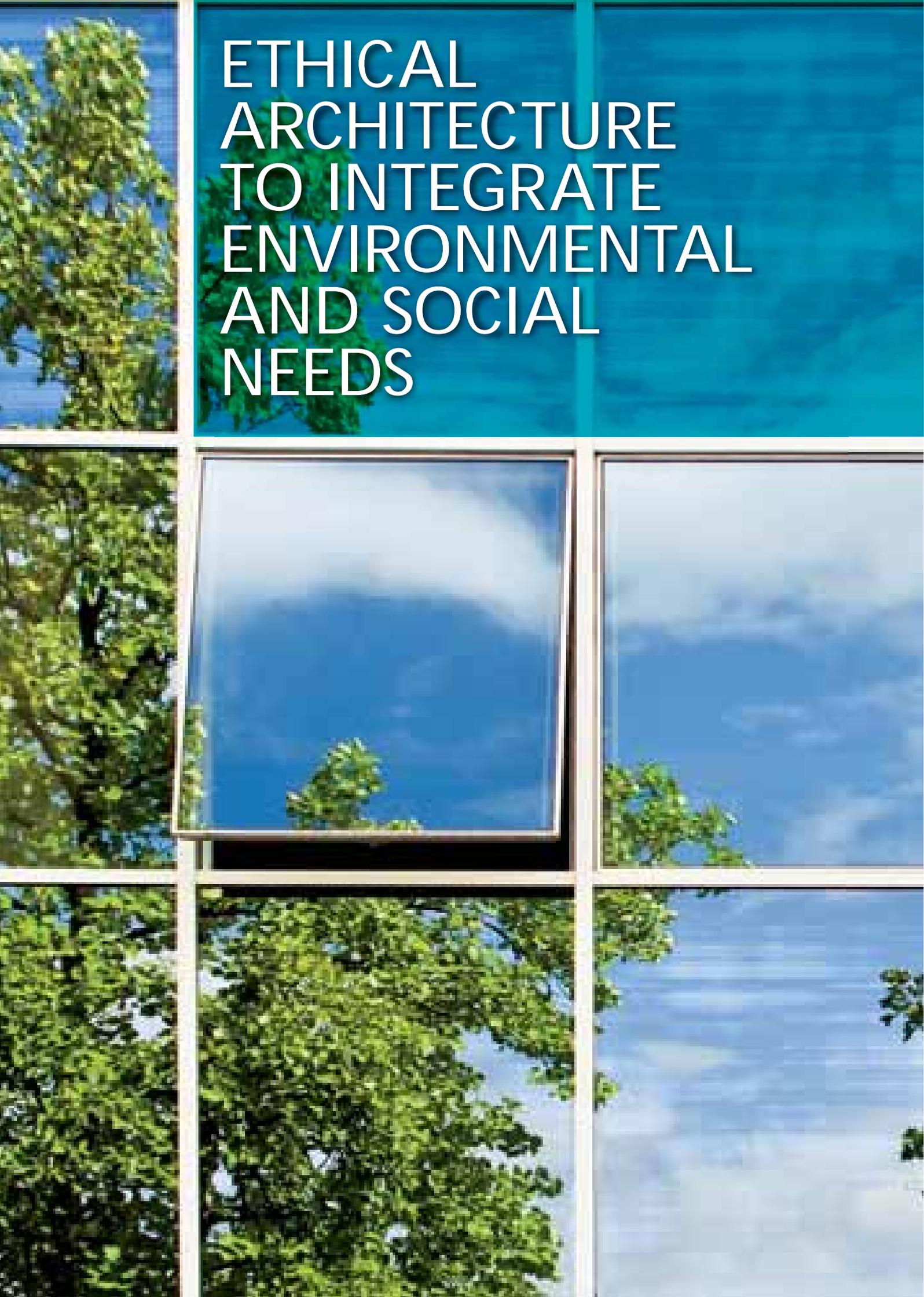


ETHICAL ARCHITECTURE TO INTEGRATE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS



MARIO CUCINELLA

Architect

Trained in the school of Renzo Piano, Italian architect Mario Cucinella's work is inspired by his attention to environmental design and sustainable architecture. With this approach, he has successfully participated in many important international competitions.

In recent years, he has developed designs at different scales, such as the construction of buildings with many different various uses, technological research, studies on environmental strategies for climate control and large urban projects.

The most significant of these projects include the Sino Italian Ecological Building in Beijing, the new building for the Municipality of Bologna, the new Istat offices in Rome, the Koo Lee Institute, Centre for Sustainable Energy Technologies in Ningbo, China, the Villejuife-Leo Lagrange station for the Paris underground and Otranto Maritime centre.

He has received many prestigious awards, among them: the *Energy Performance+Architecture Award* (Paris 2005), the *Special Award for the Environment* from the *Cityscape World Architecture Congress* (Dubai 2005) and the *Outstanding Architect 2004 Award* from the *World Renewable Energy Congress* (Denver, USA).

Mario Cucinella works in Bologna and Paris, and he is the messenger of an "ethical" architecture, that takes into consideration care for both environmental and social needs. He has developed the idea of a new environmentally-friendly design accessible to everyone - an ecologic house that everyone can afford and that embraces a new culture of sustainable living.

Mario Cucinella describes his ideas to *sdVision*.

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Architect Cucinella, why is it important that architecture deals with environmental and sustainability issues now?

It is important since architecture is one of the human activities with the greatest impact: it consumes energy, has a direct relationship with climate, cold, heat, the environment and the landscape, with people's lifestyles.

Therefore, designing today cannot mean just creating comfortable environments for living and working, but also the best use of the most innovative technologies for constructing buildings that consume less energy and fewer resources.

Building houses that cost little during construction and usage and that, therefore, are affordable to people from all social backgrounds, not only from the most wealthy brackets. Internationally, a common language for new living is being researched, for new buildings that are first of all careful about their energy consumption. With specific attention to cultural diversities that, above and beyond excessive regionalism, can however contribute to enrich this new way of designing.

For a building, and therefore for a designer, dealing with energy and environmental issues in general is not a problem, but is an extraordinary creative opportunity.

At this time, which countries are most focused on the development of the green building?

Regarding this, we see various levels in the different countries. In Europe, the UK is certainly the most advanced: it has a long green building tradition, especially applied to working environments. And this occurs because it was requested by the civil society.

The same for Germany. France is slightly behind, because its decision to increase the use of nuclear power has made public opinion less sensitive to the issue of energy savings. But also in France, today the interest of the architecture industry for the environment is very

high. Italy is also in the forefront: it now has one of the most advanced laws on energy efficiency. Unfortunately, at this time Italy is deficient at the implementation and control stage.

Among the so-called emerging countries, China, though experiencing large contradictions in the field of environment protection and a careful use of resources, is highly sensitive and I recently met many Chinese professionals and other citizens that are aware of the issue of sustainable architecture.

What are the main design lines for the ecological house? How does design change with respect to traditional design with little focus on consumption?

The main issue is to consume less, and therefore to design buildings that require little energy for heating or cooling environments. First of all, we must think of a well-insulated house, that needs little energy.

The challenge is to build a new generation of buildings by promoting the idea of a low-consumption house. It is necessary to invent and suggest a new model for living. The environment affects people's behaviours. We are all very sensitive to contexts. Therefore architecture can give a great contribution to the creation of a new culture, a new lifestyle which is really careful about the protection of the environment, the natural resources and pollution control. But for this to happen, it is necessary that we think of the medium- to low-classes of people that live in cities. And we must bring our new architecture to the peripheries, at sustainable costs. This new architecture can help improve social relations, especially in urban areas where the need is more widely felt due to large immigration flows.

Living badly, in ugly buildings, generates bad relations. The home has nothing to do with single individuals, it deals with society as a whole. Nowadays, in large cities we shall commit not only to giving a home to everyone, but also to giving everyone a beautiful, low-consumption

THE ECOLOGICAL HOUSE MUST BE BEAUTIFUL AND COST-EFFECTIVE, AT THE DESIGN STAGE, PROJECT STAGE, CONSTRUCTION STAGE AND USE STAGE. THIS IS THE REAL CHALLENGE.

Mario Cucinella

