

**Mediterranean cultural network to promote
creativity in the arts, crafts and design for
communities' regeneration in historical
cities / MEDNETA**

Florence SWOT seminar Report

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**ISIA***Firenze*

MedNeta project - Florence, September 11, 2014 - Casa della Creatività (the House of Creativity) - SWOT seminar report

The main aim of the seminar was to introduce the Florentine stakeholders involved in the project to the participants and to acquire the various points of view of ISIA representatives (the host partner).

Stefano Maria Bettega, ISIA vice director, introduced the seminar, resuming the program of the day and explaining the project.

The main project applicant (NTUA) was represented by Sofia Avgerinou-Kolonia and Aggeliki Demertzi.

They explained the MedNeta project, its contents and objectives. They described the partnerships, the key issues, the field of research, the target groups and the expected results.

Furthermore, they also illustrated the Work Package 4 (SWOT Seminar); lastly Aggeliki Demertzi introduced the results of previous SWOT seminars held in Tunis, Valencia, Beirut and Hebron.

Sabrina Sguanci (ARTEX) and Francesca Mazzocchi (CNA NEXT), as Florentine stakeholders, came after.

First was Sabrina Sguanci to introduce ARTEX Trade Association (<http://www.artex.firenze.it/>). This latter promotes various artisan companies in Tuscany, through the organization of events and projects using new technologies, aimed to preserve the cultural heritage of the artisan art. Sabrina Sguanci also presented some new techniques of 3D Print, new technologies and new nanotechnological materials used by the companies, which are promoted by ARTEX. She dwelt in particular on two projects. The first one, called ARTour, promotes tours among different some handcrafted activities well representing Tuscan territory. ARTour (<http://toscana.artour.it/>) is also promoted online through a web site that collects all the activities involved. On the other hand, the second one shows how to create a direct link between the artisan and a foreign shop, so avoiding the expensive costs of mediation.

Francesca Mazzocchi's introduction to the CNA NEXT activities then followed. CNA NEXT (<http://www.cnanext.it/>) is part of the CNA confederation, its specific aim is to spread and promote the activities of young artisans and entrepreneurs operating in Italy.

It promotes 4,000 artisan companies in Tuscany and has the perspective to create a unique profession that includes the capabilities of both the artisan and the maker, by unifying the know-how of the artisan and the use of new

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technologies of the maker. Francesca Mazzocchi talked about the CNA vision of the SWOT scheme related with the figure of the artisans: points of strength are represented by creativity, heritage, know how, adaptability and historical period of redemption, while weaknesses are represented by the culture of secrecy and the lack of knowledge of new ways of communication and new techniques. New opportunities may emerge just from the collaboration between artisans and makers. The artisans don't affect the evolution of the world, so the biggest threat is posed by losing of the know-how to do things. Francesca Mazzocchi introduced some companies that collaborate with CNA NEXT, among which she particularly mentioned "LOFOIO".

Mattia Sullini (FabLab Florence and LOFOIO) introduced LOFOIO (<http://www.lofo.io/>). It is an open space that welcomes co-workers, where artisans, makers, designers and creative individuals, working together, can share tools, instruments and know-how. To this end LOFOIO organizes seminars and courses for many kind of arts and crafts.

Carlo Francini, representative of UNESCO (<http://unesco.comune.fi.it/>) in Florence, spoke about the concept of the square, that is one of the main places of social living in Florence and that must be preserved by its deterioration. It shall be used as commercial tool or crossroad between the Florentine culture and the foreign expectations. Carlo Francini brought some examples of the previous projects made in Santa Croce, one of the most welcoming Florentine squares.

Mauro Cozzi, professor at ISIA, introduced the theme of living the city of Florence from the point of view of Michelucci, one of the most important architects, urban planners and thinkers of the 20th century. He underlined the importance of the city as an "organic" creature, where different arts and works must to be connected each other in order to create the culture of the place, where the people lives. Florence is losing the tools of the creativity, like many artisan laboratories and wood shops that were located around Piazza della Passera, a little square in the centre of Florence. Mauro Cozzi eventually underlined the inactiveness of Florence, whose potentialities are underemployed and where the people do not convey the Florentine culture through the work. One of the solutions could be represented by a smart and efficient restoration of the urban fabric.

The last speech has been delivered by professor Giuseppe Furlanis, ISIA director. The title of the presentation is "Genius Loci", that means "the real soul of a place", a guardian of its identity. This speech was mainly linked to the previous one delivered by prof. Cozzi, and it highlighted the problem of the losing identity thanks to the foreign

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products. He brought examples of other cultures that express themselves through the design (e.g. Dutch geometries with Rietveld, Milan middle class with Giò Ponti or Naples with Danisi) and/or the use of materials (e.g. Venetian murano glass, Carrara marble). According to this vision Florence rises the problem of cultural identity, by becoming more and more only a selling point for multinational companies and Chinese manufactories. The crowd of objects present in the city market makes up the image and identity of the city as viewed by foreigners. The problem of the Florence's identity is strictly linked with that factor. That's why young Florentine people should take back their city and its squares.

The core of the project is to recreate the identity that supports the art, craft and design activities and to find a unique language linking the different partners of the MedNeta project.

In order to let the Mediterranean area become the centre of the world, as it used to be before, it is necessary to unify the different populations towards a single and unique aim.

During the same day a guided tour was organised at LOFOIO and all participant of the MedNeta project took part at the opening ceremony of SOURCE, self-made design exhibition (Firenze, 11-18 September 2014).

In the evening the round table "Designer, artisan and maker: new productive horizons" took finally place at the Limonaia of Villa Strozzi. Introduced by Eva Parigi, its main topic was "contamination": among the others, Enrico Bassi, Valia Barriello, Lorenzo Damiani, Alessio Sarri e Paolo Ulian, there discussed about the possibility that different approaches could give birth to a new deal in the field of the art and design.

12 IX 2014 09:30 -> 11:00

A guided tour to the showroom of ARTEX took place on the 12 of September, there was a debate with Sabina Sguanci, the responsible of research and innovation. The debate talked about the development of the artistic handicraft in Tuscany.

The seminar was useful to clarifying the project pathway and its salient issues can be resumed as follows:

1. To promote a linked cooperation of artisans and makers.
2. To use the squares as places of the interaction between the people and the host culture.
3. To arise the culture as the fruit of the interaction between the ACD's and the host city.