

Objects of Common Interest lights up rationalist Bergamo square

'Lights On' is a new site-specific installation by Objects of Common Interest in Bergamo, part of the city's Italian Capital of Culture 2023 programme



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Piazza della Libertà in Bergamo, illuminated by Objects of Common Interest's installation 'Lights On'
(Image credit: Piercarlo Quecchia)

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Objects of Common Interest has unveiled a new large-scale, site-specific installation for Bergamo's Piazza della Libertà, as part of the city's Italian Capital of Culture 2023 programme. Former Wallpaper* Design Awards winners and 2023 judges, the studio's Eleni Petaloti and Leonidas Trampoukis created a series of interventions in the square that both celebrate and disrupt the space. The project was supported by Confindustria Bergamo and promoted by Comune di Bergamo and GAMEC, the city's Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art. Independent curator Federica Sala acted as project advisor.

'This is the most significant project we have worked on so far because of its scale, and because of its public presence,' says Petaloti. 'As trained architects, it's very important for us to be able to activate a building with this kind of complicated history.'

Bergamo's Piazza della Libertà dates back to the 1930s, its imposing colonnaded building – Casa della Libertà – originally designed as a symbolic HQ for the Fascist Party. The square's design can be less than welcoming, its stark architecture combined with inaccessible features such as a central fountain whose edges are too high for people to connect with the water.

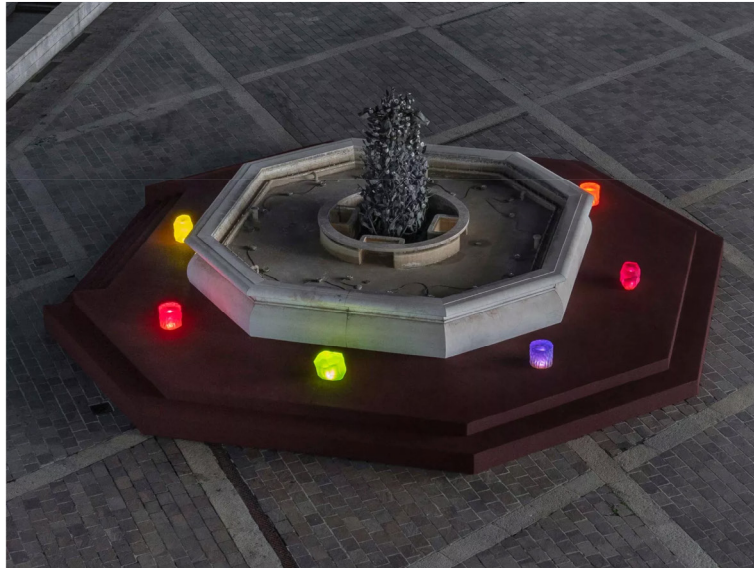
'Lights On', Piazza della Libertà in Bergamo



(Image credit: Piercarlo Quecchia)

The studio wanted to open up the square, its intervention based on a theme of 'Recycle/Reuse/Repair' interacting with the monumental architecture to connect it with visitors and passers-by.

The installation design develops over three elements. The sinuous lighting piece that erupts from the building's façade is composed of large-scale models of Objects of Common Interest's 'Tube' lights. 'The light activates the façade, it's like a parasitic sculpture that engages every part of it with its surroundings,' says Petaloti. 'Light is a celebration, a medium that brings people together in a very fundamental way.'



(Image credit: Piercarlo Quecchia)

Within the square, the designers created public seating made of marble offcuts and recycled resin. They also encouraged connection with the fountain by creating a stepped platform around it, made of recycled tyres and adorned with illuminated jewel-like objects of recycled resin. 'We wanted people to feel that they own the place, that they are in control of the experience of the square,' continues Petaloti.



(Image credit: Piercarlo Quecchia)

The goal of their work, concludes the designer, was to 'transform the square into a more lively environment that inspires and brings joy to those who live there. We have also developed the theme of the relationship between the community and its natural resources, enhancing a city that "invents" based on what it already has, drawing solutions from its own past and cultural heritage.'

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