

Museum Sustainability. Needs and Opportunities **Promoting museum leadership through an international conference**

A project by

Associazione Culturale Display & Design ETS

Co-organized with the *International Committee of Architecture and Museum Techniques* of the *International Council of Museums*

Curated by *Maddalena d'Alfonso* at the *Fondazione Luigi Rovati* in Milan.

Grounded in the principles of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, *Museum Sustainability: Needs and Opportunities* is the first 2024 initiative promoted by Display & Design ETS and co-organized with ICOM–ICAMT. The project invites museums and cultural institutions to reflect on their role in the transition toward a fairer and more sustainable future.

The key questions remain: *how can change be implemented, and what responsibilities lie with museums?*

The 2024 edition of the conference achieved excellent results, featuring four thematic sessions, numerous speakers, and strong professional participation, while gathering the support of multiple institutions in the field. This success has enabled the launch of a second edition, promoted with Fondazione Cariplo and new partner organizations, to continue sharing innovative insights and visions.

Once again organized with ICOM–ICAMT, Fondazione Cariplo, and the Fondazione Ordine degli Architetti di Milano, the 2025 international conference will offer a renewed platform for discussing the sustainable transition of museums—a process already underway yet still far from systemic transformation. Additional partners will join the event, reflecting the growing interest in the topic.

In a global context marked by environmental crises and resource scarcity, museums and culture play a strategic role: not only as custodians of collections, but as generators of knowledge, wellbeing, and social cohesion. Organizations such as UNESCO, ICOM, and the Council of the EU emphasize the centrality of cultural heritage in building sustainable futures.

The 2025 edition aims to consolidate the conference as an annual landmark event, reintroducing its four core themes and broadening them through new national and international perspectives.

The conference is co-organized with ICOM–ICAMT and in collaboration with the Fondazione Luigi Rovati.

It has received the patronage of the Lombardy Region, the Municipality of Milan, the City of Turin, the Order of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservators of the Province of Milan, and Fondazione Cariplo.

MUSEUMS AND SUSTAINABILITY. NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Fondazione Luigi Rovati, Milan

27 November 2025

9:15 – Institutional Greetings

- Representing Fondazione Luigi Rovati: President Giovanna Forlanelli
- Representing the Department of Culture: Gianfranco Maraniello, Director of the Area of Modern and Contemporary Art Museums – Museo del Novecento
- Representing ICOM–ICAMT: Marina Martin, Board Member, with a presentation of the *ICOM Award for Sustainable Development Practice in Museums*

9:35 – Welcome Address

- Maddalena d’Alfonso, President of Associazione Display & Design ETS

MUSEUMS AND SUSTAINABILITY: NEEDS

(Participation for architects with award of 4 CFP credits)

9:45 – 11:00

SESSION I - Leadership for Change

How museums can effectively guide the sustainable transition at both local and global scale.

Sustainable leadership requires vision, attentive listening, and the ability to activate communities. Museums—spaces for knowledge and dialogue—can effectively guide ecological transition at local and global levels: by narrating environmental challenges, promoting responsible behaviours, testing sustainable management practices, and becoming laboratories of social innovation. Through educational programmes, territorial partnerships, and international networks, museums can transform awareness into shared action, generating long-lasting impact.

Chair:

Patrizia Asproni

With more than twenty years of experience in cultural management and creative industries, she is Cultural Heritage Director for ATI Giunti, President of Confcultura and of the Fondazione Industria e Cultura. Lecturer at LUISS University (Rome) for CSR and cultural marketing, she serves on the boards of Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Ospedale Niguarda, and Fondazione Palazzo Blu (Pisa). She is Scientific Advisor for Valore Italia, Expert for the Horizon Europe Programme Committee – Culture, Creativity and Social Inclusion, and Founder of #Boycottmanels.

She previously served as President of the Fondazione Museo Marino Marini (2016–2022) and of Fondazione Torino Musei (2012–2017), collaborating with numerous nonprofit institutions.

Speakers:

10:00 – 10:15

Angelo Crespi, *The Pinacoteca di Brera Case Study*

General Director of the Pinacoteca di Brera and the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense. Art critic, curator, and cultural manager; former Director of the MAGA Museum in Gallarate and of Palazzo Te in Mantua. He has served on the boards of Triennale Milano and Piccolo Teatro di Milano. Author of several publications on art and museology, he sits on the Scientific Committees of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia and Valore Italia – Scuola di Restauro di Botticino, where he served as President until 2024.

10:15 – 10:30

Marco Edoardo Minoja, *The Fondazione Torino Musei Case*

Cultural manager with interdisciplinary expertise bridging archaeology, heritage management, and cultural leadership. After directing the Department of Culture of the Municipality of Milan, overseeing over twenty museums and exhibition venues, he became Secretary General of Fondazione Torino Musei in 2025, which includes GAM – Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, MAO – Museo d'Arte Orientale, Palazzo Madama, and coordinates Artissima and Luci d'Artista.

10:30 – 10:45

Adele De Vito, *The V&A Museum London, The MET, and the Rijksmuseum*

International expert in Project Management and Organizational Transformation, with over thirty years of experience across cultural, technological, public, manufacturing, and transport sectors. She has trained more than 1,500 professionals and delivered over 200 projects with a 97% success rate. Certified PMP®-PMI, APMG Lean Six Sigma Black Belt, Change Manager Practitioner, AI Specialist. Founder of D.Lab and promoter of the Italian chapter of the Change Management Institute.

11.00 – 13.00

SESSION II - Benefits of Change

Discussing environmental impacts and the economic advantages of small and large sustainable transformations.

Even small-scale changes can generate significant environmental and economic benefits. In museums with strong ties to their territory, adopting sustainable practices reduces ecological impact while supporting local economies. By rethinking spaces, materials, and management practices in dialogue with their context, museums can become active platforms for cultural and environmental development, generating positive effects on local social fabrics and contributing to the protection of natural and social heritage.

Chair:

Guido Guerzoni

Manager, professor at Bocconi University (Milan), and CEO of formules. For thirty years he has specialized in cultural economics, museum management, and exhibition design. He directed the M9 Museum project (2007–2019), served as Technical Advisor for the MUDEM (Banca d'Italia) and is advisor for Intesa Sanpaolo. Contributor to *Il Sole 24 Ore*, GEDI newspapers, and *Il Giornale dell'Arte*.

Speakers:

11:15 – 11:30

Giovanna Forlanelli, *The Fondazione Luigi Rovati Case*

After graduating in Medicine, she pursued a managerial career in the pharmaceutical sector. She co-founded the publishing house Johan & Levi and, in 2016, the Fondazione Luigi Rovati, where she

has been President since 2022. She sits on the Advisory Committee of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and the board of the Fondazione Federico Zeri.

11:30 – 11:45

Jean Hilgersom, *The Kröller-Müller Museum Case*

Architect trained in the Netherlands and Switzerland, currently Project Manager for the museum's expansion. With over 35 years of professional experience, he has been CEO of a consultancy specializing in real estate and project management for cultural infrastructures. Former President of ICOM-ICAMT and current Chair of KiCulture's Supervisory Board.

11:45 – 12:00

Matteo Ferrario, *The Fondazione Zegna Case*

Economist specializing in arts and culture, project manager for Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto, contributor to the archival/museum concept of Casa Zegna. Senior member of the Italian Association of Corporate Heritage Managers.

12:00 – 12:15

Marco Bruni, *The Delta Antico Archaeological Museum Case*

Archaeologist with extensive field experience. Since 2023, Scientific Director of the "Delta Antico" Civic Archaeological Museum of Comacchio, promoting archaeology as a tool for cultural development.

12:30 – Lunch Break

MUSEUMS AND SUSTAINABILITY: OPPORTUNITIES

(Participation for architects with award of 4 CFP credits)

14:00–16:00

SESSION III —Future Scenarios

Perspectives for museums and the possible ethical, symbolic, and territorial implications of the sustainable transition.

Imagining the museums of the future requires rethinking architectural and exhibition spaces through a sustainable lens. Buildings designed or renovated to reduce consumption and emissions, flexible pathways that enhance natural light, and layouts that promote responsible engagement are choices that influence not only environmental impact but also how audiences perceive and experience museums. These interventions generate ethical and symbolic effects, turning space into a message and tangible sign of committed action. At the same time, they create more welcoming, accessible environments capable of offering new forms of cultural experience oriented toward the future.

Chair

Maddalena d'Alfonso

Architect, essayist, and researcher; Associate Professor since 2017 after earning a PhD with distinction in Interior Architecture and Museography. Member of the ICOM-ICAMT Scientific Committee since 2019. She has curated exhibitions such as *Inheriting the Landscape* (2007), *De Chirico and the Feeling of Architecture* (2011), *Il Resto dell'Alba* (2023), and *The Landscape of Rights* (2017), the latter awarded the Medal of the President of the Italian

Republic.

Her publications include *Two Museums by Álvaro Siza* (2009), *How Space Transforms Art and How Art Transforms Space* (2016), and *Warm Modernity* (Red Dot Award 2016). Founder of Md'A Design Agency (2019), specializing in museography, interior design, and architecture; co-founder of Display & Design ETS (2024).

Speakers

14:30 – 14:45

Philippe Chiambaretta, *The Centre Pompidou Massy Case*

Following his scientific and economic training at École des Ponts et Chaussées and MIT, and strategic consulting experience, he directed international operations at Taller de Ricardo Bofill for ten years. He founded PCA-STREAM in 2000, a research-driven architectural agency focused on innovation, future cities, and evolving spatial uses, uniting over 100 multidisciplinary professionals.

14:45 – 15:00

Alessia Salerno, *The Fondazione Prada Case*

Architect trained at Politecnico di Milano with research experiences in Spain and Lebanon. Since 2003 she has worked primarily with Fondazione Prada, serving as Head of Design, Production, and Registration since 2015. She collaborates with leading designers, artists, and institutions on exhibition design and teaches in various Italian and international architecture programs.

15:00 – 15:15

Mauro Acito, *The TAM — Tower Art Museum, Matera*

Economist in arts and culture management. After experience at MIMA Brussels and Matera–Basilicata 2019 Foundation, he founded the social enterprise Torretta srl, specializing in cultural project management and regional development. Since 2022 he oversees the TAM – Tower Art Museum in Matera, a contemporary art museum whose creation he documented through the project *I Just Wanted to Open a Museum*.

14.00 - 18.00

SESSION IV – A New Paradigm for the Public

Inclusion, active participation, and the reduction of gender and access inequalities in the museums of the future.

In the contemporary museum, artistic practices, curatorial approaches, and exhibition design contribute to more open relationships between audiences and content. Inclusive design strategies, participatory installations, and accessible tools foster an environment suitable for diverse sensory and motor abilities. Thoughtful spatial and linguistic choices help overcome gender and access inequalities, allowing visitors to recognize themselves in the narratives presented. Exhibition design and curatorship thus become instruments for broadening cultural participation and promoting a more equitable and shared experience.

Chair

Cristiana Campanini

Journalist and art historian. Contributor to *Arte* and *La Repubblica*. For *Il Giornale dell'Arte*, she curated the podcast series *Scosse*. Contract professor in the Master's program *Art, Valorisation and Market* at IULM University (Milan);

lecturer in cultural journalism at the University of Brescia. Founder and editor of *artaround.info*, the first archive dedicated to research-based private galleries in Italy.

Speakers

16:15 – 16:30

Michele Ciacciofera, *Three Sustainable Works in Three Contexts*

Artist working across sculpture, painting, drawing, sound, installation, video, and theatre. His work poetically explores Mediterranean anthropology, nature, history, mythology, politics, and the relationship between human existence and the natural world. Known for using natural and recycled materials, he has exhibited in major international institutions and biennials, including Venice, Mardin, São Paulo, and Documenta Kassel/Athens.

16:30 – 16:45

Monica Rusconi, *The Museum of Rural Life of Stabio Case*

Director of the Museum of Rural Life in Stabio (Switzerland) since 2017. She led the renewal of its permanent exhibition, introducing interactive and educational spaces for all ages. She curates experiential temporary exhibitions rooted in recent history but connected to contemporary issues.

16:45 – 17:00

Giacomo Ardesio, *The Italian Pavilion at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale*

Architect and co-founder of Fosbury Architecture (FA), a collective practice based in Milan. Curator of *Spaziale. Everyone Belongs to Everyone Else*, Italian Pavilion at the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale. With multidisciplinary experience gained through collaborations including OMA/AMO, he works on installation design, exhibitions, fashion set design, research, and adaptive reuse. He has taught at ETH Zurich, AA London, Domus Academy, and is the Italian representative of HouseEurope!.

17:00 – 17:15

Anna Fresa, *The Travelling Exhibition “The Great Italian Vision. The Farnesina Collection”*

Architect and designer based in Naples. Vice President of ADI Campania and founder of Anna Fresa Design. She has curated the selection of public artworks for the Naples Metro and the exhibition *The Great Italian Vision*, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, presented at the UN Headquarters (New York), Mexico City, Seoul, Tokyo, and New Delhi. Her work spans architecture, exhibition design, and cultural projects with attention to sustainability and heritage value.

18:00 – 19:00

Guided tour of the museum and temporary exhibitions

(Self-certifiable activity for architects with 1 additional CFP credit)

For more details, please consult: *I musei nella sostenibilità: necessità e opportunità* and the official website of Display & Design ETS.

Display & Design ETS

Display & Design ETS is a cultural association founded by Maddalena d'Alfonso, Marco Introini, Giovanni Singarelli, and Massimo Berardi. It promotes project culture, architecture, and the arts nationally and internationally.

With over twenty years of experience in museography, exhibition organization, cultural programming, education, and conferences, the association adopts an interdisciplinary approach to generate innovative, sustainable, and inclusive practices for the benefit of the wider community. Based in Milan, the association promotes multiple cultural disciplines—from photography to music—while enhancing historical heritage and landscape as common goods.

Its strategic goals include: promoting sustainability and gender equality in the cultural sector, fostering social inclusion processes, and developing projects focused on nonviolence and mediation for peace.

ICOM-ICAMT

The International Committee for Architecture and Museum Techniques (ICAMT) is one of the leading International Committees of ICOM, with a network of nearly 700 members worldwide, including architects, designers, engineers, and museum professionals.

The Committee provides support and expertise on museum design, exhibition architecture, permanent and temporary display strategies, and the management of historic buildings repurposed as museums. ICAMT promotes dialogue and cooperation among its members, offering an international forum for exchange through conferences, workshops, publications, and training activities. It plays a key role in advancing innovation in museum architecture and disseminating knowledge through its website, newsletters, social media, and regular meetings.

Curated by Maddalena d'Alfonso

Architect, essayist, and researcher, Maddalena d'Alfonso has been Associate Professor since 2017, following a PhD with distinction in Interior Architecture and Museography. Founder of Md'A Design Agency (2017), specializing in interdisciplinary services for architecture, curatorship, and museum space management, promoting sustainable and accessible solutions for visual culture. She has served on the Scientific Committee of ICOM-ICAMT since 2019 and co-founded Display & Design ETS in 2024. She has taught at Politecnico di Milano and other international institutions. She has curated projects for the Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal), Iberè Camargo Foundation (Brazil), MIT Museum (USA), Triennale Milano, and Politecnico di Milano. Her exhibition *The Landscape of Rights* (2017) received the Medal of the Italian President; her book *Warm Modernity* received the 2016 Red Dot Award; *Il Resto dell'Alba* was included in the ADI Design Index Award (2024).

Author of multiple essays, including *Álvaro Siza: Two Museums* (Electa, 2009), *De Chirico. The Feeling of Architecture* (2011), *Suspended City: L'Aquila after the Earthquake* (2015), *How Space Transforms Art / How Art Transforms Space* (2016), *Warm Modernity* (2016), *Photography, Architecture and Rights* (2025).

Fondazione Luigi Rovati

The Fondazione Luigi Rovati, inaugurated in 2022 and located in a historic building in Milan's Porta Venezia district, is a cultural center that combines ancient and contemporary art in a two-level exhibition path. Recognized as a museum in 2023, it hosts a valuable Etruscan collection alongside works by Andy Warhol, Ai Weiwei, Luigi Ontani, and Giulio Paolini.

Designed by Mario Cucinella Architects, the museography includes underground galleries evoking geological structures for the Etruscan collection and a restored piano nobile showcasing a dialogue between contemporary art and historic architecture. The complex includes a bookshop, café-bistrot, and public garden with an exhibition pavilion.

Inspired by Luigi Rovati—doctor, pharmacologist, entrepreneur—the Foundation promotes culture as a tool for research, social innovation, and wellbeing, through multidisciplinary projects, education, inclusion, research, and training.

SDGs and social impact

The conference *Museum Sustainability. Needs and Opportunities*, promoted by Display & Design ETS in collaboration with ICOM–ICAMT, is conceived as a fully free and accessible initiative in line with the principles of accessibility, inclusion, and equal opportunity set out by the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The project contributes to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including:

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** Open dissemination of high-level cultural and educational content.
- **SDG 5 – Gender Equality:** Strong female presence among speakers, moderators, and curators.
- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** Free participation for professionals, students, and citizens outside institutional networks.
- **SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Highlighting the role of museums in urban regeneration and social cohesion.
- **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:** Building networks among public institutions, foundations, professionals, and cultural organizations nationally and internationally.

The 2025 edition strengthens this commitment by engaging participants from less-represented territories and diverse professional fields, encouraging intergenerational and inclusive participation.

Gender equality and representation

Over 60% of institutional representatives participating in the conference are women. This significant presence reflects the initiative's commitment to reducing the gender gap in the cultural and museum

sectors.

Qualified female leadership—academic, managerial, and creative—constitutes a strategic asset for innovation, quality, and sustainability.

Language mediation

Display & Design ETS actively supports the academic and educational world, recognizing linguistic competencies as essential tools for the internationalization of the cultural sector. A partnership has been established with the *Società Umanitaria – Scuola Superiore per Mediatori Linguistici P.M. Loriato* provide students with hands-on opportunities in cultural and professional contexts. Their involvement strengthens the dialogue between academic training and operational practice.

The realization of the conference has been made possible thanks to the support of Intiraimi s.r.l., Goppion, Md'A Design Agency, APMG International, D-LAB Training & Consulting, and through collaboration with the Fondazione Luigi Rovati.