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## **Apple opens Milan's newest public square**

Apple Piazza Liberty is an ensemble of two fundamental elements, a stepped plaza and a fountain. Located just off the Corso Vittorio Emanuele – one of the most popular pedestrian streets in Milan – visitors are drawn towards the piazza by the sight of the dramatic new fountain.

The project is another example of the close collaboration between the design team at Apple led by chief design officer, Sir Jonathan Ive and Angela Ahrendts, senior vice president of Retail and Online Stores and Foster + Partners.

A celebration of the joys of city life and embodying its dynamic nature, the signature water feature is an interactive, multisensory experience. Visitors enter the fountain through a glass-covered entrance enveloped by the sights and sounds of vertical jets of water that splash against the 26-foot high glass walls. An immersive recreation of the childhood game of running through fountains, the experience changes throughout the day as sunlight filters through the water, while at night the glass ceiling creates a kaleidoscopic effect, with the water falling down the walls, and its reflections travelling infinitely up the sky.

Stefan Behling, Head of Studio, Foster + Partners, commented: "There can be no greater honor 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."

The fountain flows down into the base of the Amphitheatre, a new social hub and an outdoor extension of 'Today at Apple'. The Amphitheater is defined by broad and sun-soaked stone steps descending below street level and opening up to a stage, backed by a second fountain's wall of water. The entire plaza is newly created and paved with Beola Grigia – a typical local stone from Lombardy, and surrounded by 21 new Gleditsia Sunburst trees.

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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### **For further information**

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