Leftloft presents

DESIGN IS A VERB

a film by Leftloft

with:
Thierry Brunfaut [BASE DESIGN, Brussels-New York-Geveva]
George Eid [AREA 17, New York-Paris]
Christian Haas [Raffinerie, Zurich]
Pascal Soboll [Daylight Design, San Francisco-Seoul-Munich]
Giacomo Spazio [Milan]
Astrid Stavro [Design by Atlas, Palma de Mallorca-New York]
Anette Væring [Mindlab, Copenaghen]
Hans Wolbers [Lava Design, Amsterdam-Beijing]

narrating voice
Marta Lunetta

(Italy 2017, col. DCP, 60’)

www.designisaverb.leftloft.com

with the support of
La Triennale di Milano

press office
press@leftloft.com | +39 335 6857707
THE TEAM

a Leftloft production

with the support of
La Triennale di Milano

idea by
Leftloft
with Fulvio Lombardi
and Marco Longo

written by
Eleonora Marangoni

directed by
Leftloft

filmmakers
Marco Longo and Fulvio Lombardi

photography
Fulvio Lombardi

camera operator
Simone Mazzoleni

sound designer
Manuel Paradiso

set designer
Alessandra Elettra Badoino

editing
Perla Sardella

music
non-pellegrino

FEATURING

Thierry Brunfaut - Base Design
George Eid - AREA 17
Christian Haas - Raffinerie AG für Gestaltung
Pascal Soboll - Daylight Design
Giacomo Spazio
Astrid Stavro - Design by Atlas
Anette Væring - Mindlab
Hans Wolbers - Lava Design

narrating voice
Marta Lunetta

with the friendly participation of the artists
Daniele Innamorato
Federica Perazzoli
SYNOPSIS

“Design is a Verb” is research in the form of a film: a story which revolves around a project and the formative journey of a young designer who expresses doubts, questions, responsibilities and desires that define the identity of a profession. His thoughts cross the city – where “everything is communication,” – study and workplaces, to progressively change scenario, discovering nature and arriving at the sea. Accompanying him on this journey are the responses of those who do the same job successfully in other parts of the world – the exponents of some of the most accomplished design studios who have built their history and gained their results by asking the same questions. The film ends with the desire for a new beginning.

DIRECTION NOTES

“Planning has to do with something you do not know because it does not exist yet. It has to do with the future.”

After twenty years of work, some of the reflections born from Leftloft’s history and its think tank – LUFT – are merged into a film: research around the project that engages with and arises from the thought of international designers who constitute a reference and a constellation of meaning. What are the boundaries of design and how do they change in change? It can be said that design is the “work of the century,” but how do you become and remain a good designer? And what will the design studios of the future be like? The film gives voice to these questions through a young designer, who is like so many young people who work or have worked in Milan and who have been formed in the studio. “Design is a Verb” is a film about the project’s concreteness, about it being action above and beyond the final result. Leftloft begins from the consideration that image society attaches importance to design, but not to designers, who are seemingly absent from public debate. We are in the design era, but not in the era of designers. Awareness of the continual change of the world makes us reflect on
the boundaries and possible contaminations of design practice in order to make it more useful and effective.
The journey – made up of reflections and conversations between Leftloft and eight designers chosen from the panorama of independent design – has highlighted the value of every choice that is made. In fact, planning is to choose. Each project grows in its context in a manner which is both organic and discontinuous. Only a real immersion combined with a capacity for disconnection can contribute, more than the predefined roles, to building a common and shared design path. The studios of the future would work with clients and not just for them. The groups of designers best able to interpret this mode could leave a mark, and today, like yesterday, is a perfect time to start.
With nearly a thousand active projects, Leftloft has begun to imagine its next twenty years in a society that has changed deeply since 1997 and will change more and more rapidly.

If the base question remains the same – how can we change the world? – potentialities have grown, but the path is also more articulate and complex. Thus, in 2016, LUFT was born – an internal think-tank for the studio seeking multidisciplinary alliances, and engaging with as well as sharing analysis and goals with designers from other areas. In the same year, the first edition of TOUCHPOINT co-design experiments (May-September 2016) was held – a calendar of appointments devoted to exploring design perspectives and involving 30 international designers, 100 students and over 2,000 visitors. “Design is a Verb” is a first story of these experiences, and it is to listen to even more than to look at.
INTERVIEWS


Base is a leading international branding firm, specializing in brand strategy and identity, with headquarters in Brussels, New York, and Geneva. We do not design for designers. We design for people is one of the points of his manifesto. Among its customers, in twenty years of activity, celebrated with a great party at MoMA: JFK Terminal 4 NY, be.brussels, Meatpacking district NY, Pantone NY, MoMA NY, Fondation Louis Vuitton Paris, The Olympic Museum, Caran d'Ache, Adidas. Thierry co-founded Base in 1996 with his friends Juliette Cavenaile, Dimitri Jeurissen, Marc Panero and Geoff Cook. Though leading BaseBrussels, Thierry today oversees all important strategic and conceptual issues within Base. He believes in the power of creative autonomy mixed with teamwork and pleasure. Thierry has led landmark Base projects including MoMA QNS. He is the author the “5-minute poster series”, creating 50 typographic works, each dedicated to a short bit of wisdom on design. Thierry is also professor at La Cambre's Visual Communication, Brussels.

George Eid [AREA 17, New York–Paris]

AREA 17 is a digital product agency with studios in Paris and New York. The agency plans, creates and grows digital products for clients of all sizes, placing a strong emphasis on craft in every detail from design to code. The agency is independently owned and creatively motivated. George Eid is one of three partners of AREA 17. In 2003, he founded the agency in New York, and opened opened the Paris studio in 2006. He began designing and coding websites in 1994 and for much of his career, he worked as a creative director at digital agencies. With degrees in art and theatre, he is a strong believer in the power of the ensemble.

Christian Haas [Raffinerie, Zurich]

Christian Haas, born 1974 in Kimberley South Africa, is a Creative Director who works at Raffinerie AG für Gestaltung in Zurich. He has gained a profound expertise in the fields of Identity and Editorial Design. Together with a 18-member-team and his partners, he has been working successfully for clients such as SWISS
Int. Air Lines, UBS, Pro Helvetia, FREITAG, Solothurner Filmtage, das Magazin and Kunsthaus Zürich. The projects have been awarded with the BCP-Award, the Best of Show Award at the European Design Awards, ADC New York, Germany and Switzerland, 100 Beste Plakate and were exhibited at TDC Tokyo, the Beijing International Design Triennial and the International Poster Festival in Chaumont. Whenever Christian finds a moment to relax he loves to place a bet against his mate Nenad or play a round of Mini-Golf with his sons.

Pascal Soboll [Daylight Design, San Francisco-Seul-Munich]

Daylight is an innovation consultancy that uses human-centered design to drive impact with offices in San Francisco, Seoul and Munich. We create meaningful experiences through digital media, physical products, social innovation, brand and strategy. We combine design thinking with powerful interdisciplinary design skills to create compelling solutions and effective strategies for our clients and to help organizations to evolve. We enjoy complex challenges and we love to explore uncharted territory.

Daylight Design was founded in 2007 by ex-leaders from IDEO in order to return to doing what they love: rolling up their sleeves and driving design- and innovation projects forward with purpose, focus and intent. Pascal is Managing Director of Daylight Design Europe. Prior to joining Daylight, Pascal spent 15 years at IDEO, where he last led Europe’s ‘Systems and Service’ domain.

He is fascinated by using design as a tool to advance our society in the areas of mobility, energy, digitization and education and is a regular speaker on these topics. A self-confessed car nut, Pascal formerly held jobs ranging from car design (Opel) to combustion research (Daimler). Pascal holds degrees in physics and in product design.

Giacomo Spazio [Milan]

Giacomo Spazio is an Italian artist, graphic designer, music producer, publisher, and journalist, who has been part of the Italian underground culture for over 40 years. In 1975, he started writing poetical phrases on the walls of his native Milan and performs between Milan and London, both alone and with the group “Poesia Metropolitana”. He is one of the first Italian artists to work on the street (1975–1987), being an avant-garde in years of the Italian Street Art movement. In the mid-1980s, Spazio got involved with the punk and indie-rock culture and even founded the punk(art)rock band called “2+2=5” in 1982, with whom he recorded 3 records. He also took part in several other bands before finally going solo. In 1983, with Ermanno Gomma Guarnieri, Spazio established the first Italian company that distributed counter-culture punk material – the UT distribution. Also, he was among the founders of the magazine Decoder, as well as the founder of the music magazines Vinile and Vox Pop.
Astrid Stavro [Design by Atlas, Palma de Mallorca-New York]

Astrid Stavro (born 1972) is an Italian graphic designer based in Barcelona. Born in Trieste, she grew up in the city of Madrid, Spain. She studied graphic design at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design and the Royal College of Art, London. Her Art of the Grid project, developed with Birgit Pfisterer at the Royal College of Art, has gathered international recognition and numerous awards. In 2005 she founded Studio Astrid Stavro, specialising in typography and editorial design. Her approach to book design is based on strong attention to conceptual and tactile details.

Anette Vaering [Mindlab, Copenhagen]

Anette Vaering is a senior Project Manager and Designer at MindLab, a cross-governmental development office in Copenhagen, which involves citizens and businesses in creating new solutions for society. Anette is experienced in involving users in various development processes and as a presenter and facilitator for both big and small groups. She is in particular interested in helping forming the right questions from the very start, creating concepts and prototypes and to present sustainable results as inspiring and involving as possible. Beside working on projects Anette is responsible for MindLabs visual appearance including the interior of MindLab, how to present cases and methods, films about MindLabs work, etc. Anette has advised the government of Brazil on setting up an user driven innovation lab in Brasilia, both regarding the design of the space and the content for their work. She has worked on a number of events hosted by MindLab, both big international seminars on public design, morning talks on various inspirational topics and executive events.

Hans Wolbers [Lava Design, Amsterdam-Beijing]

Hans Wolbers (1965) is founder and creative director of Lava Design with offices in Amsterdam and Beijing. From the very start in 1990 Lava is one of the leading dutch design agencies. Wolbers started innovating design principles in editorial design and trained his staff to work as visual journalists. After being awarded Art Director of the year in 1999 Wolbers opened up the scope of the studio towards Identity Design. He brought editorial thinking principles into Identity design thinking, and changed the approach to identity design radically. Lava is the inventor of the term Dynamic Identities. Besides design projects Wolbers regularly teaches and conduct workshops. Lava was awarded European Design Agency of 2010, and soon after it opened an office in Beijing. In 2017 a new office will open in Los Angeles.
THE NARRATING VOICE – Marta Lunetta

Born in Palermo, she began studying at the Teatro Stabile Biondo and working as an actress for television. After the television experience she resumes her theatrical journey, studying at Paolo Grassi in Milan and graduating in 2013. Here she has the opportunity to study under, among others, Kuniaki Ida, Maria Consagra, Giampiero Solari and Maurizio Schmidt. Among her working experiences in theatre are those of Schmidt and Massimo Navone, for the video with the artists Adrian Paci and Roland Sejko. In 2013 she joined the collective Kokoschka Revival, which focuses its research on genetic contamination – theatrical, musical and performative.

THE ARTIST’S STUDIO – Federica Perazzoli and Daniele Innamorato

Born in 2000, Kings is the artistic project that flanks Federica Perazzoli and Daniele Innamorato’s individual artistic paths. It is not simply a duo but the founding nucleus around which artists and creatives revolve – as if in a new Factory – in a work that spans the most diverse expressions and techniques, privileging photography and neon, overcoming the boundaries of installation, until the publication of self-produced fanzines.

THE TROUPE

During film production, in all its productive and creative stages, a group of filmmakers composed of Marco Longo, Fulvio Lombardi, Simone Mazzoleni, Manuel Paradiso, Perla Sardella, Alessandra Elettra Badoino and Marco Pellegrino and based in Milan, collaborated with Leftloft during all the productive and creative stages of film production. Their individual and collective work, which crosses cinema, advertising, and new media, and covering all the skills of the audiovisual project, is aimed at the reconquering of a look at the identitarian relationship between person, environment and territory. “Design is a Verb” is their first documentary together.
Leftloft is an independent studio where ideas, people, and skills converge to develop a wider vision for design, culture, and communication. Established in 1997 in Milan by Andrea Braccaloni, Francesco Cavalli, Bruno Genovese and David Pasquali, the studio opened an office in New York, in 2009, and now operates with a team of designers, each specialized in various fields, from branding to web design. Leftloft has developed projects locally and internationally collaborating with some of the most important Italian companies and institutions. The studio has also opened Luft, a think tank devoted to developing a creative thinking and a collaborative production through design. Main activities include: identity/research/concept/strategy/art direction/narrative. Leftloft’s projects have been awarded among others by, D&AD Award, ED-Awards, ADI Design Index, Laus Award, Creative Review Annual, TDC Annual, ID Annual Design Review. During the film production Leftloft’s team was made by: Alessandro Papini, Alessia Ghitta, Alex Calcetelli, Andrea Braccaloni, Andrea Pavan, Anna Gialluca, Anna Weckerle, Aurelie Langlet, Beatrice Cattedra, Beatrice D’Agostino, Bruno Genovese, Catarina Ferreira, David Pasquali, Eleonora Marangoni, Emidio Torre, Filippo Donisi, Francesca Cianfarini, Francesco Cavalli, Francesco Di Gravina, Francesco Villa, Gabriele Donini, Gianluca Pirotta, Giulia Tumaini, Giulio Ferrarella, Huiling Li, Maite Rodriguez, Roberta Cramarossa, Susanna Allegri, Valeria Rizzo.