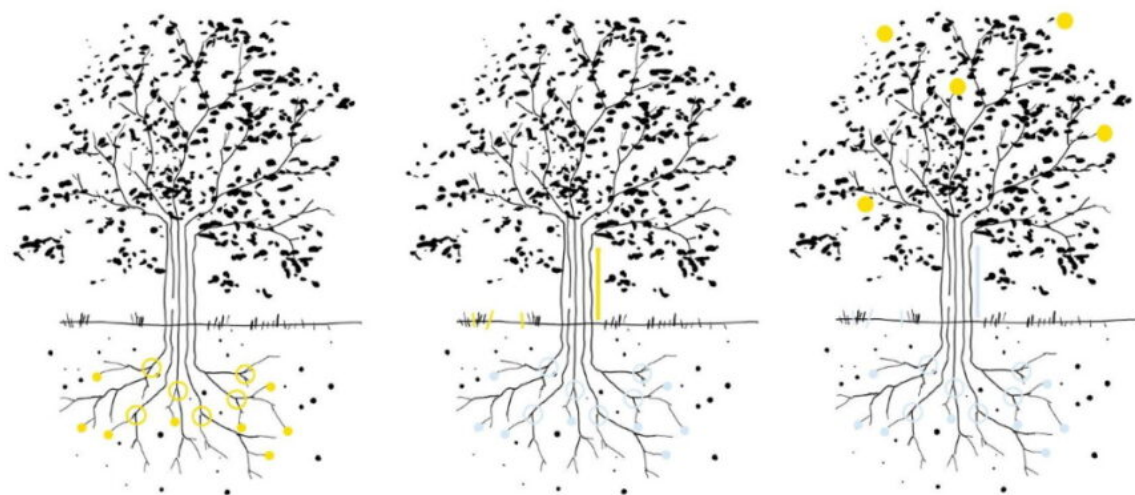




New European Bauhaus: architecture at the centre

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The European Program unites 27 states and 450 million inhabitants in the search for a common horizon also through an identity of building

New European Bauhaus: from the name, ambitious and strongly evocative, you can get the **deeper identity of the European program** which, for the first time with such intensity, **puts architecture at the center**. In the background, a community of 27 states and 450 million inhabitants looking for a common horizon (among the Recovery Plan's huge funds, the Brexit wound, the never dormant nationalist impulses and various walls, physical and virtual, which seem ready to be built) also through an identity of building.

'The New European Bauhaus combines the big vision of the European Green Deal with tangible change on the ground. Change that improves our daily life and that people can touch and feel, in buildings, in public spaces, but also in fashion or furniture. The New European Bauhaus aims at creating a new lifestyle that matches sustainability with good design, that needs less carbon and that is inclusive and affordable for all'. The words by **Ursula von der Leyen**, President of

the Commission, focus the **goal of a program** with the merit of placing the topic of architectural transformations within the broader framework of ecological transition, and at the same time clearing issues – often, erroneously, intended as too specialistic – to the general public. It's the reason that justifies a wide use of adjectives and makes tolerable the **adoption of a non-trivial name for architectural culture**, such as Bauhaus.

'Shaping more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive forms of living together' is the subtitle. The word 'beautiful' is chosen as the common denominator: *'Beautiful means inclusive, accessible spaces where the dialogue between diverse cultures, disciplines, genders and ages becomes an opportunity to imagine a better place for all. It also means a more inclusive economy, where wealth is distributed and spaces are affordable. Beautiful means sustainable solutions that create a dialogue between our built environment and the planet's ecosystems. It means to realise regenerative approaches inspired by natural cycles that replenish resources and protect biodiversity. Beautiful means enriching experiences that respond to needs beyond our material dimension, inspired by creativity, art and culture. It means appreciating diversity as an opportunity to learn from each other'.*

The path to reach this "beauty" **consists of some steps**, the realization of which is financed with an important amount of about **85 million euros**, to testify the role that the European Commission give to New European Bauhaus as a factor able to build the European identity. In these months, **the first phase, about 1 year long, is the so-called design-phase**, structured in various moments, even heterogeneous, of meetings, debates, collection of examples of good practices, with the awarding of some prizes, we write about in another article. The **next one**, which opens now, is an even **more ambitious attempt**: synthesizing approaches and references collected and making them new building "materials" to be applied in some **pilot projects that the European Commission will implement** (among these one could be in Italy).

The image that the New European Bauhaus communication team offers is a tree that grows from the roots of the first phase. While the **last moment, from 2023 onwards, is the dissemination phase**: the fruits grown on this tree are the new identity of European architecture, capable of "going beyond" the limits of good practice becoming widespread and shared practice.

The partial brief of the start-up phase is an unpredictable fervor which, albeit in a very heterogeneous and perhaps contradictory way in some outcomes, von der Leyen herself

remarked in the annual State of the Union Address: *'Or take the New European Bauhaus that led to an explosion of creativity of architects, designers, engineers across our Union'.*

Official website: https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_en

Interview with Elisa Ferreira and Mariya Gabriel

The **ceremony for the New European Bauhaus Awards** was the topical moment of a stage, not the conclusion of a journey. **Il Giornale dell'Architettura's participation in the event at the Art Nouveau building of Les Ateliers des Tanneurs in Brussels** was the occasion for an in-depth reading of objectives and ambitions. Starting from the words by the Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, **Elisa Ferreira**: *'Through its transdisciplinary and participatory approach, the New European Bauhaus reinforces the role of local and regional communities, industries, innovators and creative minds that work together to improve our quality of life. Cohesion policy will transform new ideas into action at the local level. The incredible level of participation shows the quantity and quality of great ideas and talents that must be stimulated to make our regions, cities and villages more sustainable, beautiful and inclusive places to live. The awards will also serve as inspiration to create, innovate and disseminate better living conditions for all. The future is now'.*

We had a dialogue with **Mariya Gabriel** – Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth: *'By bridging science and innovation with art and culture, and taking a holistic approach, the New European Bauhaus will create solutions that are not only sustainable and innovative, but also accessible, affordable, and life-enhancing for us all'.*

How do you judge the participation of European designers to the first phase? *'I was amazed by the enthusiasm, professionalism and creativity contained in the excellent projects presented. I am also happy that so many young people joined the Prizes. Winning projects demonstrate that by combining art, education, research and innovation we can build sustainable, inclusive and accessible environments'.*

Are these projects also an answer to the needs of post-pandemic cities? *'Just partially. New European Bauhaus main ambition is to reconnect architecture with nature, looking for sustainable solutions for the whole planet. All the projects presented for the Prizes were a very good and intense message: they take into account education, innovation and the idea of a new form of community. The pandemic experience was negative because of the isolation. For sure*

we can take some useful lessons from Covid-19 but we need to forget this phase and to design in terms of beauty'.

Can the New European Bauhaus be seen as a new movement? *'For sure. Architectural style is a very important argument because it plays a fundamental role. We want this program can help designers and institutions to think about circular economy, about construction material, about energy efficiency of our building. As well we need a stronger integration of the discipline. New architects have to work side-by-side with innovators, with startups, with artists, with simple normal people coming from everywhere because they can propose new and unexpected solutions. In this line New European Bauhaus is not only about beauty and sustainability of our building. But it's also about accessibility to architectural issues'.*

Italy is among the countries that have contributed with more intensity to the Awards. *'I think it's a very good signal coming from Italy. We register a strong participation as well as a good quality level, winning some categories, also in "Rising stars" section'.*

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