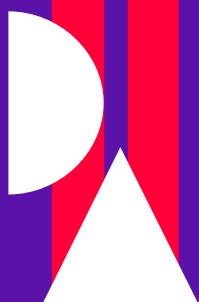


MILANO
DESIGN
WEEK

UNFOLD

2025



DOMUS ACADEMY
MILANO

REAFFIRM DESIGN://reframing design impact

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION - MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2025

Are you ready to push the boundaries of your creativity and showcase your design expertise? Domus Academy invites all Cumulus Member Institutions and their design students to develop projects to participate in the UNFOLD project competition centred around the theme **REAFFIRM DESIGN://reframing design impact**.

While the competition is primarily open to Cumulus members, other design institutions are also encouraged to explore this thought-provoking theme and take part.

The UNFOLD competition will culminate in a 1-day conference and exhibition during Milan Design Week 2025, where students from selected schools will have the opportunity to showcase prototypes and take part in a talk/presentation session discussing their projects.

ABOUT THE TOPIC

The UNFOLD initiative invites students from international design schools to explore the evolving landscape of design under the theme **REAFFIRM DESIGN**. This theme encourages a re-examination of the nature, role, and impact of design in contemporary society. This call serves as a catalyst for a critical examination of design's influence in shaping our environments, societies, and technologies, while being mindful of pressing global issues and the **challenges** of modern life. It seeks to shift the practice's focus from merely creating outputs to considering the real-world impact it produces.

Participants are encouraged to present creative and critical projects that question conventional design paradigms and reflect on the deeper meanings and responsibilities of the practice. By reasserting the importance of design, this initiative seeks to inspire thoughtful and visionary contributions that highlight the discipline's capacity to drive positive change and propose alternative viewpoints that challenge established practices. Through this exploration, students can demonstrate how design can redefine and elevate everyday life.

Participants are encouraged to consider the following directions and interpretations to develop innovative products, services, or solutions that address contemporary challenges: **Design of Resistance**, **Design with Agency**, and **Design for Reappropriation**.

Design of Resistance:

Focus on creating solutions that challenge established norms and stand against societal and environmental pressures. This direction focuses on creating durable, adaptable products and services that empower individuals and communities to question imbalanced power structures, and dominant cultural values. It encourages resilience in the face of challenges and advocates for social justice and a more equitable world. Participants are invited to explore how design can serve as a form of activism or protest against unjust systems, promoting ethical shifts in society.

Design with Agency:

Prioritise the creation of products and services that empower individuals by enhancing their decision-making and action-taking capabilities. This direction emphasises the importance of developing accessible and inclusive solutions that serve diverse audiences, ensuring everyone can cultivate a sense of ownership and autonomy in navigating and influencing their environments. Participants are encouraged to explore how design can democratise access to resources and knowledge, supporting people in making choices that influence outcomes based on their values and goals, and taking action for personal empowerment and societal change.

Design for Reappropriation:

Encourage the revival and recontextualisation of existing products, solutions, and systems, focusing on cultural and social reappropriation. By valuing the significance of local traditions and community identity, this direction prompts participants to transform overlooked or undervalued elements into valuable assets. The goal is to rejuvenate and repurpose these materials and concepts, ensuring they remain relevant and useful in a changing world. This approach integrates local knowledge and cultural values into modern design practices, empowering communities and creating meaningful connections between traditional elements and contemporary aesthetics. The focus is on maintaining the cultural and social significance of reappropriated creations, thereby enhancing local economies and identities.

Let your students demonstrate their creativity and ability to critically assess Design's impact on contemporary society. Express your interest today and lead the way in driving change through REAFFIRM DESIGN!

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND DEADLINES

Step 1 – EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

Schools should send the Expression of Interest form to: events@domusacademy.it by **28th October 2024**.

A Zoom webinar will be held in **early November** to share practical information and address further questions.

By 11th November 2024, Domus Academy will select the Institutions taking part into the project. The accuracy of information submitted will be considered by the committee to make the selection.

Step 2 – IF YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED, START DEVELOPING YOUR PROJECTS

Selected Schools will send confirmation and the signed agreement to Domus Academy by **18th November**.

They will develop projects with their design students responding to the main topics of the competition. In order to guarantee equal time to each Institution we suggest to schedule the academic activity **between 20th November and 27th January**.

By 17th January, Schools will send a document (approx. 300 words + images) with draft projects' abstracts highlighting how they align with the brief and the chosen subtopics.

By 5th February 2025 each Institution should select and submit the best projects that will be prototyped and featured at UNFOLD 2025, during the next Milano Design Week.

Each project should include the following:

- Project Abstract - up to 500 words (excluding references) with title, description, students names, mentors/teachers names, keywords, chosen sub-topics. The project abstract must be sent in PDF or Word format.
- PDF presentation of the project.
- PDF document detailing format of the academic activity developed (workshop, design sprint, curricular activity, etc) and how the project aligns with the brief (about 300 words).
- 5-10 hi-res selected images illustrating the concept.

Step 3 – START PROTOTYPING AND PREPARING FOR EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE

Each Institution will prototype the best projects selected. (Number of prototypes, scale and maximum dimensions will be communicated to participants).

Students, supported by faculty, will prepare a 10-20 minutes talk about their projects, to be given during the 1-day conference.

The talk could be done either by individual student or group of students.

Detailed information about requested projects materials for exhibition and conference will be given to the participants later on.

NOTES

Expression of Interest and projects submission are free.

Domus Academy Milano will cover the costs for UNFOLD 2025 exhibition, conference location, set up plus all the costs related to event planning.

Institutions selected to take part in UNFOLD 2025 will cover the following costs:

- Selected projects' prototypes production and delivery to Milan and back.
- Travel and accommodation expenses for Schools' staff and selected students to be present during the exhibition opening and the 1-day conference.

Copyright for the materials submitted at the time of entry belongs to the authors; Domus Academy may use the submitted work for publicity purposes related to the event.

Projects submitted must have never been published before or submitted for other competitions. In case of projects developed in collaboration with companies, the organiser will not give recognition or visibility to those brands/companies.

MILESTONES

- **28th October**: Deadline to send the Expression of Interest form.
- **11th November**: Domus Academy gives feedback to selected Institutions via email.
- **18th November**: Confirmation and receipt of the signed agreement from the selected Schools.
- **20th November – 27th January**: Selected Institutions work on projects development arranging a dedicated academic activity to address the topic and develop the projects.
- **17th January**: Schools send a draft document (approx. 300 words + images) with projects' abstracts highlighting how they align with the brief and the chosen subtopics.
- **5th February**: Deadline for selected Institutions to send to events@domusacademy.it selected projects that will take part into UNFOLD 2025.
- **5th February – 19th March**: Institutions prototype the selected projects.
- **19th March – 31st March**: Institutions deliver prototypes and materials required to Milan for UNFOLD 2025 Milan Design Week (April 7th-13th). Participants will be given detailed information in advance to arrange the delivery. If the prototypes are brought in person, the deadline will be no later than **April 6th**.

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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Please fill in the data below to express your interest in UNFOLD 2025.

Please send the form by 28th October 2024 to: events@domusacademy.it

Name and Country of the Institution: _____

Name of the Academic(s) that will lead the project: _____

Main contact person – name, surname and email address: _____

Name of Postgraduates Programmes involved in the project: _____

Number of students involved: _____

Academic format intended for developing the project (e.g. workshop format, design sprint, curricular activity, etc.):

List of future-planned or past activities, workshops, events related to the topic of the competition organised by Institutions, if any (please include also links if available):
