

Feeding at home. This concerns the inhabitant and we have gradually seen a polarization of consumption towards proximity -the grocer of the street- and mass distribution and e-commerce. This is a change and many changes are expected about that.

Education at home. We know that some children has dropped out because it was impossible to learn in the living conditions in which they were. In the Seine Saint-Denis, a district with a large number of social housing including large families, adolescents could not remain cloistered at home all day. They found themselves in the breathing space of the dwelling that constitutes the entrances of buildings. Engendering conflicts with neighbors as with the police. At the same time, the virus has circulated more than elsewhere and has accentuated the already very strong social disparities with other territories.