

Dramatic glass fountain added to new Milan Apple store

Foster+Partners has completed its new Apple store in Milan, featuring a dramatic glass fountain on its roof at the end of the public piazza. Named Apple Piazza Liberty, the new store opened to the public this month.



Image © Apple

Just off the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, one of the most popular pedestrian streets in Milan, visitors will first encounter a dramatic glass fountain that serves as the entrance to the store and a backdrop to the large outdoor amphitheater.

Apple Piazza Liberty provides a grand venue for Today at Apple, free hourly sessions on photography, filmmaking, music creation, coding, design and more. Apple has also announced that this September, Apple Piazza Liberty will host a special month-long Milan Series, where 21 local artists will share their visions for the creative future of Milan.

Learn, create, connect

The piazza, clad in Beola Grigia, a stone used throughout Milan, will be open to the public 24 hours a day and will host special events year-round amongst 14 Gleditsia Sunburst trees planted in the area.



Image © Foster+Partners

"There's no better expression of our vision for Apple stores serving as modern-day gathering places than Apple Piazza Liberty," said Angela Ahrendts, Apple's senior vice president of retail.

"In a city with such rich history of art, entertainment and creativity, it's an honour to establish a space where anyone can be inspired to learn, create and connect with their neighbours."

The interior is a bright, monolithic space, metaphorically carved out of the same stone as the plaza above. The ceiling follows the stepped profile of the amphitheater, with skylights and backlit ceiling panels that innovatively combine artificial and natural light.

Through the roof and stairs, warm shafts of sun penetrate deep into the sunken store, connecting the interior with the light and rhythm of Milan and giving it a feel of a spacious daylight-filled art gallery. The stairs leading into the store consist of polished stainless-steel clad cantilevering treads that also become a sculptural light installation, creating a theatrical and exciting experience.



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Great responsibility

"To work within one of Italy's historic piazzas is both a great responsibility and wonderful challenge," said Jony Ive, Apple's chief design officer.

"We combined two fundamental elements of the Italian piazza — water and stone — adding a glass portal that creates a multi-sensory experience as visitors enter the store through a cascading fountain that seems to envelop them."



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"There can be no greater honour and responsibility than to create a new public plaza in Italy, whose piazzas and urban spaces have always inspired us. The fountain is an expression of child-like excitement that speaks to each one of us. In its simplicity, it echoes the idea of walking into a big fountain without getting wet, and the joy of being alive," said Stefan Behling, head of Foster + Partners.

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