

Press release

November 15, 2023

MINI presented the installation "MINI INHABIT SOUND", a project focusing on the sound identity of cities and realised together with SOS - School of Sustainability, by Mario Cucinella.

From 24 October to 5 November, ADI Design Museum hosted MINI Inhabit Sound, the Sound Design project curated by Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound Design of the BMW Group, together with the students of SOS - School of Sustainability.

Milan. 5.000 visitors of ADI Museum had the chance to experience MINI Inhabit Sound from 24th October to 5th November 2023. The project was realised thanks to the partnership between MINI and SOS School of Sustainability, a school founded in 2015 by Mario Cucinella that offers a 9-month post-graduate programme for young designers in the field of Architecture and Sustainable Design. It is the result of a training and creative path curated by Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound Design at BMW Group, together with a group of international students from the 2022/23 academic year and focused on the theme of Sound Design.

"Through the collaboration with SOS - School of Sustainability," says Federica Manzoni, Head of MINI Italy, "our brand aims to promote young talent and wants to underline its commitment to the world of design by encouraging reflection on the theme of sustainability in the urban environment, a perfect example of MINI's philosophy: Big Love for the People, Big Love for the Planet, Big Love for the Progress. In this scenario, trends and styles, creativity and communication, design culture and technology are key concepts for developing joint initiatives."

"MINI is an iconic design object in continuous evolution, in step with the times, but always faithful to its original," continues Federica Manzoni. "Its heart beats to the rhythm of the city. It is always in line with the trends of the moment, but also and above all attentive to much more important issues that have to do with the urban fabric, the city of the future and those who populate it."

The project and MINI's vision of sustainability

Sustainability in the urban environment is indeed at the heart of MINI's strategy, which was originally born as a small, efficient, urban car in response to a fuel crisis in the 1950s, and evolved by anticipating the needs of the time and taking bold steps to create a future.

Sustainability is well-being for the planet, for its ecosystem, but also for mankind, whose behaviour has a decisive impact on the overall coexistence and evolution of living beings. Well-being means, among other things, psychophysical balance, often achieved through a gratification of the senses, not least that of hearing.

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Sound as an element of city identity

The course devised and implemented by MINI under the supervision of Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound Design of the BMW Group, together with the young international students, focused on research into sound design, a discipline that plays a fundamental role in the realisation of a project.

Sounds contribute to defining the identity of a city, so getting to know them is both a starting point for understanding their nature and function, but also a point of arrival for redesigning the dynamics of listening and making conscious use of them for collective wellbeing.

Acoustics characterises and defines a space, and the sustainability in this matter is becoming increasingly important in architectural, building and urban design, as well as in the production of objects and in the reinterpretation of the environments we habitually frequent, from cars to workspaces to cities.

Sound is a fundamentally invisible entity, an indispensable element of our existence, and the aim of this installation is to give sound not only a visual form, but also an architectural form, so as to create a holistic experience in which acoustics and sustainability act together for collective comfort.

The aim of the project

The objective of the MINI Inhabit Sound project is to build a sustainable space for listening, contemplation and sharing, created by transforming sound into a tangible and liveable form, materialising it, making it visible as if it were a crystal, a sustainable material, a three-dimensional sculpture where we can perceive the dialogue between silence and sound, absence and presence of the self and the other, to elevate the psychophysical and emotional condition of those who live this experience.

"It is necessary to build an auditory awareness so that individual actions lead to a collective well-being," says Renzo Vitale, Creative Director Sound Design of the BMW Group. "This can be achieved by interpreting the cities as sound realities, understanding their weaknesses in order to redesign them acoustically through different levels of expression and complexity."

MINI INHABIT SOUND: the experience

The MINI Inhabit Sound installation, the result of a project by Carlo Caire, Nicola Capozzo, Ruben Enrique Garrido Rizk and Flavia Torretta, under the supervision of Renzo Vitale, supported by Jacopo Panfili, Sound Design Assistant Coordinator at IED Istituto Europeo di Design, aims to make people experience a real sound walk, starting from the sounds perceived in a metropolitan reality such as Milan.

Imagine being able to cross the city of Milan in a few seconds. Thinking of places like Piazza del Duomo, Sempione Park, the Navigli, what noises come to mind? How does one feel? Stressed and agitated? Or safe and relaxed?

These are questions we often overlook because we are not aware of our surroundings.

What does it mean to 'listen'? The sound installation 'Inhabit Sound' aims to answer this question by encouraging a reflection on both sound as a physical-perceptual element and individual awareness of the ability to hear. The experience is manifested along a tripartite auditory path on the geometric and sonic planes. The acoustic space is optimised to allow immersion in three soundscapes that represent an interpretation of three distinct conditions: the near past is based on the urban sound world that surrounds us daily, suspended time dilates the temporal boundaries to encourage reflection on self-perception, the future hypothesises an auditory scenario conceived in the sign

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of urban sonic sustainability.



The special sustainable acoustic fabric combined with the Raum-im-Raum (room-within-a-room) solution makes it possible to effectively reduce the energy of the acoustic field, thus reducing disturbance and reverberation. Space and materials are deliberately reduced to an essential condition to encourage concentration on physical and acoustic space.

The user is welcomed by the reproduction of a combination of everyday sounds, such as human mumbles, bird chirps and artificial sounds; all of which mask other types of sounds that we do not pay attention to.

Entering the structure's 'core chamber' leads to a more acoustically isolated space, thanks to the inclusion of poufs and panels covered with sound-absorbing fabric, which provide greater acoustic comfort.

The visitor will feel safe and at ease, enjoying his presence and being aware of his surroundings.

In the final part of the journey, the sounds of the city of the present are reinterpreted and translated into the future. The sounds of nature remain clearer to our hearing and in harmony with the sounds of the city, reinterpreted in a futuristic point of view by Renzo Vitale.

Materials and Project Partners

A fundamental partner in the success of the installation's intent is Caimi Brevetti SpA which, through the supply of the sound-absorbing fabric, furnishings and acoustic panels, has contributed to guaranteeing the acoustic insulation necessary for the user to enjoy the experience.

The structure is entirely covered in sound-absorbing fabric. The patented Snowsound-Fiber technology is based on soft, inherently flame-retardant, interconnected 100 per cent polyester fibres. The interaction between the Snowsound-Fiber fibres and the air makes it possible to control reverberation, precisely adjusting the acoustic response, depending on the installation method, surface and distance between the acoustic fibre and the wall.

Sound-absorbing panels were also added to the central section of the installation, and Snowpouf elements were used for the interior furnishings, covered in Snowsound Fiber 12, a special sound-absorbing fabric that uses ECONYL® yarn in its production for the first time, created from the regeneration of nylon waste from all over the world, such as fishing nets or used carpets.

Thanks also to Artemide for the installation of light with the product La Linea 25, a flexible tube of light able to rotate freely in space according to undefined geometries, thus becoming a communicative as well as functional tool, adding values and meanings to its light through the expressiveness of its graphic sign.

A unique sound for the new all-electric MINI family.

Sound design also plays a decisive role in the customisation of the recently unveiled products of the new MINI Family.

Sound performance becomes a key component of the purely electric driving experience. Different sound atmospheres will arrive for the first time on the new all-electric MINI Cooper, creating an even more immersive experience.

The new MINI Sound DNA is based on the brand's core values and exudes a positive, charismatic aura. The MINI Experience Modes become the stage for these totally new sound atmospheres. Analogue instruments, digital technology and artificial intelligence combine to generate sounds that define the MINI of the future, convey information and arouse emotions.

The repertoire includes completely new driving sounds in the passenger

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compartment, an unmistakable sound to distinguish the MINI from the outside world, jingles for the new MINI Experience Modes and new sound notifications for information and warning functions.

Another component of the completely new sound atmospheres of the new MINI family are the so-called earcons. Similar to optical icons, they serve as distinctive acoustic symbols to signal certain events or information.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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The BMW Group

The BMW Group With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries. In 2022, the BMW Group sold nearly 2.4 million passenger vehicles and more than 202,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2022 was € 23.5 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.6 billion. As of 31 December 2022, the BMW Group had a workforce of 149,475 employees. The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.

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