



2023, November the 30<sup>th</sup>

## EMILIO AMBASZ RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE IN SYSTEMIC DESIGN FROM THE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF TURIN (IT)

Emilio Ambasz, a figure of excellence in the world's design culture and bearer of an extraordinary contribution to the history of contemporary architecture and design, will receive an Honorary Degree from the Polytechnic University of Turin. The ceremony at the end of November in the Hall of Honour of the Valentino Castle, accompanied by a very special exhibition and the world short premiere of the film *Green over Grey Emilio Ambasz*.

Turin (IT) - On Thursday, November 30, 2023, in the Hall of Honor of the Valentino Castle, in the presence of the Rector of the Polytechnic of Turin Guido Saracco, the vice-director of the Department of Architecture and Design Silvia Barbero and the coordinator of the College of Design, Cristian Campagnaro, the ceremony for the conferral of the 'Aurelio Peccei' Honorary Degree in Systemic Design will be held to Emilio Ambasz.

After the institutional greetings, the entry into the community of the Department of Architecture and Design of the Politecnico will be introduced by the laudatio of Sergio Pace and illustrated by the motivation of Elena Dellapiana, promoters of the initiative.

Professor Pace will focus on Ambasz's complex and multifaceted



personality, highlighting the different aspects of his activity as a designer, storyteller, intellectual, curator; Professor Dellapiana will underline Ambasz's contribution to an innovative idea of design, deepening the aspects of his systemic design close to that proposed by the Turin school.

At the end of the speeches and before the Lectio Magistralis by Emilio Ambasz, a fragment of the film *Green over Grey* Emilio Ambasz, by Francesca Molteni and Mattia Colombo (Muse Factory of Projects, 2023) will be screened as a world premiere.

Emilio Ambasz, Argentine by birth and cosmopolitan in life, is one of the most extraordinary design figures in the history of architecture and design at different scales.

Recognized and celebrated all over the world as the 'father, poet and prophet of green architecture', Ambasz has become a refined interpreter of a message of reconciliation between the natural realm and the artificial world, a pioneer of a much-vaunted (today) green architecture with award-winning ideas, solutions and achievements which, decades later, remain at the center of the debate of poetics and the design discipline. His philosophy, inspired by *Green over the grey*, has been able to influence some of the most famous names in contemporary architecture, from Renzo Piano to Jean Nouvel, and Tadao Ando.

Inventor and creator of objects of great scope, surprising variety and exceptional success all over the planet – his objects are in homes, offices and streets on every continent – Ambasz has also



conducted his own personal research in the field of industrial and mechanical design for the development of components and products from which an incredible sequence of ideas was born, result of more than 220 industrial patents in his name.

Ambasz: "My concern – what I've always pursued – has always been to invent prototypes."

During the ceremony, Ambasz's role as curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art of New York (MoMA) will be remembered, where, among other things, he organized the extraordinarily successful exhibition Italy: the new domestic landscape (1972) bringing Italian design objects to the world stage. On the occasion of the ceremony, a pop-up exhibition will be set up in the Hall of Honor of the Valentino Castle, curated by Elena Dellapiana and Alberto Serra, which brings together a selection of about fifty objects presented at the time, as well as hosting some objects signed by Ambasz himself as evidence of his vision of the industrial product.

MoMA, which in recent weeks with the exhibition Emerging Ecologies has finally opened up to an important reflection on the evolution of the relationship between architecture and the environmental movement, thanks to the impetus of the Emilio Ambasz Institute for the joint study of the built and natural environment, born within the museum in 2020 thanks to an important and generous donation from the Legacy Emilio Ambasz Foundation (LEAF).



MoMA again, which, like the Metropolitan Museum (NY), includes in its permanent collection the Vertebra chair (1975) - the first automatic ergonomic chair in the world, developed with G. Piretti -, from which a new industry was born for the entire sector (Compasso d'Oro of 1981), its 3-D Geigy Graphics poster and its Flashlights lamp.

Iconic works, innovative objects, international awards, authorship and curatorship are part of a design uniqueness, a creative flair, a moral commitment and an environmental sensitivity at the heart of the motivations that will be expressed. In addition to a strong knowledge and interaction with the world of industrial processes, combined with a great sensitivity towards the principles of human well-being, which characterize the character of Ambasz: an architect respectfully immersed in the environment in which he operates, a designer and inventor able to combine inventiveness, innovation, production and aesthetics, a curator capable of operating a synthesis between dream and reality, intellectual trait d'union between radicalism and academia.

Emilio Ambasz: "I always believed that designing, that is, inventing, is an act of the imagination that generates myths. I am convinced that the real task of architecture begins once the functional and behavioural needs have been met. It is not hunger, but love and fear – and sometimes wonder – that drive us to create. The cultural and social context of the architect and designer is constantly



changing, but their task, I believe, remains the same: to invent and give poetic form to the pragmatic."

"For me," says Ambasz, "architecture corresponds with the search for a spiritual home. On the one hand, I play with concrete elements that belong to my time, such as technology. My work is nothing more than a research aimed at giving architectural forms to primordial things. My projects have to do with existence on an emotional, passionate, and essential level. I'm interested in passion and emotion when they take on a seemingly timeless guise."

An honorary member of the American Institute of Architects and the Royal Institute of British Architects, Ambasz has won an impressive list of international awards and recognitions. Important solo exhibitions have been dedicated to him all over the world, from the MoMA in New York (2 times) to the Triennale in Milan (2 times), to the Reina Sofia in Madrid, passing through Tokyo, Geneva, Bordeaux, Zurich, Chicago, Philadelphia, Mexico City, San Diego, Saint Louis. Also holder of 4 Compasso d'Oro awards (1981, 1991, 2001, 2020 – the last for Lifetime Achievement), he was appointed Commander 'Star of Merit of the Italian Republic' in 2014, for "his contributions to Italian culture".

Graduated HC in Building Engineering – Architecture in 2021 at the Alma Mater University of Bologna, in November 2023 he obtained – for the first time for a non-Italian figure – the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Italian National Institute of Architecture-IN/Arch, after having obtained, in September 2023, the IN/Arch Veneto



(regional) Lifetime Achievement Award, also awarded for the first time to a foreign citizen.

A part of the long list of international awards is available on Emilio Ambasz's Wikipedia page

### **Press**

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