

# **Domus Academy Master's Degree Urban Vision & Architectural Design Program Structure**

The Urban Vision & Architectural Design Master's Degree at Domus Academy (DA) is organized into four main modules lasting eight weeks each that include courses and workshops, followed by an 8 week internship period and a final portfolio presentation.

## **History & Cultures And Methods & Practices**

The courses History & Cultures and Methods & Practices provides students with the essential backbone of the discipline: theoretical assets and cultural frameworks as well as methodological approaches and design practices within the broader context of post-graduate urban and architectural design studies.

Thanks to the contribution of professionals and researchers, students will acquire awareness and understanding of the theoretical issues and conceptual assets. They will be introduced to methods of critical research and strategic thinking, to historical and contemporary design instruments, to establish a common language for future explorations use. Then, they will engage in a broad range of methods, tools, and topics that define the contemporary urban and architectural project, examining the relations between design thought and practice to the cultures and contexts in which they exist and which they must serve. At the same time, communication will be investigated as a tool for education, research, design, and visualization.

## **Workshops**

The sequence of workshops is managed by the Course Leader with the aim to exploit, opportunities of cooperative projects with leading companies.

### **Workshop 1 – Strategies And Vision**

Urban transformation processes and the way economic, human, social and environmental dynamics affect them, do not require a local approach but a holistic vision, capable of managing complex processes and forecasting and designing the guiding forces of the future.

The workshop provides the ability to capture these evolving transformations which are often fragmented and disconnected, in order to unify them into a future scenario within a broader urban vision, taking in consideration both physical interventions, and strategic trajectories.

In accordance with an assigned urban issue, students are asked to formulate guidelines of strategic development and envision future scenarios. Thus, they should recognize, understand and interpret on-going transformation processes in a selected territorial context; figure out a future scenario, that could be verified in a specific urban context; produce a strategic urban vision, moving from a specific intervention to a wider framework.

### **Workshop 2 – Architectural Link**

The ability to shape design ideas in relation with new cultural and interdisciplinary aspects has become fundamental in the creation and development of new projects. Beginning with an analysis of existing architectural tendencies and all the links between architecture and other relevant fields, this first project-work develops a specific project topic, aimed at investigating forms and modalities of relationship between the various study fields related to architecture and urban planning right up to the links with product and business design, interaction and communication design. Students are asked to outline and shape new design ideas linked with architectural key topics; to experiment languages, techniques and modalities so as to make the multiple study fields interact with each other; to understand the various scales in order to define, conceive and communicate the project; to critically analyse contemporary trends and cross-disciplinary interactions, which are necessary to develop the project.

### **Workshop 3 – Urban And Landscape Design**

Open spaces are elements of the urban landscape that are no less complex and articulated than buildings and the infrastructures that make up the urban tissue. In starting off with this consideration, the workshop promotes a process of analysis, understanding and design dealing with research topics and project areas able to include and express all the complexity that a collective public space may contain internally. 'Complex' systems, such as roads,

squares, parks etc. as well as 'fragile' systems, such as watercourses, archaeological sites, wildlife reserves, coastlines etc. can become the subject of the design project.

Students are asked to organize and design parts of open spaces that are part of a natural or extra urban context, or placed in urban gaps. Therefore, this workshop provides the ability to identify different types of open spaces – urban, extra urban or agricultural, and to critically evaluate the landscape elements that need to be maintained, re-designed or regenerated; to formulate a project proposal capable of combining spatial complexity, social and cultural implications, environmental and energetic issues.

#### **Workshop 4 – Architectural Design**

When architectural intervention is required, it is impossible to neglect urban concerns, territorial needs and social tendencies. Nowadays, architectural projects can be seen like “design objects” within the city, and therefore it becomes important to promote a correct approach to architecture within an urban context, not just from a design point of view, but also taking into consideration the elements that make up the urban space around architecture. The workshop reproduces a complete design process that aims to define an architectural intervention within the urban tissue. It will enhance the ability to imagine architectural projects as devices capable of designing portions of urban tissue by interpreting the physical, cultural, economical and social features.

Students are required to develop a coherent and logical project proposal, in accordance with the context and program; to combine all the architectural elements, through morphological, typological, aesthetic and technological awareness; to manage the various project scales interlaced within the architectural project.

### **Final Master Project**

The final project is an important moment of the overall learning experience, since students here have the chance to critically select, adopt, and integrate the methodologies learned during the course into a single, consistent body of knowledge.

Students will need to produce a coherent body of work that reflects a developing personal integrity and achieves a high level of technical skill. They will need to develop an individual approach to the research and develop a personal investigation, planning and writing of a final report. Students will be expected to show a clear relationship between their research, text and practical work presented for the Masters' presentation. They are expected to reflect critically on their own practices as well as on that of others', by exploring and identifying the context of their own work within the area of Urban Vision & Architectural Design.

Collaboration with companies and/or designers is intended to add real value and links to the field, while still maintaining students' freedom as far as the selection and development of a personal theme is concerned.

### **Internship**

The internship is the final step of a process in which students thanks to a one-to-one tutorship, receive a deep and balanced evaluation of their skills and aspirations, in order to build a career, which fits their aims.

There are two kinds of internship:

- the first is a working experience in a company active in the disciplinary field;
- the second is an “in campus” internship that is shaped as an intensive workshop in collaboration with a company. This “in campus” internship develops an integrated project strictly related to a practical need (i.e. the resolution of a design problem, or the creation of a brainstorming platform for a new project).

In both cases during this crucial phase students are mentored on a step-by-step basis, and acquire the fundamental experience of dealing with the real world, with real business and with the people working in the field.