

Category: Circular Design

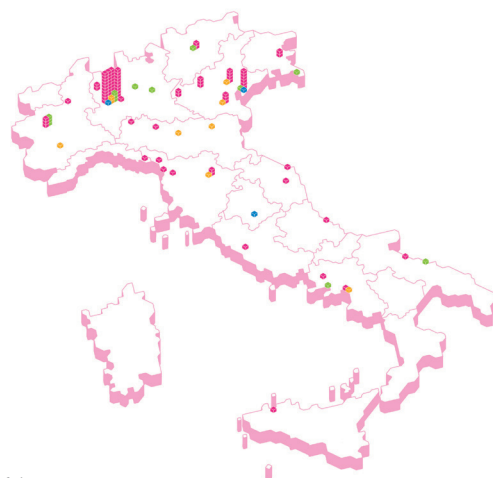
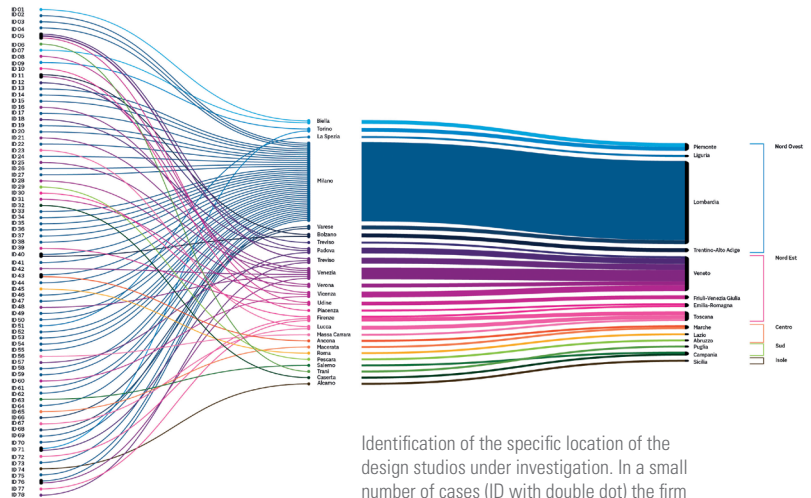
Project: Italian Circular Design Maps

What was the challenge?

This work aims to enhance, to raise awareness, to provide a census and a useful tool for the real pervasiveness of the application of the many different Circular Design Strategies among Italian Designers of products and services. In Italy, the literature on the subject has focused on the raw materials chains and recycling as well as on Company Best Practices but not on what designers are doing. To fill this gap in 2021-22, we carried out the Italian Circular Design Maps research at the Università Iuav di Venezia: a census of designers who explicitly deal with the Circular Economy in Italy and a survey on the most widely used design strategies. The research contributes to understand the elements of both technicality and critical reflection on circular and regenerative processes that designers, specifically those who are paying particular attention to environmental issues, are using in their profession. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the radical transformation of design practices connected to the revolution in consumption habits and behaviour. Are designers already acting in this way? Are they prepared for this shift towards circular and regenerative processes? How deep is their understanding of the different strategies concerning this transformation?

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Geographical map of the design studios under investigation.

What was the solution?

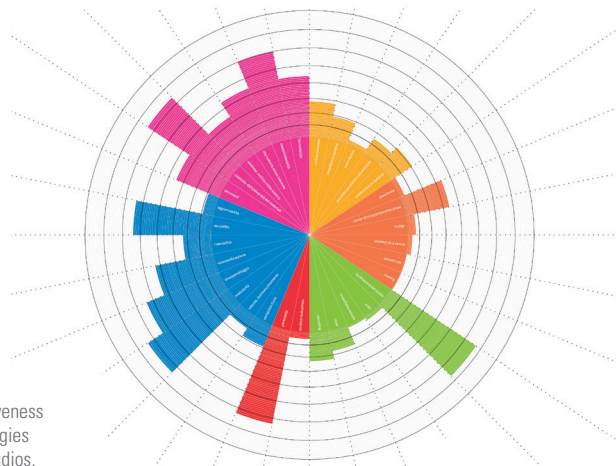
The research work highlighted some substantial issues with regard to technicality of design and its influence on the success of Circular Economy Innovation Processes.

A survey made it possible to identify a sample of about 100 designers, of which 78 product designers whose activity proved to be of particular interest. After an assessment of their geographical distribution and subsequent mapping with specific infographics, an analysis of the use of a 32 Circular Design Strategies Matrix was carried out. Among the 78 cases identified, 10 were selected for a long interview for the quality and depth of their approach to the themes of circularity and, then, for their distribution over the Italian territory, the variety of sectors in which they operate, and the originality and quantity of strategies adopted. The results obtained in the various stages of the research have been summarised in a series of infographics; these represent the point of convergence of all the data, considerations and reflections gathered during the research and offer a concise indication of the pervasiveness of the design strategies characteristic of Circular Design.

What was the effect?

The research result was a book with infographics and texts and 10 video interviews useful to deepening the Circular Design Thinking and the Circular Strategies adopted by the Italian Designers. Furthermore, the Circular Design Strategies Matrix, made of 32 issues, offers a guide to those other designers that want to deepen their knowledge of Circular Design and gives them a checklist for their work. The book thus proves the effectiveness of infographics as a tool for understanding the state of the art, on the one hand, and, on the other, as a stimulus to show and to use all the design strategies aimed at the real transition to the Circular Economy.

In 2022 the book was submitted to a peer review of the Università luav di Venezia that verified the quality of the research methodology and the effectiveness by increasing interest in these issues. As a result, the Italian Circular Design Maps was published in 2023 in the n. 40 – Revolutions of the Italian magazine Officina (also peer reviewed). In these pages we present some examples of the book pages and infographics.



Insight into the pervasiveness of circular design strategies in 78 product design studios.

