

Milan, 10 July 2015

With Opening Velasca, the Tower becomes one of the town's meeting and debating venues

**TORRE VELASCA:
THE FIRST REDEVELOPMENT STAGE IS NOW COMPLETE**

The Tower square has been returned to the town and a new space dedicated to exhibitions, meetings and debates on architecture and design opened

The project for the redevelopment of the building combining the need to organize space in a contemporary way with the requirement to preserve a symbol of modern architecture is being studied

For the entire period of the Expo, the Torre Velasca square will be revitalized and returned to public use through *Opening Velasca*: a new "place that is not a place" between architecture and design open to the city of Milan, where visitors can stop and share a space and an architecture that, over the years, has promoted a major international cross-cultural debate between architecture, engineering and the arts.

A new work of Urban Design expertly interpreted by Piero Lissoni, who has revisited and returned to the community a space in one of the most symbolic places of the city. A new urban garden has, in fact, been created along the entire perimeter of the building under the metal structure designed to support the future scaffolding for the restoration of the Tower exterior. A place where the industrial and crude aesthetics of the scaffold has become a furnishing element, mingling with the sophistication of famous design objects and the green fragrant herbs and tall plants, the natural border of this unexpected oasis of tranquility.

The result is the extraordinary transformation of a frenetic passageway into a space of rest and relaxation, where one can stop, sit and chat, read, get distracted, enjoy a snack; where, by only looking up, you realize that you are in a unique and fascinating place: in the heart of the city, at the foot of one of the symbols of the skyline of Milan.

But *Opening Velasca* also "involves" the interior: inside the Tower a new exhibition space has been opened. It is dedicated to exhibitions, conferences, meetings on architecture and design topics, which will revive the building giving new impetus to the city's cultural debate.

The first event is very prestigious: the space, set up by Piero Lissoni, with Alberico Barbiano Belgiojoso as scientific curator, was inaugurated with an exhibition dedicated to the firm BBPR and the city of Milan, which, as if it were today, covers one of most important cultural periods in the history of the city. The exhibition *Torre Velasca. Storia, architettura e design (Torre Velasca. History, Architecture and Design)*, which will be open every day from 5pm to 9pm, exhibits reproductions of original photos, drawings and some objects through which the architectural value of the Tower is highlighted in relation to the historical context in which it

was conceived. The high quality of the project and materials used for the construction of the Tower, which made it a symbol of innovation in Milan in the 50s, can be re-learned and re-discovered through the exhibition starting today.

Along the entire perimeter of the space, large vertical panels convey the history of the building and of the firm BBPR; drawings, sketches, study models of the first design solutions and the final solution, historical photos of the construction site taken during the building of the Tower and of the interior. On the tables, a selection of the most important industry, and non-specialized, publications (books and magazines) that document the history of Torre Velasca from its origin to the present day, in addition to some original blueprints of the first project submitted to the Municipality of Milan in 1953.

The path of the exhibition, finally, includes a small section dedicated to some design elements that the firm BBPR specifically and exclusively designed for Torre Velasca: the signage element for floor distribution, one of the lamps for the lighting of the building's common areas, the handle used for all interiors (offices and homes), still in production today. You can also see some of the original drawings for these design objects. Moreover, two items of furniture are exhibited: chair and armchair designed by the firm BBPR, still in production. The latter, while not created for the interior of Torre Velasca, are displayed to document the ability of the firm BBPR to deal with wide-ranging aspects of design as early as the 50s: architecture, interior and design.

The outfitting of the top floor of the Tower completes *Opening Velasca*. Piero Lissoni, once again together with leading Italian design companies, has created a space for exclusive events where one can appreciate the unique view from the top of the tower and experience the feeling of living in one of the exclusive apartments of this icon of modern architecture. Another place of great beauty which, together with the urban dynamics of the square, once again shows the centrality of the Tower within the cultural life of Milan.

“Torre Velasca - said Gian Luca Santi, General Manager of Real Estate and Diversified Companies at UnipolSai - is one of our trophy assets that has long been in need of a redesign and relaunch. We have therefore decided to initiate a redevelopment process to return one of the most important buildings of Milan to its citizens and visitors. A contribution of the Unipol Group to Milan in a historical period in which the city offers itself to the world, including through the Expo, as the capital of modernity and culture, values that our Group has always supported and promoted in an ever-evolving cultural environment”.

Torre Velasca is part of *Urban Up*, the real estate redevelopment project of the Unipol Group aiming at enhancing some of the most important buildings in Milan that belong to the Group. With *Opening Velasca*, the Tower, which has been the property of the Unipol Group since 2012, becomes a protagonist of the city of Milan and its future again.

Opening Velasca was sponsored by:

Public Space:

Living Divani for the furniture (Outdoor collection); **Flos** for the lighting products; **Nespoli Vivai** for the creation of Urban Green; **Carnini Irrigazione** for the irrigation system.

Exhibition Space:

Arflex for the furniture elements - BBPR design; **Kerakoll** for the construction of floors, wall coverings and fixtures; **Flos** for the lighting elements of the architecture collection.

Space for Attic Events:

Boffi for the open-view kitchen (show-cooking area) and support kitchen; **Porro** for the living room systems and furniture; **Living Divani** for the upholstered furniture and accessories of the lounge area and for the terrace furniture (Outdoor collection); **Flos** for indoor and outdoor decorative lighting; **Kerakoll** for the construction of floors, wall coverings and fixtures; **Nespoli Vivai** for the creation of the green area.

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