



MD Journal  
[Dossier]

**CECI N'EST PAS  
UN FOSSILE**

Marmomac Meets Academies  
2024

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CECI N'EST PAS UN FOSSILE • Marmomac Meets Academies 2024

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# MD Journal [ Dossier ]

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# UN FOSSILE • Marmomac Meets Academies 2024

## CECI N'EST PAS UN FOSSILE

### UN'IMMERSIONE NELLA PIETRA STONE DESIGN – LA BOTTEGA DEL FUTURO

Catalogue of the exhibition  
Verona, September 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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*Designing is a joy, but also a commitment,  
a great responsibility.  
To Cini Boeri, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth.*

## MD Journal [Dossier]

*Table of contents*

	<b>Presentation</b>
6	<b>Marmomac Meets Academies</b> Federico Bricolo
	<b>Introduction</b>
8	<b>Ceci n'est pas un fossile. An introduction to MMA 2024</b> Giuseppe Fallacara
	<b>Virtuous examples of knowledge transmission</b>
16	<b>The Académie des savoir-faire "La Pierre" by Fondation d'entreprise Hermès and the encyclopedic work "La Pierre", co-published with Fondation and Actes Sud</b> Hugues Jacquet
	<b>Short essays</b>
24	<b>Is it possible to build in stone? Why not?</b> Amin Taha
26	<b>Stone and Technology. The experience of Marmomac Meets Academies</b> Marco Ferrero
30	<b>Stone and Biophilic Design: considerations</b> Chiara Rizzi
36	<b>The stone architecture of the Exhibition Pavilion. 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century</b> Renzo Lecardane
40	<b>The stone and its scraps. The future in the digital field</b> Katia Gasparini
	<b>MMA 2024 work</b>
46	<b>StArch. Short Master and the Marmomac 2024 Exhibition</b> Adriana Valentini
50	<b>The central installation. Between tradition and innovation</b> Dario Costantino
	<b>Prototypes</b>
54	<b>Practical research. The prototypes exposed at MMA 2024</b> Ilaria Cavaliere
58	<b>Prototypes</b>

# STONE AND TECHNOLOGY

## The experience of Marmomac Meets Academies

**Marco Ferrero**  
(Sapienza University)

The development of stone architecture at the dawn of the third millennium shows significant discontinuities compared to a past where the main innovations were only in the evolution of machinery and tools. The driving force behind this innovation is the rapid digital evolution: in a relatively short period, even the digital tools available to designers have transformed multiple times, moving from digital graphic design to BIM modelling, that is not an analog geometric representation – even if executed with digital tools – but an actual construction process, carried out in a multidimensional virtual space.

In the production sector, evolution occurs in terms of CAM (Computer-Aided Manufacturing). Although the digital correspondence between design and production is not entirely automatic, the combination of the two has laid the groundwork for the already mentioned discontinuity. This is evident, for example, in the widespread transition from exclusively flat stone artefacts to those with complex shapes.

This scenario sets a mandatory reference framework for both producers and designers. However, production and design tend to remain on different levels, with a communication gap that hinders not only the possi-

bility of further innovation but also the simple implementation of what has been acquired.

Trade fairs are primarily commercial events and, in most cases, do not include different initiatives unless for promotional purposes. From this perspective, Marmomac in Verona is a unique event. From the beginning, it was understood that expanding the dialogue was important, involving not only the protagonists of artistic production – from sculpture to design to architecture – but also education operators, academies and universities. The transition about the inclusion of academies was made from merely showcasing student works to a broader involvement, promoting material knowledge through support – sometimes, even financially – to the development of specific courses dedicated to the theme within degree programs. However, this effort had to face communication difficulties, and despite the quality of the initiatives and outputs the gap with the production sector remained deep.

Thus, the project “Marmomac Meets Academies” was conceived. Supported by agreements with universities and a select group of forward-thinking producers, the project reversed the previous approach, programmatically proposing to create tangible objects and prototypes constructed from stone – to be displayed at the fair as the result rather than the premise of collaborations between education and production. The project’s success was evident; the quality of the outputs convinced the fair management to allocate part of the valuable commercial space for the Marmomac Meets Academies Exhibition.

From the universities’ perspective, the partnership with the production sector provided a positive impulse for practical activities in the traditionally theoretical academic context. Additionally, it brought professors and researchers closer to the current realities of industrial production, deepening their understanding of the potential and limitations of technology in the sector.

Challenges and opportunities for improvement primarily concern the disparities between areas closely connected to production hubs and those further away. The former offer greater collaboration opportunities but are limited in number and so is their territorial distribution. The latter must contend with limited resources and low interest from small companies focused on local issues and markets. The mutual growth and learning that could come from resource sharing are currently hindered by a persistent tendency towards competition rather than collaboration, which is a par-



Marmomac Meets Academies, the 2022 edition, curated by G. Fallacara and D. Potenza. Photo by Marmomac

particularly shortsighted stance in the globally significant Italian production system.

Another important area for potential development is scientific research. Study topics include production sustainability, the development of new products based on waste reduction or reuse, and the prevention of degradation; at the design level, there are also challenges posed by the development of ICT technologies and Artificial Intelligence.

Addressing these additional issues will not only provide further growth opportunities for the MMA initiative but also allow the enhancement of the most advanced offerings from today's universities. This will help move beyond traditional exhibition approaches and open Marmomac to the changes that are forcefully impacting the context in which producers and designers will operate in the immediate and near future.

