

Talking Hands

An atelier of design and social innovation



TALKING HANDS



About Us

Talking Hands is a not for profit permanent art studio enabling people from refugee communities to design, create and sell fashion and design products.

Since 2015, our atelier is based in Treviso, Italy.



Our Story

Talking Hands was born in the midst of a humanitarian emergency: the small city of Treviso, 85,000 inhabitants in Italy (near Venice), suddenly experienced the arrival of about 2,000 people seeking asylum.

Once the basic needs were met, we were able to focus on the creative and employment goals of the participants, forming our permanent design studio. We knew from the beginning that design would be a powerful instrument of communication.



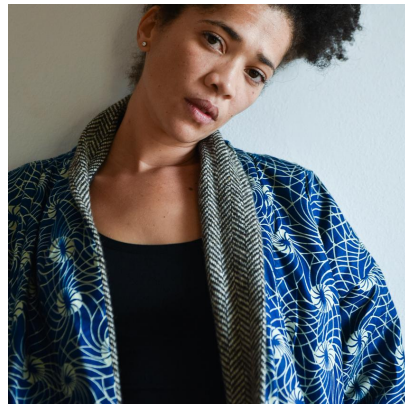
Our Vision

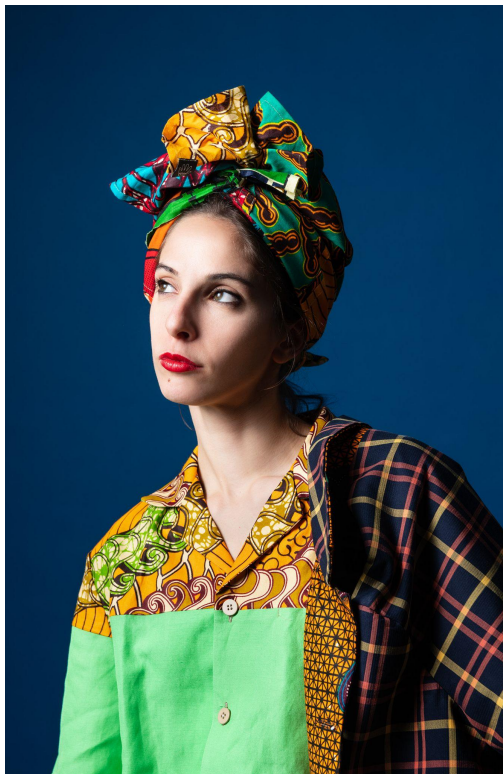
If life has taken everything away from you and you no longer have even a title of citizenship, your will to thrive cannot be taken away.

Every human has a wealth so great that it cannot be measured: it comes from our biological experience, from what we see with our eyes, from what we feel emotionally and of course, from the experience of our hands.



Our Style





Collection

Chapters of a group biography, composed of individual travel narratives that flow into the same place, at the same time, to plan and realize together their own future.





Mixité



Design, desire!



Our Production Process

The participatory dimension of the project permeates every stage of the creative and production process.

The selection of fabrics is the first moment of confrontation. The historic Lanificio Paoletti in Follina makes available so-called "fazzoletti" (test fabrics or production surplus) with unique variations in warp and weft, together with samples and smaller pieces. Choosing residual material is consistent with an environmental sustainability approach.

After an initial technical selection, the tailors' final choice is personal and motivated by colours, textures and designs. Fabrics are combined on a case by case basis in the atelier.

Italian fabrics are combined with African cottons: thanks to the collaboration of Anne Grosfilley, an expert in African fabrics and consultant to the house of Dior, we have a direct link with the Ivory Coast. There, we get our supplies from UNIWAX, a Visco company, which has been the leader in West African "veritable pagne Wax" since 1968. The encounter between different ideas, sensitivities and visions therefore starts with the fabric.

Even the design of the garments lives this collaborative dynamic: everyone is free to develop their own ideas, which are then evaluated together.

Alongside the patterns, the tailors are free to experiment by working directly with the materials, either by hand or by machine. Often the pattern is made afterwards.

The video and photo shoots involve the young people who designed them. The girls in the Talking Hands entourage become actresses, models and directors in the production phase and then testimonials on their own digital channels in the communication phase..

The atelier is the centre of a large, fluid collective that is always open to novelty.

In the sales phase, the project's protagonists actively participate in markets and fairs, temporary exhibitions, pop-ups, presentations and parties. Talking Hands thus leaves the space of the atelier and the world of fashion boutiques to share its values, ideas and knowledge with the territory.

Everyone participates in the common goal, mixing traces of themselves in a project that is constantly evolving and morphing into new shapes that will never be reproduced twice.



Lanificio Paoletti is a centuries-old wool mill was founded in 1795 and is now managed by the tenth generation of the family.



Textile production in Follina began in the mid-12th century, when Cistercian monks introduced wool production to the area.



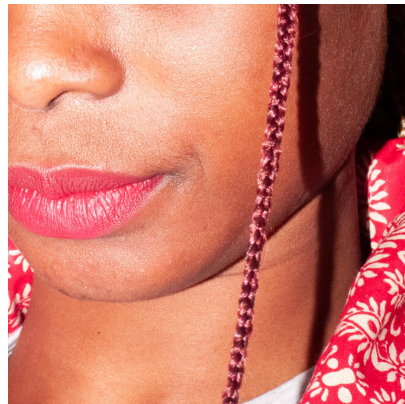
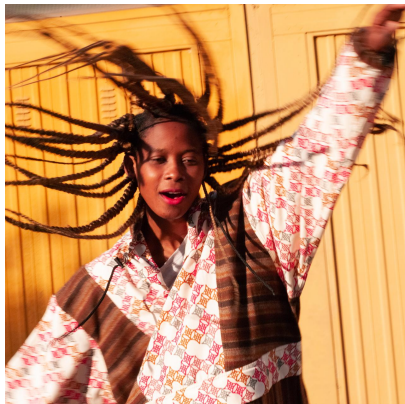
The company still works in the historic mill, with the most exclusive brands, marrying research with a sense of spirit and grace.

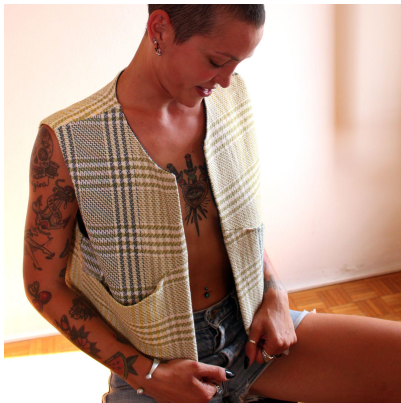
Our Wool



Our Moods











Our Values

Talking Hands values diversity, community, education, environmentally sustainable design and ethical business practices. We attempt to source products from local businesses with low carbon emissions and who adequately support their employers.

We engage in circular economic practices by sourcing materials that would otherwise end up in landfill and we favor businesses who allow for cultural appreciation rather than stealing and appropriating from a culture.

As Talking Hands aims to increase employment and social inclusion of people from refugee communities, we believe in the importance of relational networks.

Collaborations not only support our participants on a practical level, they also encourage a broader social dynamic of bottom-up democracy. We are passionate about horizontal dialogue and circular power relations.

We oppose the growing feeling of hostility and racism that plagues society, and fight against all forms of social, class and gender discrimination.

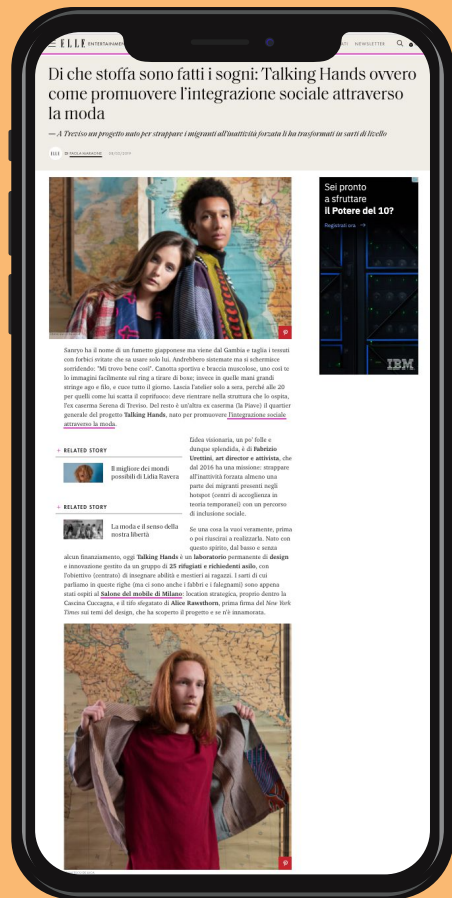
At Talking Hands, we're interested in social change and its practical processes. We believe in dialogue that let us understand and respect each other. We believe that cultural mixité, or diversity, is what makes us strong. We must surpass outdated biological concepts of race, aimed at creating fear of "the other".

We believe that culture is intersectional and adaptable rather than being merely centered on ethnicity, social norms and religion.

The stereotype of "exoticism" is widespread in the fair trade production chain of the western world. This European trend represents African culture in a mysterious and almost primitive way, as static and undeveloped. This notion is fake and wrong.

We want to highlight a genuine design process that can be shaped by turbulence rather than linear achievements. This may involve documenting accomplishments as well as mistakes: failure is what makes a piece of work stronger.

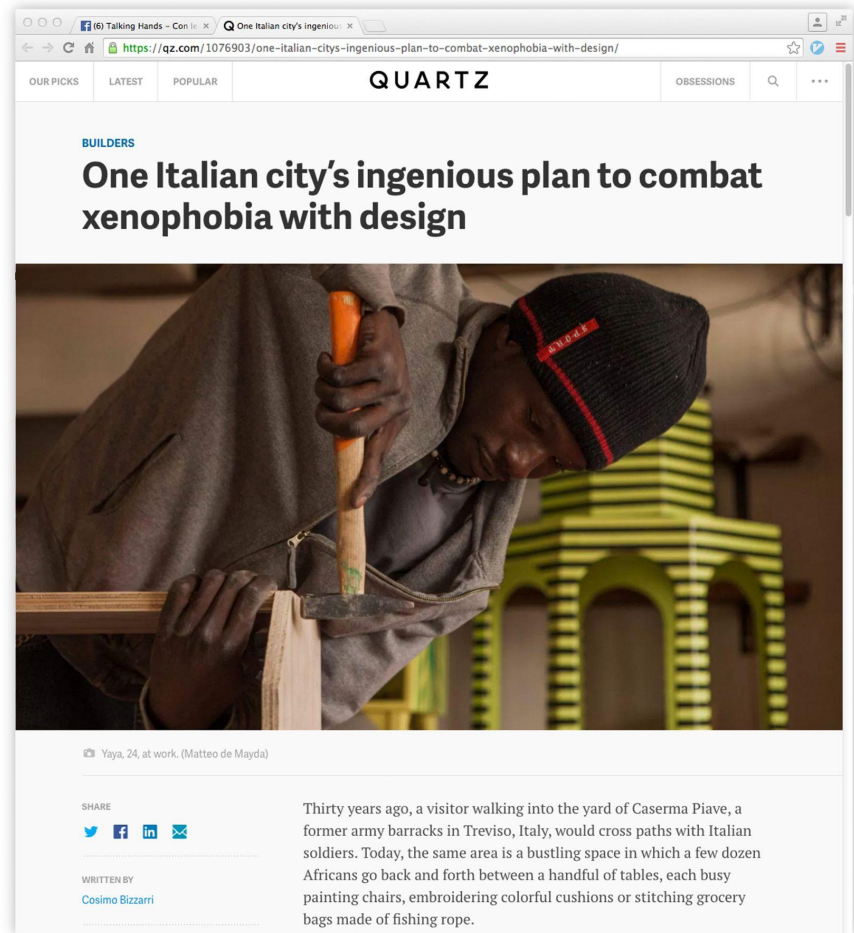
The story of Talking Hands is told in our everyday life: at the atelier, in markets and exhibitions, in seminars, on social media and in selected outlets that embrace courage and positivity as a way of life.



Press review

Quartz

“Talking Hands typically make 500 to 700 euros each time the group participates in a local market. Part of the money from the sales gets reinvested in tools and materials for the workshop. Another part is used to buy food for collective meals, which are also available to undocumented immigrants who don’t receive the monthly allowance from the Italian government. A third portion of the money is designated for those who need to send money home..”



Frieze

“Just as Moholy-Nagy envisaged designers to engage with different disciplines by collaborating with specialists from other fields, as the Ocean Cleanup does with scientists and ecologists, and Talking Hands with local politicians, he expected the reverse to happen and for those people to experiment with design.”

hing to
nd

Rebecca
Wilcox

Alice Rawsthorn *Design as an Attitude*

Sixty-
Platfo

Tu Style

"The new, strictly unisex capsule consists of a jacket, duster coat and our signature piece: the double-sided kimono-style outerwear, which can be worn on the African side or the Italian side, depending on the occasion and the mood of the moment".

NELL'ATELIER

di Treviso, tra stoffe africane



Una collezione che ibrida preziosi tessuti italiani e africani, creata da rifugiati e richiedenti asilo. Dove? A Treviso. I prezzi dei capi? Equi. Perché essere fashion non ha confini

UNA CAPSULE NEL NOME DELLA... MIXITÉ!

DI FEDERICA PRESUTTO

LA DICE LUNGA, GIÀ DAL NOME: la collezione Mixité nasce dall'unione del Made in Italy con il Made in Africa. Ovvero, i tessuti di lana (mohair, cachemire o alpaca) del Lanificio Paoletti di Follina (in provincia di Treviso) letteralmente cuciti insieme alle stoffe della Vilco, azienda da 200 anni esperta nel wax, tecnica di stampa con la quale si creano i cottoni colorati prediletti dagli outfit africani. **E già così, l'effetto "mixité" sarebbe assicurato. A dare un ulteriore twist internazionale,** i sarti della capsule: rifugiati e richiedenti asilo dall'Africa Occidentale che fanno parte di Talking Hands, laboratorio di design con sede nell'ex Caserma Piave di Treviso. Location che oggi è diventata (la mixité continual) uno spazio multifunzionale con un centro sociale, una libreria e vari laboratori. Il team di Talking

Hands, poi, è un altro inno al multiculturalismo: a coordinare l'atelier, Sanyo Cissay e Lamin Saïdy dal Ghana; pattern maker (si può tradurre, semplificando, con modellista) Anthony Knight, nato a Londra, di origini giamaicane e docente di Design della moda all'Università di Venezia; art director, Fabrizio Urettini. Che in questi giorni sta lavorando, insieme alla sua squadra cosmopolita, alla collezione Mixité per la primavera-estate 2019: «La nuova capsule, rigorosamente unisex», ci racconta, «è composta da casacca, spolverino e dal nostro pezzo cult, il **capospalla stile kimono doubleface: da indossare dal lato "italiano" o da quello "africano" secondo l'occasione o il mood del momento**». Due capi al prezzo di uno, che ci fanno venire ancora più voglia di mixité.



UNISEX
Due capi della capsule griffata Talking Hands: si acquistano (€ 150) nel laboratorio dell'ex Caserma Piave, Treviso. Info, su Facebook: [Opificio TalkingHands](#)



Francesco de Luca 3

UP TO DATE

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"Literally: no two pieces are the same.
"Even with the same pattern, the result is different depending on the tailor's hand," Fabrizio explains. One of the surprises is that the pieces in the collection are double-sided. On the one hand, the wax fabrics with their colourful designs. On the other, the highly prized material from Lanificio Paoletti, which has been processing wool from the Belluno Pre-Alps since 1795, filled without bleaching and with farm-to-table principles of production."

ellereportage



LA STOFFA DEI SOGNI

A TREVISO, UN PROGETTO NATO PER STRAPPARE I MIGRANTI ALL'INATTIVITÀ FORZATA E HA TRASFORMATI IN SARTI DI LIEVELLO. OGGI REALIZZANO PEZZI UNICI CHE AMANO: TESSUTURA CANE E L'UNICERO STILE "BBT". MA SONO IL MEGLIO DEL MADE IN ITALY

di Paolo Marzotto e Francesco de Luca

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ellereportage

Sturges ha il nome di un famoso giapponese e vive nel Confucio, l'edificio in stile cinese che si trova nella frazione di Sesto San Giovanni, a Milano. È qui che il designer ha ideato la sua collezione. Sturges ha il nome di un famoso giapponese e vive nel Confucio, l'edificio in stile cinese che si trova nella frazione di Sesto San Giovanni, a Milano. È qui che il designer ha ideato la sua collezione.

Se uno non ha una vocazione, prima o poi diventerà un realista. Non c'è da dire, Sturges è un realista. Ma non per questo è meno creativo. È un designer che ha ideato la sua collezione. Sturges ha il nome di un famoso giapponese e vive nel Confucio, l'edificio in stile cinese che si trova nella frazione di Sesto San Giovanni, a Milano. È qui che il designer ha ideato la sua collezione.



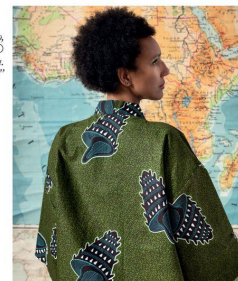
Costruire il futuro

L'idea di Sturges è nata da una sua visita in Italia. L'idea di Sturges è nata da una sua visita in Italia. L'idea di Sturges è nata da una sua visita in Italia. L'idea di Sturges è nata da una sua visita in Italia. L'idea di Sturges è nata da una sua visita in Italia.



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"Quando finisco un capo, IRACZAI, INDOSSANO e si fotografano a vicenda. Poi mandano le foto ACASA"



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Vogue

“The Mixité by Talking Hands capsule collection - which includes kimonos, blankets and bags - will be on show at a special event during Venice Fashion Week on Monday 21 October at Novecento, the charming boutique hotel in Venice. And they will then be available for the guests of the Romanelli Family residences.”



Exhibitions

1

Design Collisions, Official Fuorisalone event, April 2018, Milan

2

The Migrant Trend, Macro - Museum of Contemporary Art, April 2019, Rome

3

The Shape of Water, Altaroma, July 2019, Rome

4

Gdynia Design Days, July 2019, Gdynia, Poland

5

Territorio Italia , Porto Design Biennale, September 2019 Porto, Portugal

6

Mixité, Fondaco Marcello, October 2020, Venice, Italy

7

Infinite Creativity for a Finite World, Expo Action, March 2021, La Villette, Paris, France

Team





SANRYO



SEYBA



ALAGIE



SHERIFFO



OUSMAN



ANSUMANA



SAMUEL



YANKUBA



LAUREN



LINDA



LAMIN



KEBBA



MONICA



YARA



ZOE



LAMIN



**STUDIO
ZANELLATO/
BORTOTTO**



MATTEO

Our Team

Together for the community, social change and the common good.



Our Founder

Fabrizio Urettini

Born 1972, Fabrizio is an activist and art director. His work ranges from image design for public and private clients, to the curation of events and exhibitions. His previous project, gallery Spazio XYZ, presented more than 40 shows in 2008-2012.

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