

**IED AT DESIGN WEEK WITH ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS  
TRIBUTE TO TEN VISIONARY WOMEN  
FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS BUT UNITED BY THE ABILITY TO LOOK *BEYOND***

**Dialogue, exchange and contamination were at the heart of the project that involved  
150 IED students from different courses and from the Group's campuses in Italy, Spain and Brazil**

**BASE Milano from 6 to 12 June 2022 | Press preview: June 6<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 8 pm**

**Milan, June 6<sup>th</sup> 2022** - At the Fuorisalone, the **Istituto Europeo di Design** presents **Absolute Beginners**, an unprecedented and collective project involving **one hundred and fifty students** from IED **Group** campuses located in **Italy** in Milan, Cagliari, Florence, Rome, Turin, Venice and in Como with the Accademia di Belle Arti Aldo Galli; in **Spain** in Barcelona, Madrid and Bilbao; and in **Brazil** in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. The installation that can be visited among the spaces at **BASE Milano** - as part of the "Exhibit" within the experimental workshop We Will Design - is the expression of a design method that has brought together students from different courses in the Network's centres and has given voice to a dialogue between young designers, today's *absolute beginners*, and ten women considered *absolute beginners* for their visionary thinking. The students worked for six months in teams, taking inspiration from the stories of the *absolute beginners* as part of a continuous exchange within their own team and with other teams and tutors.

The name of the project Absolute Beginners identifies precisely this dialogue and is taken from the title of a **well-known song by another great trendsetter, David Bowie**: *"I've nothing much to offer, there's nothing much to take, I'm an absolute beginner and I'm absolutely sane as long as we're together the rest can go to hell but we're absolute beginners with eyes completely open but nervous all the same"*.

*"IED with Absolute Beginners shows the result of a true design contamination - says **Fabrizia Capriati, Communication Manager IED Group**. One hundred and fifty students from our Group campuses intertwined different cultures and backgrounds and worked as a team for six months to develop a concept related to one of the absolute beginners. From this exchange, and then from the open discussion with colleagues, came extraordinary and unexpected design outputs that we will present at BASE through an organic installation, which first followed this design unpredictability and then took shape"*.

The ten Absolute Beginners - **Lina Bo Bardi, Eva Mameli Calvino, Ada Bursi, Rei Kawakubo, Cinzia Ruggeri, Laura Solera Mantegazza with Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni, Gala Eluard Dalí, Bélen Moneo, Carla Accardi and Patricia Urquiola** - were chosen because with their creative genius and gender struggle they left a personal but indelible mark on history. Thus, ten interpretation projects were conceived from inspiration: *lina[S]* homage to Lina Bo Bardi, *Un cinguettio che rompe il silenzio* to Eva Mameli Calvino, *A chat with Ada* to Ada Bursi, *It is what it isn't* to Rei Kawakubo, *Not a bestiary* to Cinzia Ruggeri, *Who's there under the table?* to Laura Solera Mantegazza with Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni, *La femme visible* to Gala Éluard Dalí, *XX: Pouring Light* to Bélen Moneo, *Frammenti* to Carla Accardi and *Labirinto: la quarta dimensione* inspired by Patricia Urquiola.

The installation at BASE Milano is presented as an **organic space** that took shape from the projects exhibited in dialogue with each other, both digitally and analogically in an interplay of lights, sounds, projections, materials and colours. From the exchange and confrontation between groups, the ideas that emerged contaminated the exhibition project as a whole, as in the case of *Labirinto: la quarta dimensione* inspired by Patricia Urquiola's poetics, which proposes a modular structure to reflect on how space changes by interacting with the four dimensions. At the heart of the structure are wooden beams that have "flooded" the installation, becoming a symbol that runs through and binds the entire space. Or *Un cinguettio che rompe*

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*il silenzio* inspired by Eva Mameli Calvino, a composition of birdhouses, animals which are important to the scientist because they are fundamental in the process of dissemination, capable of conveying within them the potential, dangers and environmental devastation we are witnessing. Small worlds to be “spied on” through the entrance hole, capable of stimulating sight, hearing, smell and sensitivity of those who want to get closer. The partly burnt wall, which houses the composition, recalls a Sardinia which is being attacked by fires in a reference to a global context where the whole planet is burning.

#### TEN WOMEN ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

The ten Absolute Beginners with their stories are a multifaceted showcase combining passion and professionalism. **Lina Bo Bardi**, an architect and designer of Italian origin, she began her career working at Gio Ponti's studio. Having emigrated to Brazil after the war, she made the most of her education by contributing to the new Brazilian modernist scene. **Eva Mameli Calvino**, after her early education in Sassari, she moved to Pavia where she was the first Sardinian woman to graduate in Natural Sciences. In 1920, with her husband Mario Calvino, an agronomist and botanist, she left Italy for Cuba where they worked together at the Agricultural Experiment Station in Santiago de las Vegas. They then returned to Italy to settle in Sanremo where they worked at the local experimental station for floriculture. Mameli Calvino was later called upon to head the Botanical Garden of the University of Cagliari. **Rei Kawakubo**, Creative Director and Founder of the Comme des Garçons brand, is a shy, essential, rigorous woman. Kawakubo has always moved in the space “in between”, between form and function, between body and abstraction, between absence and presence. Her epiphany during the 1980s, in the company of a group of equally innovative colleagues such as Yamamoto and Miyake, enabled a radical change in the very idea of fashion. **Ada Bursi**, one of the first women to work as an architect in Turin. In her long career, she designed public and private buildings, museums, monuments, graphics and posters. She left behind a very rich and documented archive, which was donated to the Turin State Archives. **Cinzia Ruggeri**, stylist, costume designer, artist and designer who adopted an independent aesthetic from the outset. In her studio/shop in Milan, Cinzia Ruggeri's research moves between fashion, design, sculpture, installation, architecture and performance, on the borderline between play and experimentation. **Maria Montessori**, **Giuseppina Pizzigoni** and **Laura Solera Mantegazza**, three women who, with absolutely revolutionary models, with respect to their historical periods of reference, set the standard: the first two working with children, the third providing training for working single mothers in the 19th century. **Gala Éluard Dalí**, known to the public for being the wife and manager of the famous Salvador Dalí as well as his muse for many of his works, she was also an artist and art dealer in her own right. **Bélen Moneo**, Spanish architect and founder of Studio Moneo Brock, a multidisciplinary trend meeting hub. **Carla Accardi**, an Italian artist, militant feminist, with an out-of-the-box outlook and way of thinking for her time, and **Patricia Urquiola**, a well-known contemporary designer and Spanish architect who moved to Milan where she lives and works.

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The Absolute Beginners project is one of the activities promoted by the IED Group as one of the official partners of the **New European Bauhaus Initiative**:



Share your absolute beginners experience: use the hashtags **#IEDabsolutebeginners** - **#IEDdesignweek**

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## **Absolute Beginners by IED**

c/o **BASE Milano** - Via Bergognone 34, Milan | 1<sup>st</sup> floor inside "Exhibit"

### **BASE Milano**

BASE Milano is a project in innovation and cultural cross-pollination, situated in the heart of Milan's Tortona district. BASE is a community of people engaged in a range of creative disciplines, committed to developing an inclusive ecosystem to produce innovative content for cultural progress. BASE's mission: to generate new reflections for the 21st century city, to forge new connections between different arts, disciplines and languages, and to boost Milan's status as one of the great capitals of creative production. BASE's driving values: inclusion, interaction, and innovation. With 12,000 m2 spread over 3 floors, more than 200 creative enterprises in residence, over 400 events, and 500,000 visitors a year, BASE is a creative hub with an international atmosphere, as well as a centre for research, experimentation, production and joint production of cultural initiatives with real social value. Located within the ex-Ansaldo complex, one of the most important urban regeneration projects in Europe, BASE is breathing new life into a monument of industrial architecture, exploring new models of collaboration between public and private: a state-owned building, entrusted by Milan City Council to a private, non-profit social enterprise, the self-financed outcome of a union between five different charities and businesses.

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