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Final Thesis

Expo's Number One Pavilion?

A Case Study of Italy Pavilion's Visitor Experience
at the Expo 2025 Osaka

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Abstract

In 2025, Japan hosted the Expo 2025 in Osaka, Kansai. This event was advertised all over Japan as it hosted almost all nations from across the globe. This way, the artificial island Yumeshima has become a melting pot where nations from all across the globe got the chance to showcase their culture and the ways in which they are facing an unspoken race towards modernization. This ever-increasing competition for modernization becomes apparent through the theme for last year's international exposition. Under the slogan "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", all participating countries were encouraged to reveal their most advanced technological discoveries in the form of national pavilions that had been built on Yumeshima. And by consequence of this, a highly competitive environment had been created in which every nation was taking part in the run for the "number one pavilion" spot. This research focuses on studying why the Italy Pavilion was the forerunner amongst all the international pavilions, and how its popularity affected visitor interactions. For example, why were visitors willing to queue for several hours just to visit it? The methodology applied consists of a mixed methods approach. First, the demographic data of visitors shall be analyzed in order to determine interests of different generations, as well as spending habits and the funds spent on one's trip to Yumeshima; the latter being particularly of interest when considering how many foreign visitors the Expo had. To achieve that, the survey includes questions to determine quantitative data about the visitors, such as their origins or age. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of individual opinions on the Italy Pavilion, direct Interviews were also conducted. The questionnaire also consists of qualitative questions, aimed at understanding the particular reasons behind what they liked about the pavilion. The research does not consider the opinion of every single visitor but is limited to a sample group that is used to estimate the point of view of entirety of the guests. This research provides a comprehensive study on visitors' multifaceted opinions, using Italy Pavilion's success as a case study.

要旨

2025 年日本国際博覧会の開幕に先立ち、「news ランナー」は来場者が最も楽しみにしているパビリオンを調べるアンケート調査を実施した。意外なことに、イタリア館が 1 位を獲得した。この傾向はその後のランキングでも続き、イタリア館は順位を維持しているようであった。

本研究の目的は、イタリア館が他のすべての国際館の中で先駆けとなった理由、およびその人気が来場者の行動にどのような影響を与えたかを解明することである。例えば、なぜ来場者たちは、そこを訪れるためだけに数時間も並んで待とうとしたのだろうか。

本稿執筆時点では、イタリア館の人気を裏付ける具体的な要因を検証した研究はまだ存在しない。この学術研究の空白を埋めることは必要不可欠であり、それによって日本人来場者がイタリアとその文化をどのように認識し、関わっているかが明らかになるだろう。本研究は、今後の研究の基礎となるものである。

本研究では、定量的データと定性的データの両方を用いた混合研究法を採用した。イタリア館の展示および万博全般に関する来場者の嗜好や意見（定性的データ）に加え、出身地や年齢（定量的データ）を把握するため、アンケート調査を実施した。本研究は、すべての来場者の意見を考慮するものではなく、来場者全体の視点を推定するために用いられる標本グループに限定されている。また、私はイタリア館でインターンとして勤務していたため、現場での調査を行うという特権を得て、直接観察も研究手法の一つとして採用した。現地調査に加え、テレビ番組、公式サイト、学術論文、雑誌などの二次資料も研究に活用された。

国際博覧会とは何か、その歴史的変遷について簡潔に説明した後、ある種の展示形式が他の形式よりも選ばれる理由について分析する。具体的には、美術作品では

なくスクリーンや映像を展示の一部として取り入れることについて、ナショナル・アイデンティティとの関連性を論じる。

イタリア館について、聖座パビリオンや特別展示を含め、詳細な研究が不可欠であった。本研究では、展示された各作品について詳細な分析を行う。これは、展示全体を構成する様々な要素をより深く理解するためだけでなく、調査の質問の一つとして「お気に入りの作品」を選定する必要があったためである。その際、主な情報源として「Italy Expo 2025 Osaka」の公式サイトを利用した。この公式サイトは、来場者が各作品の説明プレートに貼られたQRコードを通じて、訪問中にアクセスできたサイトであったためである。

本調査は、来場者や展示に関する定性的と定量的データを収集するために実施された。これにより、長い行列がパビリオンの好感度に影響を与えたかどうか、来場者に最も好評だった作品はどれか、そして来場者がイタリア館の特徴として何を挙げているのかといった点を把握することができた。複数のパビリオンを訪れた来場者には、どのパビリオンが最も気に入ったかを選択していただき、どのパビリオンが1位にランクインしたかを把握した。イタリア館を訪れた総人数が不明であるため、来場者数に基づく全パビリオンの実際の順位を算出することは不可能ですが、本調査を通じて、イタリア館が人気ランキングで1位を獲得したかどうかを測ることができた。

本研究から浮上した主な批判点を検討した後、これらの批判点をより深く理解するために、ソーシャルメディア「X」上の投稿についても分析を行う。

最後に、2025年日本国際博覧会の開催後に起きた出来事、例えば万博が築き上げた遺産や、夢洲の万博開催地に関する大阪市の将来計画などについて、振り返りを加える。万博の閉幕に伴い、「BIEデー公式式典及び表彰セレモニー」が開催された。

この式典において、イタリア館は「テーマ解釈部門受賞者」部門の「公式参加者褒賞」で最優秀賞を受賞した。この賞は、万博のテーマである「いのち輝く未来社会のデザイン」を各パビリオンがどのように展開したかを評価するものであり、おそらく最も権威ある賞であったと言えるだろう。

本調査の結果、イタリア館が来場者に最も人気のあるパビリオンであるとみなせることは明らかである。これは、「PEN」や「日経トレンディ」といったウェブサイトによるランキングだけでなく、調査の結果、回答者の中でイタリア館が第 1 位となったことから裏付けられる。さらに、「イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか」や「イタリア館を訪問した後、イタリアが自らにどのようなイメージを与えますか」といった質問に対する来場者の回答を分析した結果、イタリア館の成功は、館内に本物の芸術作品が展示されていることに起因していることが明らかになった。

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Introduction

In 2025, Japan hosted the Expo 2025 in Osaka, Kansai. This event was advertised all over Japan as it hosted almost all nations from across the globe. This way, the artificial island Yumeshima has become a melting pot where nations from across the globe got the chance to showcase their culture and the ways in which they are facing an unspoken race towards modernization. This ever-increasing competition for modernization becomes apparent through the theme for last year's universal exhibition. Under the slogan "Designing Future Society for Our Lives", all participating countries were encouraged to reveal their most advanced technological discoveries in the form of national pavilions that had been built on Yumeshima. And by consequence of this, a highly competitive environment had been created. This environment prompted every nation to take part in the run for the "number one pavilion" spot. Important to consider for this research is that, according to *Nikkei Trendy*, the Italy Pavilion was considered the number one pavilion to visit amongst international pavilions¹. *Pen* also includes the Italy Pavilion in its "5 Must-See World Pavilions" as its number one spot, citing pieces such as *the Italian Space Agency's Interactive Screen*, the underwater technology showcased in the *Italy of Patents* section, and the presence of the Holy See Pavilion with its piece *The Entombment of Christ*². This research focuses on studying why the Italy Pavilion was the forerunner amongst all the international pavilions, and how its popularity affected visitor interactions. For example, why were visitors willing to queue for several hours just to visit it?

Many news outlets were reporting on Italy Pavilion's success, but it is much harder to find the reason for this surge in popularity. It is thus crucial to uncover what the key elements that make an Expo pavilion worthy of visiting are. Although the Expo is an event that occurs every five years, there is no official formula that each nation can follow in order to achieve success, and since a pavilion essentially represents the image that a nation wants to show of itself, it becomes vital to learn whether the current strategies are working or not. Moreover, many Italian regions invested copious amounts of public funds

¹ "L'inserto del Nikkei, 'Padiglione Italia è primo da non perdere'." *Ansa*, 27 July 2025, https://www.ansa.it/expo_2025_osaka/notizie/2025/07/27/inserto-del-nikkei-padiglione-italia-e-primo-da-non-perdere_21acbbd1-8316-45ac-bed2-b82fda90cbcc.html.

² Pen Henshūbu. "【 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku 】 Dezain Ni Mo Chūmoku Shitai Sekai No Pabirion Gosen." *Pen Online*, pen-online.jp, 13 Mar. 2025, <https://www.pen-online.jp/article/018252.html>.

to ensure that their participation at the exposition would be successful. Of course, this was not without controversies, hence it is fundamental to understand whether these investments were worthwhile³. Due to insufficient preexisting academic literature aimed at studying the reason behind the traction of the Italy Pavilion currently, it was necessary to conduct research. For this, it was necessary to use empirical research using questionnaires and interviews to collect qualitative data.

This research focuses on studying why the Italy Pavilion was often considered the forerunner amongst all the international pavilions in regard to popularity, and how this popularity impacts visitor interactions. For example, why were visitors willing to queue for several hours just to visit it. This research provides a comprehensive study on visitors' multifaceted opinions, using Italy Pavilion's success as a case study.

According to Mario Vattani, Italy Pavilion's Commissioner General, the Pavilion was "the most mentioned at the Expo 2025 Osaka, with queues of up to five hours waiting"⁴. It comes naturally to start wondering why the Expo visitors were willing to wait for such a long time in the scalding Kansai climate to visit one of the many exhibits in Yumeshima. Thus, it became necessary to research what differentiates the Italy Pavilion from all the other national pavilions. One of the possible reasons could be the fact that Italy, unlike most other countries at the Expo, had transported real artwork all the way from Italy. The exhibit included sculptures, paintings, models, and screens. Furthermore, the rooms they were showcased in themselves were integral parts of the exhibition. The showcased artwork dates from the second century all the way to contemporary art from the year 2023⁵. The people directing the pavilion themselves also seemed to prioritize the artwork, by deciding on the motto "Art Regenerates Life", thus placing the art to the forefront. Part of this research is aimed at understanding whether the visitors preferred the artistic parts of the exhibition over the scientific and technological ones. In this way it would be possible to understand if the presence of real artwork from masters like Michelangelo and Caravaggio was a determining factor in the popularity of the Pavilion⁶.

³ Valeri, Valerio. "Regione Lazio, ecco tutte le spese sostenute dalla giunta Rocca per l'Expo di Osaka." *RomaToday*, 31 May 2025, <https://www.romatoday.it/politica/tutte-le-spesa-regione-lazio-osaka-2025.html>.

⁴ Netti, Enrico. "Osaka, Padiglione Italia a trazione imprenditoriale e culturale." *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 13 June 2025, <https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/osaka-italy-pavilion-entrepreneurial-and-cultural-traction-AHmN8KFB>.

⁵ "Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/atozuopintoinsutareshiyon>.

⁶ "Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

To test this theory, a qualitative survey was conducted to ask the visitors coming out of the pavilion what their favorite part of the exhibition was, then grouping all the individual answers regarding each artwork into macro categories such as “artwork” and “technology”. The quantitative data provided by the questionnaire was then analyzed and combined with the qualitative data, thus finding out which part of the exhibition each age group prefers, with the goal of studying if the age of the visitors was a factor in the traction of the Pavilion. Another element that seems to prove that the presence of original works of art was part of the success of the Italy Pavilion is the fact that *Esquire Japan* had named the Pavilion the number one for “High Culture”⁷. The magazine’s reason behind this decision was the fact that the Pavilion managed to perfectly combine music, cuisine, art, and architecture, making even the queue an essential part of the visitor experience⁸. A further analysis of the queue as an integral part of the visitor experience will be provided in a later section of this research.

Literature Review

Mega-events have been a topic of discussion in much research. However, scholars have yet to consider the impact of one of the most recent long-standing mega-events, the Expo 2025 Osaka. Particularly the Italy Pavilion is of interest here, not only because of my own personal experience working as an intern at said Pavilion, but also because of the vast media coverage naming it “number one”⁹. As the aim of this paper is to find out what made this Pavilion so popular amongst all the other pavilions present at the Expo, prior research regarding national identity, mega-events, and the kind of exhibitions and their message shall be used as a fundamental basis for analysis.

⁷ Bolzani, Alessandro. “Expo 2025, Esquire Japan premia il Padiglione Italia: “Eccellenza nella cultura e nell’innovazione.” *Alanews*, 8 August 2025, <https://www.alanews.it/esteri/expo-2025-esquire-japan-premia-il-padiglione-italia-eccellenza-nella-cultura-e-nellinnovazione/>.

⁸ Bolzani. “Expo 2025, Esquire Japan premia il Padiglione Italia: “Eccellenza nella cultura e nell’innovazione.”

⁹ “EXPO 2025 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku | Chisei Ga Yusaburareru Pabirion Sen.” *Esquire*. 7 August 2025. <https://www.esquire.com/jp/lifestyle/travel/a65358795/expo2025-best-pavilions/>; “L’inserto del Nikkei, ‘Padiglione Italia è primo da non perdere’.” *Ansa*, 27 July 2025, https://www.ansa.it/expo_2025_osaka/notizie/2025/07/27/linserto-del-nikkei-padiglione-italia-e-primo-da-non-perdere_21acbbd1-8316-45ac-bed2-b82fda90cbcc.html; Pen Henshūbu. “【 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku 】 Dezain Ni Mo Chūmoku Shitai Sekai No Pabirion Gosen.” *Pen Online*, pen-online.jp, 13 Mar. 2025, <https://www.pen-online.jp/article/018252.html>.

Roche (2002) provides a definition of mega-events which also constitutes the Expo, namely that they are events that contribute to the development and the meaning, of aspects such as “public culture” and “cultural inclusion and exclusion” in modern societies in both national and international contexts¹⁰. An example of mega-events are Expos and the Olympic Games. Furthermore, prior to television becoming a main source of information gain, these mega-events functioned as the main channels of cultural globalization, but they still retain influence to this day¹¹. One key aspect of Roche’s research into mega-events is the identification of three sets of binary characteristics: modern/nonmodern, local/nonlocal, and national/nonnational, that are applicable to the study of the Expo 2025 Osaka¹². To further elaborate, Roche explains that they are modern, because they are based on capitalism, urbanism, universalistic humanism, and transnationality; but they are also nonmodern because they refer to “modernity’s changing versions of its past and future”¹³ and thus there is a need to quote the past in order to highlight modernity, and modernity’s preceding times can be considered “traditional”¹⁴. The Expos are national, as they are nationally-based and involve the host nation, with “host-state nationalism” and “official versions of the host-state ‘public sphere’ [...] and populist ‘inclusion’ strategies in this public sphere”¹⁵; mega-events are also “inter-national”, as they involve the representation of other countries, they develop “touristic consumerism”, and in this context the host nation has more power than any other participating country, fitting in a “quasi-imperial” role¹⁶. They are local, as these events are about the particularity of a place’s image, and can be analyzed as urban events because they have the power to transform an area of the host city, they project this city and reposition it in the global economic competition; they are nonlocal because in the late twentieth century they became “media events”, and worked in symbiosis with the mass press, especially through television in the post-war period, because the organizers could promote the event and the “commercial advertising and/or political propaganda

¹⁰ Roche, Maurice. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*. Routledge, 2002, 1.

¹¹ Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 7.

¹² Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 8.

¹³ Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 9.

¹⁴ Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 8-9.

¹⁵ Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 8.

¹⁶ Roche. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*, 9-10.

connected with the event”¹⁷. The three sets of binary characteristics, especially the international and national aspects of the Expos, are useful in the understanding of the scale and the message of the event. However, the research at hand will not delve into the inherent characteristics of mega-events, but rather apply them onto the specific case of the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. Moreover, the definition of the Expo as a “mega-event” is useful in the study of said event, and it will be recurrent in the research.

Rembold (1999) and Auerbach (1995) provide a retrospective on previous mega-events. According to Auerbach the fairs that were held in Europe during the late Middle Ages were the predecessors of the modern Expos; they were able to mobilize the people from various regions and gather them together, and represented displays of power and authority, other than a way to showcase new products and to have economic exchanges¹⁸. With time these fairs evolved, and in the nineteenth century in Britain these events were a combination of theatre, fair, art, and science¹⁹. The subsequent exhibitions starting from the Great Exhibition of 1851 of the nineteenth and twentieth century had many characteristics in common with the fairs of the early modern period, such as the inclusion of the arts and labor-saving machines, but differed in size and scale, and the involvements of governments²⁰. An example analyzed by Rembold is the first international exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace in London launched by Prince Albert and Henry Cole²¹. Particularly of interest here is the status that came with hosting such an event as it became, according to Rembold, only comparable to the prestige of hosting the Olympic Games in the modern era²². Rembold also states that from the first Expo in 1851 onwards, such events served to encourage peaceful competition in arts and industries between participating countries, and these exhibitions are inherently connected to culture, and were thus not only used as a way to display goods but also to convey ideas about a nation’s identity²³. These historical accounts will be referenced in the thesis with the goal to provide a basic understanding of what the Expo is and how it evolved, although not in the same depth as Auerbach, who

¹⁷ Roche, Maurice. *Megaevents and modernity: Olympics and expos in the growth of global culture*. Routledge, 2002, 10.

¹⁸ Auerbach, Jeffrey Aaron. “Exhibiting the nation: British national identity and the Great Exhibition of 1851.” *Yale University*, 1995, 12-13.

¹⁹ Auerbach. “Exhibiting the nation: British national identity and the Great Exhibition of 1851.”, 13.

²⁰ Auerbach. “Exhibiting the nation: British national identity and the Great Exhibition of 1851.”, 13-14.

²¹ Rembold, Elfie. “Exhibitions and National Identity.” *National Identities*, vol. 1, no. 3, Nov. 1999, 221.

²² Rembold. “Exhibitions and National Identity.”, 221.

²³ Rembold. “Exhibitions and national identity.”, 221-222.

analyzed the link between the fairs held in the Middle Ages and the modern Expos. Contrary to that, Rembold's idea of the more modern Expos as peaceful competitions, alongside the idea that the various nations taking part in the Expos exhibit not only goods but also their idea of "national identity", is analogous with the research conducted.

Nishimura (2025) argues that the 1893 Expo embodies the most characteristic exhibitions of an Expo, mainly the specific public utilities that made their first appearance there, such as Thomas Edison's inventions which utilized electricity²⁴. This was also an Expo in which wireless communication and the telephone were seen by the public, starting the telecommunication industry²⁵. Moreover, the 1900 Paris Exposition saw the opening of the Paris Metro²⁶. Nishimura also argues that the 1970 Osaka Expo might have represented the precursor of the Third Industrial Revolution, which used information as a source for growth²⁷. According to Nishimura, the Expo 2025 Osaka started various initiatives aimed at pioneering efforts towards carbon neutrality, with the carbon-free electricity generated from renewable sources and nuclear power, and the absorption and reuse of CO₂, thanks to the Gas and Electricity Pavilions²⁸. Nishimura also states that the most recent Expo provided the ideal scenario for new technologies and explanations regarding transportation and energy to be looked back at a later date, much like it happened in the 19th century, with previous Expos and electricity, the telephone, and the subway²⁹. Although Nishimura uses the most recent Expo as the basis for his analysis, also touching on the national pavilions of the Gas and Electricity Pavilions, and the impact that this Expo will have in the future of technology, this research will be based on the cultural impact rather than the technological impact of the Italy Pavilion in particular.

The scholars Jones and Ponzini (2018) analyze the aim of mega-events. They argue that events such as the Expos started as a way to bring together various nations in order to constitute "friendly competitions" to showcase the latest cutting-edge technologies but have then taken in new meanings such as becoming tools for mass tourism and urban

²⁴ Nishimura, Akira. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai." *Kōeki Jigyō Kenkyū*, vol. 77, no. 1, 30 Sept. 2025, 53-54.

²⁵ Nishimura. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai.", 53-54.

²⁶ Nishimura. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai.", 54.

²⁷ Nishimura. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai.", 54.

²⁸ Nishimura. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai.", 54.

²⁹ Nishimura. "Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kara Mitōsu Kōeki Jigyō No Mirai.", 56.

development³⁰. Ferraz de Matos et al. (2022) conclude that Expos represent an opportunity for competition amongst nations, a sentiment that recurs when considering the position as number one of the Italy Pavilion³¹. Ferraz de Matos et al. also analyze potential collateral benefits from hosting a mega-event, namely compensation in the form of the event's publicity and achievement; thus, "wealthy individuals, institutions, and museums infused the fairs with elements of trade and business, shaping several aspects of society"³², and are influencing architecture, arts, urban planning, music, mass entertainment, and consumption³³. This concept of the Expos as a competition provided by Jones and Ponzini and by Ferraz de Matos et al. will provide the basis for the analysis of the unofficial rankings that the Italy Pavilion seemingly dominated. Additionally, the aftermath of the Expo 2025 Osaka will also be analyzed, namely what will be left of it and what Japan might gain from it, as both papers have also delved into in a more general way.

The scholar Beese (2021) states that the study of the World Fairs can be divided into two categories, one that looks at "the ideas rhetorically expressed by the Fair" and the other takes "the Fair as a symbol representing a particular, often nostalgic experience"³⁴. The first one is more common in "modern criticism of the Fair", as it focuses on the experience of the Fair itself and its effects; the second one is more common in "historical studies of the Fair", as it focuses on the "way the Fair was remembered or the impact it had on its visitors"³⁵. Similarly, the logic behind a pavilion's choice in what to exhibit and how to exhibit it covers various aspects analyzed by Smits and Jansen (2012). They conclude that it primarily focuses on the way the people from the host country will perceive it, as they will represent the vast majority of visitors³⁶. This

³⁰ Jones, Zachary M., and Davide Ponzini. "Mega-Events and the Preservation of Urban Heritage: Literature Gaps, Potential Overlaps, and a Call for Further Research." *Journal of Planning Literature*, vol. 33, no. 4, 19 June 2018, 443.

³¹ Ferraz de Matos, Patrícia, Hande Birkalan-Gedik, Andrés Barrera-González, and Pegi Vail. "Introduction: World Fairs, Exhibitions and Anthropology: Revisiting Contexts of Post-Colonialism." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, vol. 31, no. 2, 1 Sept. 2022, 2.

³² Ferraz de Matos et al. "Introduction: World Fairs, Exhibitions and Anthropology: Revisiting Contexts of Post-Colonialism.", 2-3.

³³ Ferraz de Matos et al. "Introduction: World Fairs, Exhibitions and Anthropology: Revisiting Contexts of Post-Colonialism.", 2-3.

³⁴ Beese, Benjamin. "The Fair of the Future: Developments in Society and Modernity at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Middlebury." *Thesis*, 6.

³⁵ Beese. "The Fair of the Future: Developments in Society and Modernity at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Middlebury.", 6-7.

³⁶ Smits, Katherine, and Alix Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs." *National Identities*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2012, 173.

research will combine both kinds of World Fairs' studies identified by Beese, thus gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Expo 2025 Osaka as a whole, and the personal experience of its visitors. Moreover, Smits and Jansen's theory that each international pavilion focuses on how the visitors from the host country will perceive the exhibitions will be used to explain the decisions behind the Italy Pavilion's choice in exhibited pieces.

Ultimately, the research presented provides a fundament to build further analysis on. Roche provided the core characteristics of the Expos, alongside the term "mega-events" to refer to the Expos; Auerbach analyzed the beginnings of the Expos, even before the 1891 Great Exhibition; Rembold delved into the idea of national identity that each nation tries to convey; Nishimura argued that the most recent Expo will have great impact on the future of technology; Jones and Ponzini and Ferraz de Matos et al. were responsible for theorizing that the Expos might represent a chance to create a friendly competition between participating countries; Beese analyzed the analysis of the Expos itself, studying the two different ways in which the event can be studied; Smits and Jansens studied the notion according to which each international pavilion considers the visitors from the host country as the main audience of its exhibition. Although only Smits and Jansen's paper has been directly quoted in this research, the other scholars' impact permeates every study regarding the Expos, including this.

Accordingly, this thesis' research will use the experience and the opinions of the Italy Pavilion's visitors as data, combining the results to first, measure the Pavilion's success, and second, to find out what were the elements that could have brought such success.

Methodology

The methodology consists of a mixed methods approach. The survey included questions to determine quantitative data about the visitors, such as their origins or age. It is important to analyze the demographic data of visitors in order to determine interests of different generations. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of individual opinions on the Italy Pavilion, the visitors were asked to freely talk about their opinions and preferences when giving their answer to open-ended questions. Thus, the questionnaire also consisted of qualitative questions, aimed at understanding the particular reasons

behind what visitors liked about the pavilion. With that, the numerical demographic data was combined with individual preferences, providing a way to study a particular group's preferences. The research does not consider the opinion of every single visitor but is limited to a sample group that was used to estimate the point of view of entirety of the guests. Due to lack of proper research, this has worked as a primary source. Newspapers, Magazines, and Television programs also aided as secondary sources.

Alongside the previously mentioned methodology, some observation as a research method was also conducted from May 2025 to July of the same year. This research has been conducted by myself, as I had the chance to work for the Italy Pavilion and personally analyze it as well as the surveyed visitors. Observation as a method of data collection employs the researcher's senses. The researcher then transforms the observed into evidence and information³⁷. This kind of research method also offers a way of analyzing a cultural and social event or phenomenon in its natural set up. It also allows the researcher to examine the minds of the observed subjects, providing the researcher with a way to understand the surroundings and behaviors of the subjects of the research, which could only be learnt via observation³⁸. Additionally, this research utilized unstructured and uncontrolled observational research. This means that the objects and phenomena were observed in their usual environment without interfering with them, without imposing a structure over them or trying to control the subjects of their study³⁹.

In addition to the research I conducted personally, some papers regarding theory about the history of mega-events and Expos were used as secondary sources, alongside television programs, magazines and websites that talked about the Expo and the Italy Pavilion. Moreover, it was occasionally necessary to use secondary sources to describe the artwork, these secondary sources include for example the artists' official webpages and brochures. For this research, I have also been granted access to parts of the internal documents for the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka from a person working alongside me. These documents have not been published yet and were used to describe the Temporary Exhibitions. The Italian national pavilion at the Expo 2025 Osaka will be referred to by its official name: "Italy Pavilion", which has also been used in internal documents as well as

³⁷ Satapathy, Smritirekha. "Observation as a Tool for Collecting Data". *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, vol. 8, no. 5 (1), May 2019, 152.

³⁸ Satapathy. "Observation as a Tool for Collecting Data.", 153.

³⁹ Satapathy. "Observation as a Tool for Collecting Data.", 155-156.

news outlets, and the shorter and capitalized “Pavilion” will occasionally also be used. The complete analysis of the artwork exhibited at the Italy Pavilion is relevant to further analyze Italy Pavilion’s messaging and the visitors’ preferences.

To study the Pavilion itself, the official website of the Pavilion “Italy Expo 2025 Osaka” was the main resource used. On the website, individual pages were created for each exhibited piece at the Pavilion. The official website was also used as an aiding guide for the description of the Pavilion’s structure and the exhibited pieces. Additionally, the use of the official Italy Pavilion webpages is a tool to further understand what kind of message the Italy Pavilion was trying to convey, and the explanations provided to the visitors, as these pages were not only available for consultations from home, but also directly at the Pavilion, through QR codes that were present on the label plate of every single exhibited piece. Therefore, the analysis of the artwork will be mostly based on what was available to the visitors of the Italy Pavilion. The pages in Japanese were the main resource for this analysis, especially the イタリア館 *Itaria Kan* page in regard to the structure, and the アート作品とインスタレーション *Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon* page, as an overview of all the artwork. Although, since the description of the artwork would sometimes be different based on the language of the webpage, it was sometimes necessary to implement notions from the English pages.

Chapter 1 - The History of International Exhibitions and National Identity

According to Smits and Jansen, the countries taking part in the world's fairs do not only use this occasion to showcase their technological advancements, industries and goods, but instead, and most importantly, they use it as a way to display a nation's ideological and strategic identity⁴⁰. World fairs are additionally a way to show the nation's industrial and economic dominance as compared to others⁴¹. In fact, the earliest world fairs were seen by the hosting countries as an opportunity to self-represent themselves, and to show their legitimacy locally and to also demonstrate their international political significance⁴². Mega-events, such as the Expo, are used to manufacture and display a sense of national identity. They predominantly focus on the audience that will attend the exhibition, which consists mainly of domestic visitors that live in the host country⁴³. Therefore, the exhibitions will be attended, and other exhibited countries will mainly be viewed mainly by people native to the region the exhibition is taking place at⁴⁴. With this in mind, it can be concluded that in the case of the Expo 2025 Osaka, the majority of visitors were Japanese citizens, or native to Osaka specifically. Thus, it can be argued that the Italy Pavilion manufactured its concept of national identity with especially the Japanese visitors' opinion in mind.

The international expositions that took place in the first fifty years, made it clear that there was a need for an independent overseeing organization that could confer the title of "hosting country". Therefore, in 1928, the Bureau International des Expositions (or BIE) was founded in Paris by thirty-one nations⁴⁵. From the 1930s, specifically the Chicago World's Fair, the exhibiting countries did not choose to convey their identity through the architecture of the pavilion itself, but through the display of electronic technology⁴⁶. This trend continued even after the Second World War, with the 1967 Montreal Expo, so much

⁴⁰ Smits, Katherine, and Alix Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs." *National Identities*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2012, 173.

⁴¹ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 173.

⁴² Honisch, Pascal. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015." *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 1.

⁴³ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 173.

⁴⁴ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 173.

⁴⁵ Honisch. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.", 2.

⁴⁶ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 174.

so that Umberto Eco stated that the aim of the world's fairs was no longer to show what a country could produce, but to show how smart a country was in presenting what it produces⁴⁷.

The Expos can be considered friendly rivalries amongst participating countries, but they can also encourage technological advancements to both national and, more importantly, international audiences. They also promote the urban development of the hosting country⁴⁸. To the multiple national pavilions taking part in the Expos, the event does not only require them to compete for the visitors' attention, but it also makes it necessary for each country to distinguish themselves enough in terms of personal experience offered, especially in a world in which globalization is creating a more homogenous world. However, the existence of a common theme for the Expos means that the context itself is homogenizing its themes and settings, perpetrating the idea of a modern mass culture⁴⁹. Expos are also seen as a way to create a valuable "national branding", similar to how the Olympics and FIFA World Cups are seen as events that are able to create a marketing opportunity, so much so that countries compete to host them⁵⁰. To create a narrative that centers around the idea of progress, the exhibitions often showcase technological innovations alongside a romanticization of the past⁵¹. Even in modern Expos, and with the example of the Italy Pavilion in mind, it seems that pavilions keep trying to create this perfect balance between history and innovation, showing what a country is famous for alongside what that country would want to be famous for.

According to Greenhalgh, the expos of the 19th and 20th century had to "cater for the educated, as well as the ignorant"⁵², thus creating a calculated logic behind the kind of national culture that was chosen to be showcased, since it had to be understood by a large section of the population⁵³. During international exhibitions, various countries have continued to display their own idea of national culture and identity through the architecture of the pavilion itself, along with more stereotypical ways like the use of

⁴⁷ Smits, Katherine, and Alix Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs." *National Identities*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2012, 174.

⁴⁸ Honisch, Pascal. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015." *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 1.

⁴⁹ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 175.

⁵⁰ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 176.

⁵¹ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 176.

⁵² Greenhalgh (1988) in Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 176.

⁵³ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 176.

national symbols and flags, traditional performances in the form of dances and songs, and food items available at various pavilion restaurants⁵⁴. This is also the case of the Italy Pavilion, with the colors of the Italian flag being used as part of the Pavilion's symbol, the numerous performances held both inside and outside of the building, and the food available at the Eataly restaurant⁵⁵. International exhibitions have not only promoted the latest advancements, but also selectively utilized cultural symbols, and implemented them in a modern context to create a "national branding". This "national branding", according to Smits and Jansen, has become the main focus of the various countries taking part in the Expos that occurred from the nineties⁵⁶. Through this "national branding" the nations can then shape their history and culture and convey a specific idea⁵⁷. This means that after carefully choosing a message to convey, the national identity to support it can be manufactured to reflect what that message represents.

The paradigm of every world fair has been created on occasion of the Great Exhibition, the first international event that took place in 1851. This paradigm was then utilized by every other international exhibition, such as the ones that occurred in France and in the United States⁵⁸. The Great Exhibition was not only used as a model for other world-wide events, but also as a critique to consumer culture in the middle class, specifically as the "apogee of commodity fetishism" as Marx had described it⁵⁹. This Great Exhibition model, though, saw visitors as merely passive admirers of the aforementioned "national branding"⁶⁰. Until the end of the Second World War, the expos were mainly used as a stage for "nationalist exercises", best exemplified by the architectural competition between the Nazi and Soviet Pavilions during the *Exposition Spécialisée* of 1937 in Paris⁶¹. It was only when the countries' pavilions were influenced by what Smits and Jansen describe as "amusement-fair technologies" that the visitors began to be more interactive with the exhibition⁶². After the Second World War, videos as technology became a more

⁵⁴ Smits, Katherine, and Alix Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs." *National Identities*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2012, 176-177.

⁵⁵ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

⁵⁶ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 177.

⁵⁷ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 177.

⁵⁸ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 177-178.

⁵⁹ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 178.

⁶⁰ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 179.

⁶¹ Honisch, Pascal. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015." *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 2.

⁶² Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 180.

important part of the national displays, since the technological advancements of each country had become so close to each other that showing something for the first time to the visitors was practically impossible. So, the focus of the pavilions switched from the invention itself to the way something was displayed, both in the architecture and in the media used⁶³.

The Expos are tied to the industrial and technological developments of their time. For example, during the first Great Exhibition of 1851, Great Britain showcased the country's economic and technological developments to its six million visitors⁶⁴. During the Industrial Revolution, the newly invented locomotive helped to bring both visitors and exhibits towards London's Crystal Palace⁶⁵. From the post-war period, then, the modernity of a pavilion was shown via the technological innovations used rather than the raw materials (that in the past were frequently taken from a country's colony) that the country was able to show⁶⁶. Video and displays then became one of the most featured parts of the visitors' experience⁶⁷. The Commissioner General of the Italy Pavilion, Mario Vattani, also talked about how during the World's Fairs, even the most recent ones, many pavilions choose to use digital media, videos, as the visitor experience⁶⁸. He also saw this as an opportunity to differentiate the Italy Pavilion from the other national pavilions, using authentic artwork as the main feature⁶⁹.

After the Canada Expo of 1967 utilized film as its main medium, the national pavilions would sometimes use advertising strategies and would also use the Expo as a way to increase tourism. This meant that it was necessary to sell the idea of the nation's daily life to the visitors⁷⁰. The Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka seemed to also have done this, showcasing pieces that sponsored upcoming events and infrastructure. More importantly, this can be said about the temporary exhibitions held by various Italian

⁶³ Smits, Katherine, and Alix Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs." *National Identities*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2012, 180.

⁶⁴ Honisch, Pascal. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015." *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 3.

⁶⁵ Honisch. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.", 3.

⁶⁶ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 178-180.

⁶⁷ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 181.

⁶⁸ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 4 April 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjmLYIVoHfQ>, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

⁶⁹ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

⁷⁰ Smits and Jansen. "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs.", 181-182.

Regions, which seemed to try to entice visitors to visit them, with the implementation of elements such as the live craftsmanship demonstrations⁷¹.

All in all, it becomes evident that the Expo 2025 Osaka has applied many of the elements that have been common at world expositions since their conception. Additionally, videos were used to explain what the pavilions had constructed as their national identity, making the messaging accessible to its visitors regardless of their prior knowledge of Italian culture and history. The combination of past and future, with, in the case of the Italy Pavilion, the use art from the second century AD and the most advanced technology and patents available in Italy. The history of the Expos cannot be ignored, as it is fundamental to understand the Expos of today.

1.1 Expo Legacy - Osaka 1970

The Expo that took place in Osaka in 2025 was not the first time the event was hosted in Japan. Interestingly enough, it was also not the first time the Expo was hosted in Osaka either. In fact, the 1970 World Exposition also had its venue located in Osaka. Japan had tried to become the host country for the Expo two times before 1970, with the first time being in 1912⁷². However, this Expo was cancelled due to the death of the Meiji emperor Matsuhiro⁷³. Afterward, Japan managed to secure the spot as the host country of the 1940 Expo, which was also cancelled. This time, the cancellation was caused by Japan's involvement in the Second World War⁷⁴. In September of 1965, it was formally decided that the International Exhibition would be held in Japan. That was not only first Expo to be held in Japan, but also the first Expo to be held in Asia altogether. The 1970 World Exposition also had its venue located in Osaka. The exhibition lasted from the 15th of March to the 13th of September 1970, for a total of 183 three days⁷⁵. The theme was

⁷¹ "Padiglione Italia – Expo 2025 Osaka Percorso "Nicchie Espositive"." *Camera di Commercio Brindisi-Taranto*, 4 March 2025, <https://www.brta.camcom.it/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka-percorso-nicchie-espositive>.

⁷² Lecardane, Renzo. "Oriente e Occidente all'Expo Osaka 1970, East-West: Artistic and Technological Contaminations / Tōyō - Seiyō Geijutsu ya Gijutsu e no Eikyō Nitsuite". Edited by Alberto Sposito and Anna Mangiarotti. AGATHÓN RCIPIA PhD Monographies 4, Politecnico di Milano, UNIPA, Universitat de Girona. 2013, p. 79.

⁷³ Lecardane. "Oriente e Occidente all'Expo Osaka 1970, East-West: Artistic and Technological Contaminations / Tōyō - Seiyō Geijutsu ya Gijutsu e no Eikyō Nitsuite", p. 79.

⁷⁴ Lecardane. "Oriente e Occidente all'Expo Osaka 1970, East-West: Artistic and Technological Contaminations / Tōyō - Seiyō Geijutsu ya Gijutsu e no Eikyō Nitsuite", p. 79.

⁷⁵ "Ōsaka Banpaku." *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*, <https://www.expo70-park.jp/cause/expo/>.

“Progress and Harmony for Mankind” and saw the international participation of 76 countries, four international organizations, one administrative district to represent Hong Kong, three American states, three Canadian provinces, two American cities, one German city, and two companies⁷⁶. The Japanese domestic participation involved thirty-two organizations, which included the Japanese Government, the Preparatory Committee of the Local Governments’ Pavilion for the Japan World Exposition, two public companies and twenty-eight private corporations⁷⁷. Italy was also one of the participating countries during the 1970 Expo. Italy Pavilion’s concept for the 1970 Expo was “Progress and Tradition in the Developing World” (“開発世界における進歩と伝統”)⁷⁸. The structure of the main building was diagonal, and it was playfully nicknamed the “Leaning Tower of Osaka”, referencing the famous Italian landmark⁷⁹. This design was chosen through a competition, which was won by the Italian architect Tommaso Barre⁸⁰. The way this building was constructed made it so that the side view of the pavilion spelled the Japanese kanji for the word “entrance”, or “入”, creating a bridge between Italian and Japanese culture⁸¹. In the outer area, where the Main Building and the Industrial Pavilion were situated, a full-scale model of the first biplane that successfully flew from Italy to Japan, more specifically from Rome to Tokyo, in 1920⁸². Curiously, a model of the same biplane, the SVA 9, was also exhibited inside the Italy Pavilion for the Expo 2025 in Osaka. This plane has thus been used multiple times at the International Exposition to symbolize the connection between Italy and Japan. Analyzing the Expos from the past aids in the study of the most recent ones, as it seems that the similarities are far greater than the differences, even after a 55-year-long difference between them.

Although the 1970 Expo was the first time any Asian country had the chance to hold an Expo in its territorial borders, it was not the first time Japan had been chosen to host an international event. As a matter of fact, Japan had already been the hosting country for the 1964 Olympics. After the Second World War, Japan experienced a great economic

⁷⁶ “Ōsaka Banpaku.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

⁷⁷ “Ōsaka Banpaku.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

⁷⁸ “Itaria Kan | Banpaku Kinen Kōen.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*, <https://www.expo70-park.jp/cause/expo/itaria/>.

⁷⁹ “Itaria Kan | Banpaku Kinen Kōen.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

⁸⁰ “Itaria Kan | Banpaku Kinen Kōen.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

⁸¹ “Itaria Kan | Banpaku Kinen Kōen.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

⁸² “Itaria Kan | Banpaku Kinen Kōen.” *Banpaku Kinen Kōen*.

growth, which led to the creation of large-scale projects⁸³. It will be thus necessary to study the kind of projects that the Expo 2025 Osaka was able to lead to the creation of.

⁸³Lecardane, Renzo. "Oriente e Occidente all'Expo Osaka 1970, East-West: Artistic and Technological Contaminations / Tōyō - Seiyō Geijutsu ya Gijutsu e no Eikyō Nitsuite". Edited by Alberto Sposito and Anna Mangiarotti. AGATHÓN RCIPIA PhD Monographies 4, Politecnico di Milano, UNIPA, Universitat de Girona. 2013, p. 79.

Chapter 2 - The Exhibition

“Designing Future Society for Our Lives” was the theme of the 2025 Expo, and various interpretations of it could have been found in each national pavilion. Many, for example, had been focused on introducing visitors to the country’s customs, technological advancements, or traditional crafts. In this context, the Italy Pavilion decided to showcase the country’s artistic connection and history. The representatives brought real, historical artwork from Italy to Japan. The artistic presentation also flowed into the showcase of technological advancements, with the panels, scale models and modern screens, which were used as canvases for what was displayed on them.

2.1 The Italy Pavilion

Mario Cucinella and MCA (Mario Cucinella Architects) were entrusted to work on the project of the Pavilion. They reinterpreted the ideal city of the Renaissance and used it as the base for the Pavilion’s design. The concept of the ideal city, or “Città Ideale” in Italian, was developed during the artistic movement of the Renaissance of the 15th century⁸⁴. This concept was used in paintings, and it represented the perfect urban balance. The structure of the Pavilion was developed following these main elements. The building was built using wood, and at the end of the Expo said wood was meant to be used as a resource. They developed the project of the Pavilion in such a way that it would feature the main characteristics of the “ideal city” which also represent the main meeting places of the Italian society: the central square, the theatre, the Italian garden and the porticoes⁸⁵.

⁸⁴ “Itaria Kan.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

⁸⁵ “Itaria Kan.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.



Figure 1 Photograph of the Italy Pavilion. Mario Cucinella Architects. <https://www.mcarchitects.it/progetti/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka>.

The first part of the Pavilion was the Porticoes. These Porticoes were visible even from the outer area of the Pavilion. They were not only structures used to replicate the shape of the Colosseum and other Roman amphitheaters but were also used as Italy Pavilion exhibition areas. In fact, whilst recreating the shape of the arches of the Colosseum, the Porticoes were also used as “exhibition niches”, places in which it was possible for the Italian regions exhibiting their artwork inside the display area during the thematic weeks, to also showcase the region’s traditional craftsmanship, art or regional products⁸⁶.



Figure 2 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of a “Frutta Martorana” creation demonstration at the exhibition niches. 10 June 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

⁸⁶ “Padiglione Italia – Expo 2025 Osaka Percorso “Nicchie Espositive.” Camera di Commercio Brindisi-Taranto, 4 March 2025, <https://www.brta.camcom.it/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka-percorso-nicchie-espositive>.

The next area was the Theatre, an area in which the visitors were asked to sit down and watch a brief introductory video projected onto screens. Once the video finished playing, the screens would open in a similar fashion to doors, and the visitors could proceed towards the next area. The theatre had also hosted various performances throughout the whole duration of the Expo, concerts, opera performances, dances and more. This way, the theatre was a fully functioning part of the exhibition, that also worked as an actual theatre⁸⁷.



Figure 3 Map of the Ground Floor of the Italy Pavilion Adapted from Pianta livello 00 by MCA. Mario Cucinella Architects.
<https://www.mcarchitects.it/progetti/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka>.

The doors led visitors to the Square, which posed as the main area of the exhibition. After entering the Square, there was not a fixed visiting route, and visitors were able to freely access every piece of artwork that was situated in this area. The Square was subsequently divided into four smaller areas titled “Self”, “Us”, “Spirituality”, and “Territory”. Once visitors went through the doors, they first found the “Self” area located to their left. This section was dedicated to the Individual, and it was used to represent the connection between health and the environment, concepts symbolized by the artwork located in the area. To their right, right after entering through the doors, the visitors could see the “Us”

⁸⁷ “Itaria Kan.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

area. The “Us” represented the society, and it housed artwork and screens mainly used to showcase the country’s projects for its future. Further ahead, visitors could visit the “Spirituality” area in the upper right side of the Square. This area was formally part of the Holy See Pavilion. This section was an area enclosed by walls, thus separating it from the rest of the exhibition area. The last part of the “Square” is the upper left part of the planimetry, the “Territory” section. During the seven months of the Expo 2025 Osaka, eighteen of the twenty Italian regions were able to use this area of the Pavilion to showcase the best parts of their culture and technologies. The regional exhibitions were temporary, giving visitors a reason to come back to the Italy Pavilion to see every temporary exhibition⁸⁸. But the Italian regions were not the only ones having the opportunity to utilize this space. In fact, the Pavilion had various thematic weeks, such as the “Fashion Week” temporary exhibition held in from the 25th to the 30th of May⁸⁹. Because of the extensive number of exhibited pieces, the “Territory” area warrants its own chapter, in which the underlining message that each Italian region wanted to convey will be analyzed.

● **Garden**

● **“Eataly” restaurant**

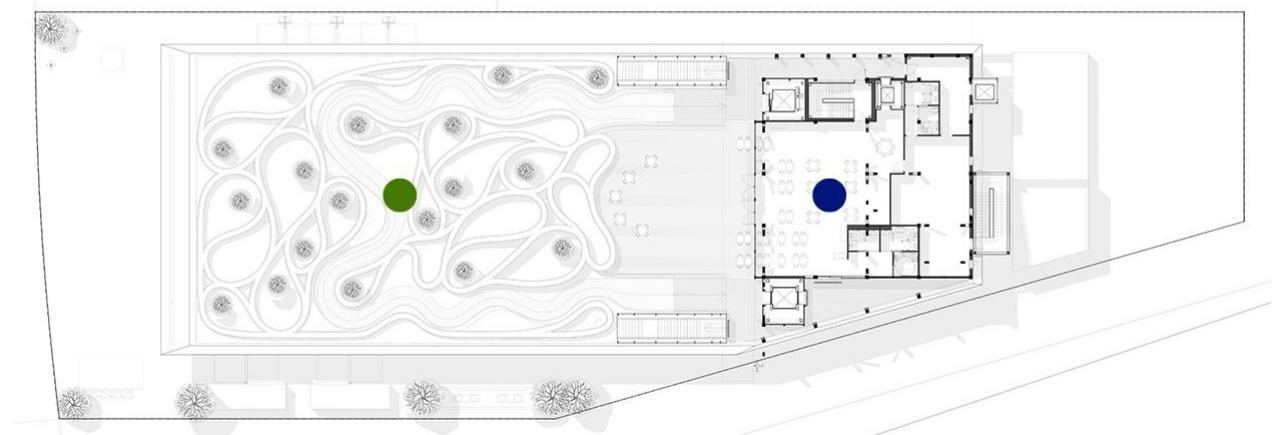


Figure 4 Map of the Second Floor of the Italy Pavilion Adapted from Pianta livello 02 by MCA. Mario Cucinella Architects.
<https://www.mcarchitects.it/progetti/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka>.

⁸⁸ “Itaria Kan.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

⁸⁹ “La mostra L'Italia è di Moda vola all'Expo di Osaka.” *Ansa*, 30 April 2025, https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cultura/moda/2025/04/30/la-mostra-litalia-e-di-moda-vola-allexpo-di-osaka_b75f44a8-8f87-4552-892a-8e1444894846.html.

As already mentioned, the Italy Pavilion's visitor experience was not limited to the "Square". The highest floor of the building housed the "Italian Garden" and the Eataly restaurant. The garden was an open space that combined nature and art. A fixed route would guide visitors through various plants and sculptures, and visitors could also see the outer Expo structure, the "Grand Ring". On the same level as the garden, the Eataly restaurant allowed visitors from all over the world to savor traditional Italian cuisine. This way, Italy's culinary traditions were thus part of the exhibition, with a menu that changed based on the Pavilion's thematic week. The last area accessible to the public was the Multimedia and Multifunction room, an auditorium in which many of the daily events of the Italy Pavilion were held, such as workshops, panels, and conferences⁹⁰. To further understand what Italy Pavilion's distinguishing aspects were and which part of the exhibition visitors liked best, it is necessary to study each piece present at the Expo under Italy and the Holy See's shared roof.

2.2 Portrait of Itō Mancio

One of the first artworks visible right after the opening of the screen doors of the Theatre was the "Itō Mancio" portrait, situated on the right side of the Square of the Italy Pavilion⁹¹.



Figure 5 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Itō Mancio's Portrait. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

⁹⁰ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

⁹¹ "Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/atozuopintoinsutareshiyon>.

The young man portrayed in this picture is Itō Mancio. He was originally from the former Tonokori of the Hyuga Province, the current city of Saito in the Miyazaki Prefecture, and his grandfather Itō Yoshisuke was the lord of the Tonokori Castle. He then escaped to Bungo once Hyuga had been conquered by the clan Shimazu. Itō Mancio got his name in 1580, after being baptized, taking it from the Portuguese martyr Saint Mancio⁹². Itō Mancio was one of the four boys, all around thirteen years of age, from the Jesuit school “Arima Seinario”. They started their journey to Europe in February of 1582 as delegates to the Christian feudal lords of the Japanese island of Kyushu. This journey has been called the “Tenshō Embassy”, after the Japanese Tenshō Era. The four young boys embarked on a voyage, which led them to stop in various countries, like Spain, Portugal, and Italy. In Italy they stopped in various cities, namely Rome, Venice, and Florence; but the most relevant city for the story of this portrait is Venice, which they reached in 1585⁹³. It was in Venice that Jacopo Tintoretto was commissioned to paint a portrait of the four Japanese boys. It is believed that the portrait exhibited at the Pavilion was originally part of a bigger painting, but after Jacopo Tintoretto’s death, his son Domenico Tintoretto altered it, completed it, and turned it into a single person portrait⁹⁴. The way that this portrait was exhibited, with glass encompassing it instead of being nailed to a wall, made it possible to look at the backside of the canvas. Said area reveals details about the painting, which were originally written on the front, such as the year 1585 written in Roman numerals as “MDXXCV”, and some incorrect transliterations of Japanese words⁹⁵. The visitors were encouraged to look at the backside of the painting by the Italy Pavilion Volunteers who also explained the meaning behind the words written there. This portrait symbolized the first time Italy and Japan had the chance to “meet” each other, thus creating a bridge between the two countries. This artwork is used to show to the mainly Japanese audience what binds these two nations together. Another reason this piece was chosen to represent Italy, is because it demonstrates that Italy and the Italy Pavilion hold its hosting country in high regards, making it an integral part of the nation’s exhibition, further showing a deep respect to Japan and the Japanese people.

⁹² Seya, Ai. “Tokubetsu Koukai Shinhakken! Tenshou Kenou Shounen Shisetsu Itou Mansho no Shouzou.” *Tokyo National Museum*, 17 May 2016, 3.

⁹³ Seya. “Tokubetsu Koukai Shinhakken! Tenshou Kenou Shounen Shisetsu Itou Mansho no Shouzou.”, 2.

⁹⁴ Seya. “Tokubetsu Koukai Shinhakken! Tenshou Kenou Shounen Shisetsu Itou Mansho no Shouzou.”, 2

⁹⁵ Seya. “Tokubetsu Koukai Shinhakken! Tenshou Kenou Shounen Shisetsu Itou Mansho no Shouzou.”, 2.

2.3 The S.V.A. 9

The same could be said about the next piece of the exhibition, the model of the S.V.A. 9 biplane. This model was exhibited whilst hanging from the Pavilion's ceiling, thus making it possible for visitors to imagine it during its flight. This piece could have been overlooked by visitors for two main reasons: first, because of its aforementioned positioning, and second, because the material the model is made of does not have a stark contrast to the Pavilion's roof, as they are both made of bare wood. This should be kept in mind for subsequent chapters.

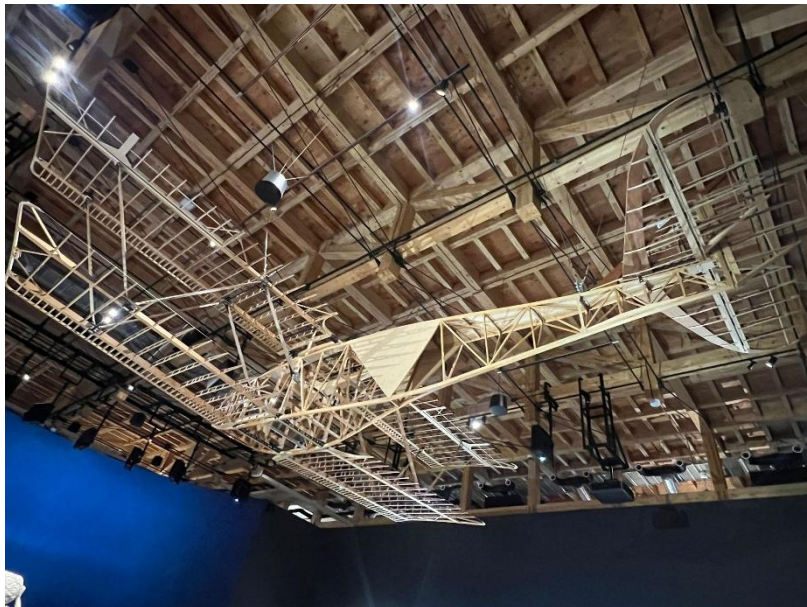


Figure 6 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of the S.V.A 9 model. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

The project for this model was made by Giorgio Bonato and the Hangar Fusina team, of which he is the president. Bonato managed to gather around four hundred authentic illustrations of the biplane, during around two decades of meticulous research, which became the basis for the reconstruction of the biplane. This model, in a 1:1 recreation of its original counterpart, represents the bare skeleton of the S.V.A. 9; it is entirely made from wood. The wood had been harvested from Northern Africa, Finland, Slovenia and the Philippines⁹⁶. The types of wood used were mahogany, spruce, ash, and plywood. The original S.V.A. 9 was designed by Umberto Savoia and Rodolfo Verduzio, the name of the

⁹⁶ "Suva 9 Gata 1:1 Rōma - Tōkyō Hikō (1920 nen) de Hikōshi Arutūro Ferrarin ga Shiyōshita Fukuyōki no Jitsubutsudaimokei." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/sva-9-ansaldo-ferrarin>.

biplane comes from the union of the initials of the surnames “Savoia” and “Verduzio” and the initial of the manufacturing company “Ansaldo”⁹⁷. This plane took flight from Rome to Tokyo, from the 18th of January to the 11th of March 1920. After 107 days and about eighteen thousand kilometers, the flight ended, after a total of 112 hours of non-continuous flight. This extremely long journey happened thanks to the Italian writer Gabriele D’Annunzio and his friendship with the Japanese writer Harukichi Shimoi and their intention to connect such distant countries, Italy and Japan. Although D’Annunzio himself could not take part in this expedition, it was carried out by Arturo Ferrarin and Guido Masiero⁹⁸.

2.4 Probable Futures

Right in front of Itō Mancio’s Portrait, two three-meters-tall screens would continuously display videos.



Figure 7 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Probable Futures. 17 July 2025. Author’s personal collection.

These videos would show forty children and young adults, from around the age of 10 to 26. These young boys and girls were asked to give their opinions on pressing matters such as what the future will look like for humanity, their views on war, on boundaries and screen time and phone addictions, on generations, on empathy, on algorithms, on schools and

⁹⁷ “Suva 9 Gata 1:1 Rōma - Tōkyō Hikō (1920 nen) de Hikōshi Arutūro Ferrarin ga Shiyōshita Fukuyōki no Jitsubutsudaimokei.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

⁹⁸ “Suva 9 Gata 1:1 Rōma - Tōkyō Hikō (1920 nen) de Hikōshi Arutūro Ferrarin ga Shiyōshita Fukuyōki no Jitsubutsudaimokei.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

discriminations and VR technology, on passions like playing instruments and dancing. Many of them were able to showcase their culture and traditions⁹⁹. Megan, a seventeen-year-old Italian and Ukrainian girl, for example, recalls having to move to Italy only two weeks after the war in Ukraine had started. Lukas, a thirteen-year-old Italo-Australian boy, performed La Pizzica, a traditional dance from southern Italy, especially Apulia. Luis, an eleven-year-old Italo-Columbian boy, was able to thank the Japanese visitors in their own language, Giulia, sixteen years old, did it in Latin, and Megan did it in Ukrainian. Sara, ten years old, and Yumiko, twelve years old, two Italo-Japanese girls, symbolically welcomed the Japanese visitors to Italy in Japanese. This video installation was created thanks to the “Futuri Probabili Association”, whose chairman is Luciano Violante, and it was directed by Marco Casu¹⁰⁰. Almost the entirety of the video is in Italian, except for some brief excerpts, such as the aforementioned ones. In addition to the Italian audio, subtitles in both English and Japanese were also provided to accommodate the international visitors of the Pavilion. Since this piece was located right behind Itō Mancio’s Portrait, it was right behind visitor’s backs as they entered the Square and looked at the previously mentioned portrait. For this reason, it is easy to imagine that *Probable Futures* might not have been extremely popular amongst visitors. This topic will be further analyzed in a subsequent chapter.

⁹⁹ “Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/atozuopintoinsutareshiyon>.

¹⁰⁰ “Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

2.5 Circulatory System

The first piece in the “Self” section of the exhibition was *Circulatory System*. This piece was situated on the left side of the Square, right after the Portrait of Itō Mancio.



Figure 8 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of *Circulatory System*. 20 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

As part of the “Self” section, this piece combines science, technology, and art. This piece consists of thirty different anatomically correct hearts made from ceramic. These hearts are positioned on red columns made in the shape of square-based parallelepiped and dispositioned in a circle. *Circulatory System* was created by the contemporary artist Jago in 2017. The creation process involved him creating a sculpture of an anatomically correct heart out of clay. This sculpture was then digitalized and turned into a 3D animation. This animation was then simplified and split into thirty frames, which were subsequently transformed into thirty ceramic hearts¹⁰¹. This circle symbolizes infinity, the continuity of this heartbeat. According to the artist, Jago, this art piece represents a connection between past present and future¹⁰². Furthermore, he explains that his intention was to show that even something as solid as ceramic could be able to move in such a way that it could be able to recreate something as human and fluid as a heartbeat through his technical prowess¹⁰³. The involvement of a young artist such as Jago at the Expo 2025 Osaka denotes the intention of supporting the present and future of art from the Italy

¹⁰¹ “Circulatory System: a beating heart at Expo Osaka 2025.” Jago, <https://jago.art/en/apparato-circolatorio-un-cuore-pulsante-a-expo-osaka-2025/>.

¹⁰² “Circulatory System: a beating heart at Expo Osaka 2025.” Jago.

¹⁰³ “Circulatory System: a beating heart at Expo Osaka 2025.” Jago.

Pavilion. Moreover, this piece perfectly reflects the Pavilion's motto "Art Regenerates Life", as it is able to combine art and life, motion and motionlessness, creating a piece that is almost living¹⁰⁴. Behind the artwork, three screens would constantly show videos on the piece and how it was made. A particularly valuable part of the video showed thirty pictures of the thirty hearts, one of each of them, in sequence, thus creating a stop-motion video of the ceramic heart beating. It could be said that the process of making this piece in itself is part of the artwork, and so is the video displayed behind it.

2.6 pneumOS

Staying on the topic of young artist and modern art, it is necessary to mention the next artwork in the "Self" section. Said piece is called *pneumOS*, by the artist Oriana Persico.



Figure 9 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of *pneumOS*. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

Oriana Persico describes herself as a "cyberecologist", combining art, data and environmentalism. *pneumOS* is an interactive piece of modern art, it was commissioned to the artist by the city of Ravenna, a city in the Italian region of Emilia Romagna¹⁰⁵. It is an interactive piece of art that combines multiple senses, and it is made up of five raised

¹⁰⁴ "Circulatory System: a beating heart at Expo Osaka 2025." *Jago*, <https://jago.art/en/apparato-circolatorio-un-cuore-pulsante-a-expo-osaka-2025/>.

¹⁰⁵ "pneumOS—Kūki no Chishiki wa Ōpun Sōsu desu." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/pneumos>.

membranes that constitute five drums, and one moving silicone artificial lung. The way this artwork works is through the collection of air quality data from the city of Ravenna, it then uses AI to translate this data into movement and sounds. In fact, the experience derived by this piece changes entirely based on whether the air quality in Ravenna is good or not, compared to European air quality standards¹⁰⁶. The piece takes its data from three different weather stations and translates said data into electrical impulses. If the air quality is good, the silicon lung will “breathe” at a slow pace, in a calming rhythm, and the membranes will vibrate creating a relaxed sound. Whereas if the air quality is poor, the artificial lung will “breathe” with a frantic rhythm and the membranes’ pitch will become higher¹⁰⁷. It makes it possible for the visitors to see air and interpret its quality directly through their eyes, by looking at the movement of the artificial lung, and to also hear it with their ears, translated into music by the five drum membranes. This piece could have been viewed multiple times by the visitors and could potentially have conveyed a completely different feeling each time it was looked at. *pneumOS* raises awareness for air quality and environmental problems, denoting the intention, from Italy Pavilion, to be considered as a pavilion, and also as a Country, which takes to heart ecological challenges, something that characterizes modern and well-developed Countries according to public opinion.

2.7 Italian Space Agency’s Interactive Screen

In the same section as the previous piece in Italy Pavilion’s collection the Interactive Screen by The Italian Space Agency (ASI) allowed visitors to touch Italy’s advancements in aerospace technology. This piece was composed of two parts: an LED screen mounted on the wall of the “Square” section of the Pavilion, and a transparent panel. The visitors could touch the panel and interact with the images displayed on the LED screen.

¹⁰⁶ “pneumOS—Kūki no Chishiki wa Ōpun Sōsu desu.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/pneumos>.

¹⁰⁷ “pneumOS—Kūki no Chishiki wa Ōpun Sōsu desu.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.



Figure 10 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Italian Space Agency's Interactive Screen. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

Through this installation, it was possible to interact with 3D models of space satellites, and space infrastructures developed and funded, or either one of these options, by the Italian Space Agency¹⁰⁸. The 3D models that could have been displayed included the lunar habitation module MPH, part of Italy's contribution to the international Artemis program, satellite PRISMA and satellite COSMO-SkyMed, both used to observe the Earth, as well as a three-dimensional rendition of the Earth. The visitors could move these models freely through the touchscreen panel in front of the screen, along with accessing multimedia content such as images, videos, and text descriptions¹⁰⁹. This contribution sets out to highlight Italy's advancements in aerospace technology. This piece set itself apart from the artistic exhibitions as it is purely digital, which could have increased the risk of visitors not actively perceiving the artwork as intended. To avoid this, the piece was installed as a medium for entertainment, providing two ways of informing interested visitors about the scientific achievements of Italy: some attendees could have a first-person experience and be able to control the touch screen as desired, and their actions were then displayed on the large LED screen for onlookers. This way, the piece was made entertaining for both the active participants as well as the people waiting in line to control it themselves, and

¹⁰⁸ "Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/atozuopintoinsutareshiyon>.

¹⁰⁹ "Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

the people who had no intention of using the touch screen panel, because simply looking at the active participants was entertaining enough for them.

2.8 Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games

The *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games* were located on the opposite side to the *Portrait of Itō Mancio*, on the right side of the Square right after the screen doors. The light blue torch on the left was the model of torch that would then be used for the Olympic torch relay, whereas the brass colored one on the right was the torch model that would then be used for the Paralympic torch relay.



Figure 11 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of the Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

For the first time, visitors were able to see the *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games*, with the Expo being their world premiere. The displayed torches were designed by the architect Carlo Ratti, and they were made for the torch relay for the Olympic and Paralympic games that would be held in Milano and Cortina d'Ampezzo in February of 2026, after the end of the Expo 2025 Osaka¹¹⁰. The torches were made in Italy, highlighting one of the Pavilion's core themes, Italy's know-how. They were made from recycled materials, namely a metal alloy composed of aluminum and brass, being in line with some of the Expo 2025 Osaka's core values like

¹¹⁰ "Mirano-Corutina 2026 Tōki Orinpičku Pararinpičku Seika." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/olympic-and-paralympic-torches-milano-cortina-2026>.

sustainability¹¹¹. Furthermore, these torches were made so that each one of them could be reused up to ten times, thus reducing the total number of torches needed for the Olympic and Paralympic torch relays. The cities involved in the Olympic and Paralympic games had to go through an extensive process of infrastructural development to be able to welcome the event. This piece was also a way to represent this aspect of the Olympics and its hosting country¹¹². Displaying these torches could potentially raise interest in the Winter Olympic and Paralympic games that would be held in Italy, enticing the visitors to visit Italy and to become spectators of said sporting event, or simply creating more enthusiasm around it. Moreover, as already mentioned, this piece also displays Italy Pavilion's attention to themes like sustainability and environmental consciousness, as well as the Pavilion's focus on the art of "creating".

2.9 Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport

The walls of the Pavilion were used as projection screens, in addition to that some display screens were added to some parts of the exhibition. On the right side of the Square, the "Us" section, both the projection on the wall and three screen displays would constantly showcase videos and multimedia content regarding projects made by the Italian Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport.



Figure 12 Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport. *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.
<https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/en/artworks-and-installations>.

¹¹¹ "Mirano-Cortina 2026 Tōki Orinpikku Pararinpikku Seika." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025,
<https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/olympic-and-paralympic-torches-milano-cortina-2026>.

¹¹² "Mirano-Cortina 2026 Tōki Orinpikku Pararinpikku Seika." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

The displays would show the geographical areas of said projects and their three-dimensional rendition, their cost, as well as some brief text explanations. The text on the videos would be in both English and Japanese. The projects that were showcased were: the Brenner Base Tunnel, the tunnels along the Turin-Lyon railway line; the MOSE system in Venice, which protects the island from its high tides; the new Genoa Outer Breakwater, which is set to become the deepest one in Europe; the ongoing construction work in Rome in order to build a new Metro C stop at Fori Imperiali, a delicate project since it is necessary to be mindful of the archeological heritage of the area; the project of the Strait of Messina's Bridge, to connect Sicily to mainland Italy through the provinces of Messina and Reggio Calabria; and the infrastructures built for the upcoming Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, such as the tracks used for the bobsled, luge, and skeleton races¹¹³. The aim of this video installation was to prove Italy's engineering prowess, and the Country's deep cultural background and cutting-edge technologies¹¹⁴. This piece was also able to create a direct connection though multiple pieces of the exhibition, namely the Olympic Torches, through further explanation on the Olympic Games and Italy's effort into making it a successful event. The *Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport* was a more "technical" part of the exhibition, aimed at showcasing Italy's development more than gaining the favors of the visitors. This aspect will be analyzed in a later chapter.

2.10 Unique Forms of Continuity

Right in front of the *Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport*, a small pedestal displayed the artwork that was originally made by the artist Umberto Boccioni, named *Unique Forms of Continuity*. Understanding the value of this piece is particularly easy, regardless of one's country of origin, since it is featured on the Italian 20 cents Euro coin.

¹¹³ "Expo 2025 Osaka: il MIT partner del Padiglione Italia." *Ministero delle infrastrutture e dei trasporti*, 13 April 2025, <https://www.mit.gov.it/comunicazione/news/expo-2025-osaka-il-mit-partner-del-padiglione-italia>.

¹¹⁴ "Expo 2025 Osaka: il MIT partner del Padiglione Italia." *Ministero delle infrastrutture e dei trasporti*.



Figure 13 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of *Unique Forms of Continuity*. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

Umberto Boccioni was one of the leading artists of the Italian artistic movement called *Futurismo*, or Futurism in English, which began in the 20th century. This movement's main focuses were themes of machines and machinery, speed and movement, a strong rejection of the past and its art and, as the name suggests, themes regarding the future¹¹⁵. *Unique Forms of Continuity*, originally created in 1913, depicts a man walking. The human form in this sculpture is not immediately apparent, it is a shape almost transfigured by the sense of movement, of the speed in which the person is moving¹¹⁶. The deformation of the man's body through its complete absence of upper limbs transforms the human form into a symbol of movement and innovation. It embodies the colliding of man and machine, typical of the Futuristic movement. This piece is one of the six bronze casts made from the original, created thanks to the collaboration between the founder of the Futurism movement Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and Umberto Boccioni's sister Amelia¹¹⁷. *Unique Forms of Continuity* is a piece that represents the combination of man and technology, and it symbolizes the Pavilion's goal of unifying artwork and scientific and technological advancements, a sentiment that is coherent with the motto "Art Regenerates Life"¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁵ "Kūkan Niokeru Renzokusei no Yuitsu no Keitai." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/unique-forms-of-continuity>.

¹¹⁶ "Kūkan Niokeru Renzokusei no Yuitsu no Keitai." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

¹¹⁷ "Unique Forms of Continuity." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/en/artworks/unique-forms-of-continuity>.

¹¹⁸ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

2.11 1:13 Scale Model of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility (DTT) Sponsored by ENEA

Right next to the area dedicated to *Unique Forms of Continuity*, a *Scale Model of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility* could be seen in an all-encompassing glass case. Similarly to other parts of the exhibition, this piece's goal was to showcase Italy's advancements and potential in regard to science and technology.



Figure 14 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of 1:13 Scale Model of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility (DTT). 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

The *Divertor Tokamak Test facility*, or DTT, is a fusion research facility that has not been completed yet, as it is still being built. The facility is being built at the ENEA research institute located in the Italian city of Frascati¹¹⁹. This test facility's aim is to study a new way to extract the plasma exhaust and the power excess that usually comes with fusion at heat fluxes that are similar to those of power plants, and because of this, it will have a leading role in fusion research. Through Italy's commitment to research fusions and the collaboration with industries, contracts of an overall value of two billion euros were awarded to various Italian companies. Thus, rendering Italy one of the key players in the construction of ITER in France¹²⁰.

¹¹⁹ "1:13 Sukēru Moderu – Daibāta Tokamaku Tesuto (DTT)." Italyexpo2025osaka.it, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/divertor-tokamak>.

¹²⁰ "1:13 Sukēru Moderu – Daibāta Tokamaku Tesuto (DTT)." Italyexpo2025osaka.it, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/divertor-tokamak>.

2.12 Michelangelo's Risen Christ

The marble sculpture of Michelangelo's *Risen Christ* was positioned in the area that came right before the entrance of the Holy See Pavilion. It was, in a way, a preview of the religious themes that characterized the pavilion within the pavilion.



Figure 15 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Michelangelo's *Risen Christ*. 17 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

This sculpture is the first of the two variations that Michelangelo Buonarroti created. The statue was commissioned to him by Matello Vari in 1514, for the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva located in Rome¹²¹. Michelangelo discarded this first sculpture because, whilst sculpting it, a dark crack appeared on Christ's face¹²². The artist never completed this faulty sculpture. The statue, after being kept in Vari's garden, was then lost from records from 1607 to 1638, when it reappeared in the inventory of Vincenzo Giustiniani's palace, though still as an incomplete piece. It is thought that Gian Lorenzo Bernini might have been the person to finally complete *Michelangelo's Risen Christ*, when he was still a young artist¹²³. The statue finally found its permanent home only in 1644, when it was brought, by Vincenzo Giustiniani's adopted son, to the Church of San Vincenzo Martire in

¹²¹ "Fukkatsushita Kirisuto – Mikeranjero." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/fuhuoshitakirisuto-mikeranshiero>.

¹²² "Fukkatsushita Kirisuto – Mikeranjero." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

¹²³ "Fukkatsushita Kirisuto – Mikeranjero." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/fuhuoshitakirisuto-mikeranshiero>.

Bassano Romano¹²⁴. This sculpture represents the Christ's first moments after his resurrection. He is depicted holding the cross, but this cross is considerably smaller than how it is described within the Bible, symbolizing how insignificant and light it had become after Christ's comeback. He is also depicted while holding other crucifixion symbols, namely the rope, the sponge, and the veil. Although Michelangelo Buonarroti decided to discard this sculpture entirely, only because of a perceived flaw seen as the crack on Christ's face, it could be argued that the presence of that tear-like black streak might even add to the artwork.

Although this sculpture was not originally part of the permanent exhibition, and it was only meant to be part of the Lazio region's temporary exhibition, it was later added to the main exhibition area. The Lazio region's temporary exhibition in the "Territory" area took place from the 18th to the 24th of May 2025¹²⁵. Thus, the Italy Pavilion exhibition lacked the presence of *Michelangelo's Risen Christ* for only a month from the start of the Expo 2025 Osaka of April 13th, 2025. *The Risen Christ* was one of the eighteen possible preferences in the Survey conducted to determine which of the artworks present at the Italy Pavilion were the ones the public liked most. The decision to include it came from the fact that when the survey was conducted, *Michelangelo's Risen Christ* had already been part of the permanent exhibition located at Italy Pavilion's main exhibition area, the Square. Moreover, this piece is present on the official webpage of the Italy Pavilion, "Italy Expo Osaka", which showcases all the pieces in the exhibition.

2.13 The Farnese Atlas

The Farnese Atlas acted as the symbol of the Italy Pavilion. It was situated at the center of Italy Pavilion's main exhibition area. It was often featured when talking about Italy Pavilion, even before the Expo's doors opened to the public.

¹²⁴ "Fukkatsushita Kirisuto – Mikeranjero." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

¹²⁵ "Regione Lazio a Expo 2025 Osaka." *Regione Lazio*, <https://comunicazione.regione.lazio.it/expo2025osaka/>.



Figure 16 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of *The Farnese Atlas*. 28 May 2025. Author's personal collection.

The Farnese Atlas is a sculpture made out of marble, dating back to the second century AD, it weighs two tons, and it is two meters tall, it was then placed on top of a pedestal, making it appear even taller. The subject of the sculpture is the titan Atlas, from Greek mythology, while he carries a celestial sphere on his shoulders, while kneeling on the ground. The celestial sphere represents the entire universe. The marble sphere has constellations, heaven and hell, the four cardinal directions engraved on it with a depth of around six millimeters. This representation of the universe was the most advanced rendition of the celestial vault of its time¹²⁶. The placement of the sculpture at the center of the Square was intentional, as it symbolized the connection of each subcategory of the exhibition, “I”, “We”, “Territory” and “Spirituality”, creating the narrative that the Atlas represents every aspect that the Italy Pavilion wanted to showcase to the international public of the Expo. It unifies both the artistic and scientific aspects that the Pavilion tried to convey. As the titan Atlas is brought to his knees by the weight of knowledge, symbolized by the weight of the celestial sphere, the Atlas represents the human desire to run after knowledge¹²⁷. Due to the long transportation from Naples to Osaka, the statue's unveiling was a very delicate moment. The relief after finding out that the

¹²⁶ “Farunêze Atorasu.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/fuaruneseatorasu>.

¹²⁷ “Farunêze Atorasu.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/fuaruneseatorasu>.

sculpture was not damaged was even broadcasted in Japan¹²⁸. The Commissioner General Mario Vattani, in the NHK broadcasting of the news regarding the Atlas' arrival at the Italy Pavilion building, highlighted how it is not unusual for the exhibiting countries, during the Expo, to mainly use digital media to provide various explanations. However, according to Vattani, seeing the real artwork with one's own eyes gives a completely different effect¹²⁹. He also states that authenticity is Italy's trademark. The Commissioner General often uses the Japanese word for "authentic article" *honmono*, as one of the characteristic features that the Italy Pavilion has to offer¹³⁰. The reoccurring theme of the *honmono* will be also referenced in a subsequent section. Mario Vattani also explained that "the Atlas embodies the spirit of Expo Osaka, the Latin *curiositas*, the spirit of adventure that is what has always united peoples, like a bridge"¹³¹. *The Farnese Atlas* was the perfect symbol of the Pavilion, a symbol that was recognized by visitors as well. In fact, it was not uncommon for visitors to initially disregard the other parts of the exhibition and to directly go towards the center of the Square, right where the Atlas Farnese towered the rest of the exhibited pieces. The statue's position at the center made it so that it could be functioning as a unifying force for the two main parts of the exhibition, the pieces that were original artwork and the pieces that represented Italy's technological and scientific advancements.

2.14 The Holy See and The Entombment of Christ

The Holy See was hosted by the Italy Pavilion during the Expo 2025 Osaka; it was located in the "Spirituality" area of the Pavilion. For the first time ever, the Holy See Pavilion did not have its own exhibiting area, but rather was part of the Italy Pavilion, in occasion of the World Expo. The Holy See Pavilion's independent theme was "Beauty Bings Hope"¹³². It is worth considering the fact that the Expo coincided with the year of the 2025 Jubilee. It is

¹²⁸ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 4 April 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjmlYIVoHfQ>, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

¹²⁹ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

¹³⁰ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

¹³¹ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka. "L'Arte Rigenere La Vita - Il Padiglione Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka." *YouTube*, 12 Nov. 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRPAWBZDcQw>, 00:02:47-00:02:58.

¹³² "2025 Nen Ōsaka Banpaku: Rōma Kyōkōchō Pabirion Kaikanshiki." Vatican Expo 2025, 13 Apr. 2025, www.vaticanexpo2025.va/ja/notizie-ed-eventi/2025/expo-2025-inaugurato-padiglione-santa-sede.html.

possible that the Holy See's decision to have a smaller pavilion was connected to the already great investments that were necessary to host the Jubilee.



Figure 17 *The Entombment of Christ*. Musei Vaticani.

<https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/la-pinacoteca/sala-xii---secolo-xvii/caravaggio--deposizione-dalla-croce.html>.

The Entombment of Christ, also known as the *Deposition*, is a piece made by the Italian artist Caravaggio. Caravaggio was the most prominent artist of the “realist” movement, as his use of color and his lights and shadows techniques was revolutionary in the seventeenth century art scene¹³³. The painting depicts the moment in which Christ's lifeless body was gently laid on the Stone of Anointing, which would then be used as his tombstone. The other people depicted in the painting are John and Nicodemus, both holding Christ, and the three Marys: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Cleophas and Mary of Nazareth. Each character in the scene portrays different expressions and levels of sorrow. From the almost stoic expression of the Virgin Mary, who is hovering her hand on top of Jesus Christ's face, to the pensive Mary Magdalene, who seems to have a more interiorized way of feeling sadness, to Mary of Cleophas, who cannot help herself from raising her hands in the air in shock and grief. The painting was commissioned by

¹³³ “Caravaggio, Deposizione.” *Museivaticani.va*, <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/it/collezioni/musei/la-pinacoteca/sala-xii---secolo-xvii/caravaggio--deposizione-dalla-croce.html>.

Girolamo Vittrice for the family chapel situated in the Santa Maria in Valicella church, in Rome¹³⁴. The painting was personally chosen by Pope Francis to be exhibited at the Expo, according to Archbishop Fisichella, during the inauguration of the two joint pavilions. *The Entombment of Christ*, shown for the first time in Japan, was positioned in such a way that visitors were able to look at it at eye level, rather than posting it high on the wall. In this way, the visitors were able to see every detail painted by Caravaggio from very close proximity. Although, *The Entombment of Christ* was not the only piece featured that was part of the Holy See Pavilion. In fact, the area of the Italy Pavilion designated to host it had other elements in it. The Holy See showcased a great sensitivity to the possible experience of the visually impaired visitors, curating a visitor experience that accounted for visitors' disabilities. The Holy See Pavilion featured a three-dimensional rendition of Caravaggio's painting, providing a tactile stimulus¹³⁵. Moreover, the sounds present at the pavilion were part of the curation of the exhibition. Bill Fontana's sound installation by the name *Silent Echoes of the Great Bell* was continuously playing in the background. The sound installation reproduced the sounds that the vibrations of the bell situated at Vatican City's Saint Peter's Basilica in produced¹³⁶. The mixture of visual and auditory features of the Holy See's pavilion mixed in harmony to create a deeply spiritual atmosphere. The Holy See Pavilion created an inclusive space within the Italy Pavilion walls, but it also provided a multisensory experience to able-bodied visitors.

2.15 Italy of Patents. Inventions and Innovations of Success

The area used to showcase the patents was located right after the "Territory" area. It was a small space entirely dedicated to showing and explaining the latest patents held by Italian people and Italian companies.

¹³⁴ "Caravaggio, Deposizione." *Museivaticani.va*, <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/it/collezioni/musei/la-pinacoteca/sala-xii---secolo-xvii/caravaggio--deposizione-dalla-croce.html>.

¹³⁵ "2025 Nen Ōsaka Banpaku: Rōma Kyōkōchō Pabirion Kaikanshiki." Vatican Expo 2025, 13 Apr. 2025, www.vaticanexpo2025.va/ja/notizie-ed-eventi/2025/expo-2025-inaugurato-padiglione-santa-sede.html.

¹³⁶ "2025 Nen Ōsaka Banpaku: Rōma Kyōkōchō Pabirion Kaikanshiki." *Vatican Expo 2025*.



Figure 18 L'Italia dei Brevetti. *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*. <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/en/artworks-and-installations>.

The Italian Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy created this part of the exhibition. It was included at the Italy Pavilion in order to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the Italian Patent and Trademark Office's creation. Only a small part of the one hundred patents chosen by the Ministry were exhibited inside the Italy Pavilion in Osaka, the rest was exhibited at the headquarters of the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy in Rome¹³⁷. This area almost constituted its own independent exhibition, further divided into seven subcategories. The categories were: Smart City, Place & Home (showcasing patents that aimed at increasing green and smart constructions to lessen the damages of various natural disasters); Smart, Green & Safe Mobility (patents aimed at refining the performance of several means of transport); Smart & Precision Factory (with patents that can be used for industrial automation); Agri & Sea Tech (patents for plantations and greenhouses both on land and underwater); Aero & Space Tech (patents for space exploration and air transport); Energy & Clima Tech (patents aimed at generating green energy from sustainable resources, alongside patents for the recycling of plastic); Med & Wellbeing (patents for illness prevention, treatment, and diagnosis, together with innovations regarding fitness)¹³⁸. Again, Italy shows its sensibilities towards the topic of sustainability, and simultaneously it proves its own technological advancements and

¹³⁷ "Artworks and Installations." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/en/artworks-and-installations>.

¹³⁸ "Artworks and Installations." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

innovative solutions to modern problems through the presence of the aforementioned patents.

2.16 Atlas Codex

After seeing Italy's patents and the temporary exhibition, the visitors could finally arrive at the part of the exposition in which Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Atlanticus* was shown. The pages of the Codex were kept inside a glass case.



Figure 19 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of The Farnese Atlas. 20 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

The collection of documents and sketches that constitutes the *Codex Atlanticus*, is the largest collection of pages by the Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci. The collection is usually housed at the Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan¹³⁹. The pages lent by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana were four out of the 1119, but due to conservation purposes, the Italy Pavilion only showcased two at a time. These four pages were chosen because of their artistic and scientific significance, in accordance with the rest of the Pavilion's exposition and overall message¹⁴⁰. The chosen pages depicted: a "Goldbeater", "Hand-cranked spinning wheel with details", the "Architectural studies for the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Milan", and the "Study of composite shadows with numerous architectural

¹³⁹ "Reonarudo Da Vinchi No Shukō." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/codex-atlanticus>.

¹⁴⁰ "Reonarudo Da Vinchi No Shukō." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*.

drawings". The media used to create the pages chosen to be exhibited were various, including feather and black or diluted ink, black pencil, and red chalk, and the drawings were made between around the year 1493 and 1515¹⁴¹. The four pages were thought to be the link connecting each one of the pieces in the exposition, showcasing Leonardo's inventive, creative prowess and artistic abilities, and how the spirit of the Renaissance permeates even today's thought and creativity¹⁴². The turnaround of the pages of the *Codex Atlanticus* was one of the many ever-changing aspects of the Italy Pavilion, inviting visitors to visit the Pavilion multiple times, in hopes of seeing something different each time.

2.17 No Name and Garden

Italy Pavilion's visitor experience culminated with visiting the upstairs area, which was where the Garden was located. The Garden was a structure built on the rooftop of the Italy Pavilion. The rooftop included two main parts of the Pavilion, the Garden and the Eataly restaurant. Although people visiting the Pavilion were able to see into the restaurant walls and to look at the people eating on the restaurant's patio, the only way to get a table there was to queue in a separate line that was located on the outer area of the Italy Pavilion's building. Thus, getting access to the Garden and the rooftop would not translate into getting access to the restaurant. The Garden was structured to resemble a labyrinth, but the actual shape of the area was a fixed route that accompanied visitors from one side of the rooftop to the other. The plants used in the Garden were there to mimic a typical Italian garden, giving visitors from all over the world a taste of what Italy might look like¹⁴³. From this open area visitors could also see the Grand Ring, the structure that worked as the "outer walls" of the Expo grounds, and the neighboring pavilions, giving them a new perspective on the entire exposition. The Garden was conceived as a place in which

¹⁴¹ "Leonardo Da Vinci Codex Atlanticus." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/en/artworks/codex-atlanticus>.

¹⁴² "Reonarudo Da Vinchi No Shukō." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/artworks/codex-atlanticus>.

¹⁴³ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

people could relax after visiting the other main areas of the Pavilion. It was a place in which visitors could unwind whilst getting closer to nature¹⁴⁴.



Figure 20 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph *A rose, is a rose, is a rose*. 19 July 2025. Author's personal collection.

The Garden was also an exhibiting area, as some of the artwork was located here. The artwork was created by the artist Francesca Leone, daughter of the famous movie director Sergio Leone. The artwork's name is not clear, as it is referred to by the title *No Name* on all official Italy Pavilion webpages, but it is called *A rose, is a rose, is a rose*, after Gertrude Stein's notorious verse, on the artist's website¹⁴⁵. The artwork is made up of three large flowers made from discarded sheet metal that came from abandoned buildings and construction sites. These sheets of metal are flawed; they are rusty and covered in tears and scratches. The artist wanted to give new life to these waste materials, using paint on the flaws and scratches as if it was a plaster on wounds. The sheets of metal were then combined to create the shape of three differently sized flowers. Some of the flowers still show the traces of their story, through their still visible defects¹⁴⁶. Francesca Leone sends a powerful message on recycling and the power of art as a healing force. Using waste materials that would end up polluting the environment, she creates shapes that aim to recreate naturally occurring ones. These flowers made of discarded materials then became part of a natural environment, the Garden, thus integrating them in the very thing they were about to destroy. The relaxing experience of the area was then completed with a sound installation. The Artistic Director of the Biennale Musica of the Biennale di

¹⁴⁴ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

¹⁴⁵ "Together We Art - G20 – Francesca Leone." *Francesca Leone*, 7 June 2024, <https://www.francescaleone.it/exhibition/together-we-art-g20/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Together We Art - G20 – Francesca Leone." *Francesca Leone*.

Venezia, Caterina Barbieri, created a multichannel sound installation. This installation, by the name of *Nest of Silence*, was especially made to be part of the Garden experience of the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. It became part of the Exposition on the 16th of April 2025, during Venice's temporary exhibition week. The sounds played were a mixture of field recording, recorded by the composer Sarah Keirle, and synthetic sounds, representing the connection between machine and nature¹⁴⁷. The concept of mixing machines and nature was also conveyed by the piece *Unique Forms of Continuity*, located in the Square area of the Pavilion. Similarly to the Holy See Pavilion, with the exhibition of The Entombment of Christ and the sound installation of *Silent Echoes of the Great Bell*, the Garden represented an all-encompassing exhibition area as a whole, making every element located within it part of the visitor experience. The entire section could be thought of as singular piece of the exhibition. After its opening to the public, the route towards the exit of the Pavilion would lead visitors towards its Gift Shop, where it was possible to purchase the mascots of the Italy Pavilion, *Italia-chan*, and of the Holy See Pavilion, Luce, as well as high-end Italian products and like jewelry, apparel, and also pasta and balsamic vinegar. The gift shop was only accessible to visitors who queued for the Italy Pavilion or the Eataly Restaurant, it was not possible to enter it otherwise.

2.18 The other pieces

Not all of the pieces included on the official website of the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka have been included in the survey conducted, of which more will be explained at a later chapter. Namely, four of the pieces on the “*Āto Sakuhin to Insutarēshon*” page on the Italy Expo 2025 Osaka website were not part of the list of eighteen artwork to choose from as the visitors' favorite part of the exhibition. The pieces were: *dieXe*, *Canopo*, *The Icosahedron*, and *Stella d'Italia*. These pieces were not included in the list of artwork to choose from because of numerous reasons, but mainly because they were not part of the main exhibition.

¹⁴⁷ “La Biennale Di Venezia a Expo Osaka 2025 Con “Nest of Silence.”” *La Biennale Di Venezia*, <https://www.labiennale.org/it/news/la-biennale-di-venezia-expo-osaka-2025-con-%E2%80%98nest-silence%E2%80%9999>.

Stella d'Italia was situated on the second floor of the Pavilion, a floor that general visitors had no access to. In fact, the only areas present on the second floor were the VIP lounge and the Office spaces. This means that only a small percentage of visitors, namely the VIP ones, could get the chance to see this painting.

The *Icosahedron* was a sponsored piece by ALTAGAMMA, it was situated outside the main exhibition area of the Italy Pavilion, the Square, as it was positioned right inside the outer façade of the building. The Icosahedron was more of a sponsor ad than an actual art piece, even though it was meant to represent Italy's craftsmanship, all through ALTAGAMMA brands.

Canopo, similarly to the other excluded pieces, was not part of the main exhibition. It was, in fact, in a very easy-to-spot location, namely right behind the Italy Pavilion food trucks. *Canopo* was completely outside of the building, and it can be considered an ambiguous piece, not only completely outside of the Pavilion building, but it was also placed in a peripheral position. The visitors were able to see this piece only after exiting the Pavilion.

Kengo Kuma's chandelier, *dieXe*, was situated in one of the exhibition niches right along the internal queuing line, of the Italy Pavilion. This piece too was placed outside of the Square, and it was not part of the main thought-out exhibition plan, part of the exhibition's storytelling. Thus, *dieXe* could be considered a marginal part of the exhibition.

These four pieces had no part in the fully thought-out storytelling of the Italy Pavilion; they were not part of one of the main sections of the exhibition like the examined ones. They did not have a subgroup (i.e. "Us", "Territory", etc.) they belonged to. Thus, the pieces *dieXe*, *Canopo*, *The Icosahedron*, and *Stella d'Italia* can be considered not essential to the subsequent analysis of the already lengthy list of exhibited pieces.

2.19 Italy Pavilion's message

With the motto "Art Regenerates Life", the Italy Pavilion tries to unify the two subthemes of the exhibition, the *honmono* of the past and the technologies of the future. Italy Pavilion's message is a mixture of old and new, innovation and tradition. It is hard for Italy to fundamentally change what the country has been known for centuries, alongside what it represents and its values. As the Commissioner General of the Pavilion, Mario Vattani,

had stated, many exhibiting countries at the Expo decide to try to convey a message whilst relying on merely showing videos on big screens, Italy decided to utilize art as a way to show that Italy's trademark is authenticity, or *honmono*¹⁴⁸. Therefore, in a world in which the Expo is mainly used to show videos and screens, the Italy Pavilion decided that to one up its "competitors", it was necessary to rely on a reputation that has been cultivated for centuries: its image as the homeplace of art, food, and traditions. This might also be the reason the technological element, such as the big screens inside the building, for instance the *Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport*, ran the risk of falling flat, especially if compared to the real artwork dated centuries brought to Yumeshima specifically for the Expo. There were also pieces that narrated a story, the story of the long-lasting friendship between the two countries of Italy and Japan. A friendship that started with Itō Mancio, continued with the S.V.A. 9, and culminated with the Expo 2025 Osaka itself. Additionally, the exhibition created anticipation for upcoming events and innovations, for instance the completion of the infrastructure projects part of the *Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport*, and the, at the time, approaching Olympic and Paralympic Games of Milano Cortina, thanks to the presence of the *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games*.

¹⁴⁸ NHK. "Kodai Rōma no 'Farunēze no Atorasu' Banpaku Kaijō ni Tōchaku." *YouTube*, 4 April 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjmLYIVoHfQ>, 00:00:00-00:02:22.

Chapter 3 - The Temporary Exhibitions

Eighteen of the twenty Italian regions took part in the Temporary Exhibitions in the Territory area of the Pavilion, and each one of them had its own way of promoting itself and entice visitors into visiting them. The two regions that did not take part in the Expo were Trentino-South Tyrol and Aosta Valley. Trentino-South Tyrol was amongst the regions which were used as venues for the Milano Cortina Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, so it could be theorized that the kind of investment necessary to participate in an exhibition in another continent, the year prior to one of the biggest mega-events that would take place directly in the regions' territory, might have represented a hindrance¹⁴⁹. The case of Aosta Valley might also be linked to the lack of funds. Although an official explanation of the reasons that made the region decide not to take part in the Expo is not available, we can theorize that, since Aosta Valley also decided to withdraw from participating in Expo Dubai, the reason might be the same¹⁵⁰.

The Temporary Exhibitions were mostly held by Italian regions and lasted one week. This continuously changing area of the Pavilion was not only used to give the regions a space to showcase their products, but also to give Expo visitors a reason to come back to the Italy Pavilion every week. The menu of the Eataly restaurant also offered special dishes coherent with the culinary traditions of the exhibiting region¹⁵¹. The main source used for the thematic weeks and their exhibited pieces were unpublished documents. These documents were used for internal use of the Italy Pavilion during the Expo 2025 Osaka. These documents contain information regarding the events held in the Multimedia and Multifunction room, the theatre and outside the Pavilion, the pieces exhibited both in the Territory area and in the exhibition niches, the presence of interactive stands with live demonstrations of craftsmanship, and the aforementioned additions to the Eataly menu. These documents were given to me by the people I had the chance to work with during my internship at the Italy Pavilion. The documents, from now on referred to as "Regions' Programs at Italy Expo 2025 Osaka – Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione

¹⁴⁹ Bregman, Scott. "Milano Cortina 2026: Le Sedi Pronte a Splendere per I Giochi Olimpici Invernali." *Olympics*, International Olympic Committee, 2 Feb. 2026, <https://www.olympics.com/it/notizie/sedi-olimpiadi-invernali-milano-cortina-2026>.

¹⁵⁰ "Expo Dubai: costo elevato, Valle d'Aosta non parteciperà." *Ansa*, 8 July 2021, https://www.ansa.it/valledaosta/notizie/consiglio/2021/07/08/expo-dubai-costo-elevato-valle-daosta-non-partecipera_57ae23f2-d6b1-443f-b560-002d81b73661.html.

¹⁵¹ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

Internazionale”¹⁵², were used by the workers of the Italy Pavilion, which was overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. I therefore asked the people working at the Ministry if they could grant me access to these documents, as they would be indispensable for the in-depth analysis of the Thematic Weeks section of my research, as the Regions’ Programs at Italy Expo 2025 Osaka represented an all-encompassing resource, with information that would not be available otherwise. The following chapter will give a brief summary and overview of the regions and analyze how they interpreted the Expo theme.

3.1 Venice

Although Veneto had its own exhibition time slot in May, the city of Venice had its own individual thematic exhibition in the opening week of the Expo 2025 Osaka. The thematic week ran from the 13th to the 19th of April¹⁵³. The exhibition included two immersive installations depicting both Venice’s past and future: the past was represented by a narration of the lagoon’s history, and the future was represented by an AI-based installation in which visitors could interact with a Venetian “Maestro”¹⁵⁴. Various symbols that represent the city were also showcased, such as the *Bucintoro*, the Doge’s flagship, the winged lion holding a sword and an open book, symbol of wisdom and justice, Murano glass and brocade, and the *marsina*, the traditional costume of Venetian nobility¹⁵⁵. Venice, arguably one of the most famous Italian cities in the world, kicked off the numerous thematic weeks that would be held at the Italy Pavilion. The pieces showcased evoked the atmosphere of the Venetian lagoon, giving visitors an all-encompassing experience of the characteristics that make Venice such a unique city.

¹⁵² The subsequent chapter and its main contents have been primarily based on the “Regions’ Programs at Italy Expo 2025 Osaka – Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale” documents.

¹⁵³ ““Venetsia.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025,

<https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/index.html#/ja/regions/uenetsuia>.

¹⁵⁴ “Venetsia.” *Italy Expo Osaka*.

¹⁵⁵ “Venetsia.” *Italy Expo Osaka*.

3.2 Calabria

The first Italian region to set up its exhibition at the Expo was Calabria, from April 20th to 26th. The installation was conceptualized into three main parts. The first one, was “The Welcome Door”, a tapestry-map that pointed at the position of Calabria in relation to Italy, to the Mediterranean Sea and to Japan. This tapestry was an interactive piece, as it extended into strips to the floor, with which the visitors were encouraged to wrap themselves in and take pictures, whilst waiting in line. This part of the exhibition was aimed at creating a connection with the visitors and evoking the region’s typical hospitality. The second one, with the title “The Future’s Patrimony”, was created for the Territory area and was made up of ten screens in the shape of columns which had pictures of Sila’s mountains, and Capo Colonna alongside other landmarks, as well as an olfactory installation, based on bergamot essence, and a sound installation. The area was meant to create an ideal place, with centuries-old trees and columns creating a timeless temple. The last part was titled “The Niches of Craftsmanship”, as it was located in the exhibition niches of the Pavilion. Eight micro-workshops were created through eight pop-up trunks that contained products that came from Calabria’s industrial and artisanal excellence, namely tools, objects, and artifacts, as well as video documentaries that explained the production processes. The production sectors featured were goldsmiths, fashion and tailoring, textiles, pipes and luthiers, knives, essences, ceramics, and food. In addition, a gallery of five Japanese ambassadors was also displayed. The events held by the Calabria region were about investing in the region, and Calabria’s role as an attracting force towards foreign investment, the region’s collaboration with the Japanese company Kagome and the culinary culture of Calabria and Japan, and Calabria’s archeological patrimony, its urban development and the regeneration of small towns through culture.

3.3 Friuli-Venezia Giulia

The region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia had its thematic week from the 27th of April to the 3rd of May. Two screens were added to the façade of the Pavilion, which showcased the art, culture and nature landscapes of the region. Pieces made by the Carnic Museum of Popular Art, the Scriptorum Foroiuliense, the Palazzo del Fumetto (with the comic book

Yokai a zonzo in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, a comic book in which traditional Japanese *Yokai* go on a journey to discover the region), the School of Mosaicists, the Cluster legno arredo Sistema casa, and the School of Lace-making were found in the exhibition niches. Art and artistry were thus at the forefront of the visitor experience conceived by Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The exhibition in the inner part of the Pavilion featured three original archeological artifacts, which are part of Aquilia's UNESCO World Heritage. The region showcased real artwork of historical importance to the region itself, aligning with the overall themes of the Italy Pavilion. The events mainly showcasing the protagonists of the exhibition niches in greater detail, and the traditional Friuli-Venezia Giulia puppet show as the main event at the Italy Pavilion Theatre.

3.4 Veneto

After the opening of the Expo with the thematic week of the city of Venice, the Italian region of Veneto also had its own exhibition. Veneto was the third Italian region to hold its thematic week. The exhibition was run from the 4th to the 10th of May, and it consisted of nine screens, each one of them displayed a looped video showcasing one of the UNESCO sites of Veneto, with music in the background. The aim of this exhibition was to narrate how beauty and culture could possibly bring forward new ideas to encourage new inspiration for the future. Again, the concept of beauty, art, and culture are tied to the future, a theme that is coherent with the Italy Pavilion. The events held were about the city of Venice and how tradition meets innovation, the production of Prosecco and how the production techniques evolved, an event regarding Space Economy, a panel regarding the problem of the aging population, and the opportunities for investment in the region. Thus, the events centered on showcasing Veneto's, as well as finding challenges that both Veneto and Japan have in common.

3.5 Apulia

Apulia held its temporary exhibition from the 11th to the 17th of May. The region used the exhibition niches to display traditional ceramics, jewelry, and other pieces. The focus of the exhibition in the Territory area was Blue Space Economy, showcasing inventions made

by various companies and start-ups from the region; some of the pieces were the *Spacedge* by Planetek, an *Exoreactor* by SITAEL, and a *Hexagon Periodic Reflector* by GAP. The exhibition also featured a contemporary art-piece made by the Apulian artist Pino Pascali named *9 square meters of puddles (9 metri quadrati di pozzanghere)*, which represents water, and its purpose is to make people reflect on the future of water and of the Earth. The Theatre became the stage for the Folk Orchestra “La Notte della Taranta” and its Apulian folk music and dance show. The Multimedia and Multifunction room featured various events, amongst those there was an event regarding the 5 World UNESCO Heritage Sites in Apulia, one on the future of Space Tech, a panel about the artist Pino Pascali, and an open invitation to invest in the region. Apulia had two different sides at the Expo, the traditional side with its traditional music, and the innovative side, with its focus on reaching space through its technological innovations.

3.6 Lazio

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, Lazio held its temporary exhibition from the 18th to the 24th of May, and the region showcased both antique and modern pieces in the Territory area, such as Villa Giulia’s National Museum’s Etruscan artifacts, narrating the history of the region, and pieces by the Italian contemporary artist Pietro Ruffo. The region also created a section entirely dedicated to its cinematographic industry, with costumes used in the movies *Il Racconto dei racconti* by director Garrone, and *Diamanti* by director Özpetek. Arguably, the most important piece brought by Lazio to Osaka was the *Risen Christ* sculpture. In fact, Lazio’s thematic week changed the Italy Pavilion permanently, or at least for its entire existence, as Michelangelo’s *Risen Christ* became part of the permanent exhibition and narration of the Pavilion, offering a preview of the religious themes of the Spirituality area. The events were mainly centered around culture, technology, aerospace and space economy, and sport. The outer part of the Pavilion was used as a fencing piste, with a fencing performance that took place twice during the 18th of May, which entertained the visitors queuing to enter the Pavilion. The region also decided to utilize the niches to showcase Pietro Ruffo’s artwork alongside video displays, whilst Opera performances composed by Verdi, Puccini and Mascagni could be enjoyed at the Theatre.

3.7 Marche

June started with a new thematic week, the Marche exhibition, which lasted until the 7th of June. The centerpiece of the exhibition was the piece named *Controluce*, a piece created by young artists from Marche using paper made by the paper-making masters of Fabriano. The artwork was lit up from within, revealing its intricate watermark, and it symbolized the connection between Marche and Japan.

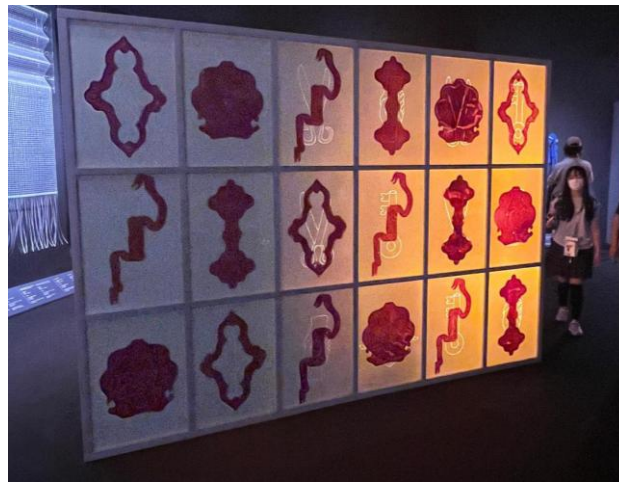


Figure 21 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of *Controluce*. 1 June 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

The other parts of the exhibition were divided into four sections: the first had the theme “Knot and weaving” which showcased a lace dress from the city of Offida and a straw hat from the city of Montappone; the “Craftsmanship and innovation” section featured the *Vanity Fair* armchair and the *Gommino* loafers; “Connecting lives” with the *Ghost* chair and the pieces named *Kimono*, four tapestries which unified the aesthetic visions of both Italy and Japan; “Future and design” showcased the *Suite 1* space suit, which was used in the Virtue 1 mission, representing the relationship between tailoring and innovation. Each section also featured a video in both Japanese and Italian in which the artisans explained their work, highlighting the parallelisms that could be drawn tying Japan and Marche together. The niches featured pieces from different Marche companies, amongst which there was a demonstration of fresh pasta-making. The façade featured a banner made of I-mesh fabric, and a backlit piece made of watermarked waterproof sheets. As already mentioned, some of the thematic weeks also involved events that took place in the outer area of the Pavilion, such as the outer stage or the “Italy Square”, the section

that was situated in front of the Pavilion's building. One of the regions that utilized this space was precisely Marche, with the performance by Ascoli Piceno's Quintana's flag bearers; the flag bearers were dressed in traditional medieval costumes while performing a flag-bearing show three times a day for three days, from the 1st to the 3rd of June. Some of the events were about architecture, design, diplomacy, and one about animation, more specifically about the *Winx Club* animated series, created by the animation studio *Rainbow*. For the occasion an art contest was held, and the two best illustrations were made by a Japanese and by an Italian student. Moreover, the event functioned as a premiere of the animated series *Winx Club The Magic is back*, which would have been available in Japan from October 2025. This event might have had the dual objective of enticing visitors into watching the series, whilst creating a link between the two countries, thanks to the medium of animation. Whilst showcasing the region's art and design seems to have been the goal for most of the Italian regions, Marche set itself apart by emphasizing its connection with the animation industry Japan is known for.

3.8 Sicily

Sicily was the protagonist of the Italy Pavilion's Territory area from the 8th to the 14th of June. A replica of the *Demeter of Morgantina*, a statue of the goddess of agriculture and fertility was situated in the outer part of the building. The niches during the Sicilian exhibition were entirely dedicated to showcasing the region's traditional craftsmanship, as six out of seven of them showcased a different type of Sicilian craftsmanship or artisanal craft.



Figure 22 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of a Sicilian Cart craftsmanship demonstration of at the exhibition niches. 10 June 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

The first niche housed the Sicilian art of goldsmith and silversmith, with artisans demonstrating how to create rings, earrings and micro-sculptures with traditional Sicilian techniques. The second niche was designated to the art of the Sicilian Cart, with artisans demonstrating how to paint the ornate details of the various parts of the cart. The art of Sicilian ceramics was also featured in this first part of the visitor experience, and the artists would not only demonstrate the various techniques used to create ceramics but would also let the visitors create their own pieces, using molds, that visitors were then allowed to keep. Sicily would then not only create an interesting environment for the visitors who were queuing, but they would also provide an activity they could also take part in, thus making the wait more eventful. Culinary traditions from the island of Sicily were also presented in one of the niches, with demonstrations of the process of making the traditional *Frutta Martorana*, turning almond paste into realistic fruits in front of the visitors. Design objects and artwork made with lava rock from the active volcano of Etna were also showcased in one of the six niches, where an artisan would create high relief pieces depicting characters from Sicilian mythology live. The last niche housed the art of Sicilian embroidery and weaving, and the artisans situated at this niche showcased the *filèt* weaving technique, and the Sicilian bobbin lace technique. Another niche hosted the piece *Grains of Peace* (“Grani di Pace”), an art installation created by piecing together

1000 rice grains made from ceramic. This piece of art was created with the collaboration of the visitors of the Italy Pavilion, as 1000 of them had the chance of glueing one grain of rice to the piece, with the symbolism of the thousand rice grains coming from the Japanese tradition of the 1000 origami paper cranes. Visitors, whilst simply queuing to enter the Pavilion, became an integral part of the exhibition itself.



Figure 23 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Gift – A Gesture of Return. 14 June 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

The Territory area featured the piece *Gift – A Gesture of Return* by the artist David Gabriele Gandolfo, and the piece was a performance art installation; the artist would gift small bread sculptures to some of the visitors and the visitors, in return, would have to write a message on a small card, that would then be placed on the draping that was located behind the artist. Both the external stage, situated in the “Italy Square”, and the Theatre were used for the *Opera dei Pupi*, a traditional Sicilian puppet show, and the Multimedia and Multifunction room was used to create a multisensory exhibition dedicated to biodiversity and Sicilian landscapes, including the smell of Mediterranean herbs and the sounds of the wind and the wildlife. The region of Sicily was able to not only engage the visitors in its temporary exhibition, but also making them part of the exhibition itself, creating interactive artisanal demonstrations as well as living pieces of art with the collaboration of the visitors.

3.9 Abruzzo

The regional exhibition of Abruzzo was held from the 15th to the 21st of June. The external niches were not utilized, in favor of the internal niches, situated in the Territory area of the Pavilion, where two of them were used to showcase games centered on the environment, and socialization as opposed to isolation, and one of them was used to showcase the figure of the Jesuit Theatine Father Alessandro Valignano, who promoted the first Japanese diplomatic mission to the West. The next area was used to showcase artwork created with the intention of speaking out against climate change and microplastics, with another area dedicated to highlighting how natural raw materials could be transformed to create various artistic pieces. The center of the Territory area was used to recreate the typical villages of Abruzzo, through panels that were used to replicate the façades of village houses, along which projections were used to narrate the region's contemporary craftsmanship, urban art, and the concept of a "contemporary village". In the middle of the Territory area visitors could see a suspended installation and holograms recreating traditional crafted pieces, archeological artifact and seeds from the National Park of Maiella. A screen display would also show videos narrating the scenic beauty of Abruzzo. The events centered around agri-food, the intercultural dialogue between Abruzzo and Japan, and the combination of traditions and innovations in regard to craftsmanship technologies and sustainability.

3.10 Sardinia

Sardinia's thematic week took place from the 22nd to the 28th of June, and the outer part of the Pavilion featured two replicas of two of the statues of the *Giants of Mont'e Prama*. The niches were used to showcase the region's craftsmanship traditions, similarly to the regions that had their thematic week before Sardinia's; there were six set up niches in total, and they all provided a live demonstration of the craftsmanship techniques. The main themes of the niches were: traditional pasta-making, woodwork, weaving, ceramics, knife-making demonstrations, and goldsmith Sardinian traditions. The Territory featured the music created by the art pieces *Sounding Stones (Pietre Sonore)*, stones that were incised and can be used as musical instruments that can be played simply by touching

them with one's hands. The traditional sounds of the *Tenores*, a Sardinian vocal tradition recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, were also present in the area through a multimedia installation. The Theatre was used as a stage by various performances such as the Ottana Carnival costumes show, a *Launeddas* and guitar musical, a Fanta Folk Concert, the "Polyphony of Sones" musical performance highlighting the *Tenores*, and a performance in which the aforementioned *Sounding Stones* were used as musical instruments. Some of the events that took place at the Multimedia and Multifunction were about Sardinian agri-food, about the sculptures of the *Giants of Mont'e Prama*, and also about science, gravitational waves and the collaboration between Italy and Japan. Music was the main protagonist of Sardinia's temporary exhibition, both in the artwork and in the traditions that were showcased in the Theatre, with unique traditional sounds.

3.11 Liguria

The Ligurian exhibition went on from the 29th of June to the 5th of July, the Territory area of the exhibition featured four LED walls continuously displaying videos centered around four themes: culture, landscape, traditions, and innovation¹⁵⁶. The people featured in these videos were Ligurians with expertise in various activities such as cooks, restorers, luthiers, fishermen, and entrepreneurs¹⁵⁷. The region also added an area dedicated to the Japanese soccer player, and a former player for the Ligurian Team of Genoa, Kasu Miura, with two Genoa football team official t-shirts and a video with a Kasu Miura homage as part of the Territory section of the exhibition¹⁵⁸. The events in the auditorium were mainly about investing in Liguria, research, technology and art, tourism, and the fish industry. One of the events in particular was aimed at highlighting the region's craftsmanship traditions such as violin-making, the creation of accessories and jewelry with recycled materials, goldsmith, and art restoration.

¹⁵⁶ "Expo Osaka, Regione Liguria Dal 29 Giugno al 5 Luglio Nel Padiglione Italia Con "Ligurians, Artist of Living". Presidente Bucci: "Settimana Di Protagonismo All'insegna Del Saper Fare Ligure."" *Liguria*, 20 June 2025, <https://www.regione.liguria.it/cgr/item/43975-liguria-a-expo-osaka-2025.html>.

¹⁵⁷ "Expo Osaka, Regione Liguria Dal 29 Giugno al 5 Luglio Nel Padiglione Italia Con "Ligurians, Artist of Living". Presidente Bucci: "Settimana Di Protagonismo All'insegna Del Saper Fare Ligure."" *Liguria*.

¹⁵⁸ "Expo Osaka, Regione Liguria Dal 29 Giugno al 5 Luglio Nel Padiglione Italia Con "Ligurians, Artist of Living". Presidente Bucci: "Settimana Di Protagonismo All'insegna Del Saper Fare Ligure."" *Liguria*.



Figure 24 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of a violin-making demonstration at the internal niches. 5 July 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

Some of these artisans also had a highlighted spot in the Territory area, in the internal exhibition niches, in which they could perform demonstration of their craft.

3.12 Molise

The region of Molise held its thematic week in July, from the 6th to the 12th of the month. The external niches were used to showcase Molise's cultural identity and its past, and each one of them had a different theme: the art of the Bagpipe, the art of the lace making, the art of copper, knives, stonemasons, and grain processing. The outer part of the Pavilion, the Italy Square, was also used as an exhibition area by the region, as it hosted the bell featuring various symbols on it, such as the symbols of the current and previous Expos held in Japan, namely the 1970 Expo and the 1990 Horticultural Expo, both held in Osaka. A bas-relief of Japan and Italy could also be seen on the bell, in which the region of Molise and the Kansai area of Japan were highlighted. As the Expo coincided with the eightieth anniversary of the atomic disaster of Hiroshima, a bas-relief of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial could also be seen alongside the other images. On one side of the bell, an image of a cherry tree, used as a symbol of Japan, and from which the bell takes its name, *Molisakura*, as a combination of the name of the region, Molise, and the Japanese word for cherry blossom, *sakura*. On the opposite side there was an image of Italy Pavilion's mascot, *Italia-chan*. The *Molisakura* bell could be rung by the people outside of

the Pavilion, both by people queuing and people who simply wanted to experience ringing the bell.



Figure 25 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of the Venus of Venafrò. 11 July 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

The Territory area featured a structure created to evoke the design of a triskelion, an ancient symbol of movement and balance, used as a way to symbolize the perfect union of past, present, and future, that was turned into a lamp. In the same area, alongside six screens displaying folklorist events and archeological and natural landmarks, a statue of the *Venus of Venafrò*, a real piece of art, could also be seen. The internal niches were also used by the region as exhibition areas, featuring pieces such as screens showcasing the traditional crafts and products of Molise, a small statue of Mefitis, and traditional costumes from the region. The events centered around the costumes of Molise, biodiversity, and traditional crafts.

The *Molisakura* bell, after the end of the thematic week of Molise, was gifted to the St. Mary's Cathedral of Osaka-Takamatsu and is now located in the front yard of said Cathedral¹⁵⁹. This thematic week was able to leave a permanent mark not only in the visitors who had the chance to witness it firsthand, but also on Japan itself, as part of the exhibition was able to stay in the hosting country of the Expo.

¹⁵⁹ "EXPO 2025 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Regashī." *Ōsaka Takamatsu Sei Maria Dai Seidō Katorikku Tamatsukuri Kyōkai*, 2025, <https://www.tamatsukuri.ostk.catholic.jp/menu/expo2025>.

3.13 Tuscany

The region of Tuscany held its temporary exhibition from the 13th to the 19th of July. The main focus of this thematic week was the Territory area of the Pavilion, which was used to showcase multiple mini exhibitions, with pieces such ceramics, the *Rainbow* wedge shoe model made by Salvatore Ferragamo for Judy Garland in 1938, alabaster vases, a bowl and an inlaid vase, the *Getsuen* armchair which was created in collaboration with the Japanese designer Masanori Umeda, the *Ultrafragola* mirror-lamp created in the 70s by Ettore Sottsass Jr., regenerated fabrics, Giuseppe Antonello Leone's sketch drawn for the gold leaf sculpture created as an homage to Piero della Francesca, the reinterpretation of the *chicco di riso* model of jewelry of the 40s, a *Vespa Piaggio*, and the *Mano Fiorata* ceramic piece designed by Gio Ponti in the 30s. The Territory area also featured three stage costumes of various Opera productions, two pictures of Michelangelo's *Moses* statue, and three immersive VR experiences about Tuscany and Dante Alighieri.



Figure 26 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of a stage costume part of Tuscany's temporary exhibition. 19 July 2025.
Author's Personal Collection.

The events included a panel on the *Lucca Comics & Games* convention that is held in the Tuscan city of Lucca every year, a *tanzaku*-making workshop, and an event centered on investing in Tuscany. The Tuscany temporary exhibition mainly focused on design and pieces of artistic value, highlighting how many great minds the region was able to give birth to, starting with Leonardo da Vinci and his *Codex Atlanticus*.

3.14 Campania

The temporary exhibition organized by the Italian region of Campania was held from the 20th to the 30th of July. Thus, this exhibition coincided with the conduction of the survey, which ran from the 23rd to the 3rd of August. With the Campania exhibition ending by the 30th of July, it might seem that it did not encompass the entirety of the survey timeframe. Whilst the survey was conducted in person until the 29th of July, one respondent entered their answer on the 3rd of August. This means that this visitor held onto the survey for around five days before entering it. Each one of the exhibition niches had its own concept: the first one was centered around “Cultural Heritage”, and it featured Campania’s traditional ceramic creations; the second one showcased “Tourism and Creative Industry” with demonstrations of artisanal techniques used to create pieces of the traditional nativity scenes; the third one’s theme was “Enabling Technologies” and it included audio content from the SoNa portal; the fourth one was based on the concepts “Fashion, Made in Italy and Design” and “Advanced Materials and Nanotechnologies” and it featured clothes and precious jewelry made with an innovative cellulose fiber, created without having to cut down any trees; the fifth one was centered on “Fashion, Made in Italy and Design”, “Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Creative Industries”, and “Enabling Technologies” with demonstrative models made by the Center of Digital Craftsmanship; and the sixth and last one focused on “Agri-tech” and “Enabling Technologies” with a focus on pizza. The Territory Area focused on the idea that Campania and Japan share geological and cultural aspects, such as the importance of active volcanoes in their landscapes, drawing a comparison between Mount Vesuvius and Mount Fuji as spiritual and cultural elements. The exhibition also included the theme of archeology as a connecting force between past and present, and between destruction and rebirth, with Pompeii, Ercolano and Cuma as examples.



Figure 27 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of part of Lazio's Territory area exhibition. 20 July 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

The exhibition included videos, panels, and replicas of the “Dioscuri e Sandra” statues. The events included a workshop named “Campania Pizza Experience” which also talked about how the art of the Neapolitan “Pizzauolo” entered the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2017, the event “Campania Food for Health” and how Campania’s agri-food can promote health, sustainability and local development, and the panel “Digital Ecosystem for Campania Region’s Culture” which promoted the portal of the same name, aimed at the promotion of cultural assets and resources. Campania’s temporary exhibition not only took advantage of its international reputation, but it might have even educated the Japanese audience into distinguishing how Pizza and Mount Vesuvius are not simply “Italian” cultural elements but are specific to the region of Campania. The region also tried to find a link between itself and Japan in the presence of the active volcanoes and the cultural importance of food.

3.15 Basilicata

The region of Basilicata exhibited its pieces at the Italy Pavilion from the 24th to the 30th of Augst. The Pavilion’s external niches featured: jewelry made to capture the architecture of the *Sassi di Matera*, mats made with plant fibers, ceramics, the traditional container *chichimo* made with 3D printing techniques, foulards that evoke the forests of Basilicata,

jewelry, pillows weaved on a loom, and traditional masks used during local festivities. The main exhibition area featured a multisensory installation called *Motherland*, which consisted of sounds, smells, and images that evoked the heritage of the region through elements such as honey, wheat, orange blossoms, and the characters of the *Carnival of Basilicata*. The events centered around themes such as food and wine culture, tourism, mechatronics, and Opera performances at the Theatre. Basilicata tried to evoke the feelings and sensations linked to the region through a multisensory installation, meaning that apart from the external niches, there were no tangible pieces in the Territory area, only sounds, smells, and pictures that were displayed on screens.

3.16 Umbria

Umbria held its temporary exhibition from the 31st of August to the 6th of September. The Territory area was the main space utilized by the region. The *pièce de resistance* of the thematic week was the *Gonfalon of Justice*, an original piece by the master of Umbrian Renaissance Perugino, depicting Mary Mother of Christ and angels surrounding her, Saint Francis and Saint Bernardino of Siena, and the landscape of Perugia in the background. The other parts of the exhibition were designed to recreate a path around the main exhibited piece, a path created using three-part structures, on which details of the main artwork and other pieces of the *National Gallery of Umbria* were printed in large format. Outside of the Pavilion, namely in the Italy Square area, music was the main protagonist with the multiple daily performances of the Umbrian band *Funk Off*. The events at the auditorium covered topics such as craftsmanship, tourism, cuisine, and art. The region of Umbria brought a real piece of art from Italy, and this addition was not only a piece of great value to the Pavilion, but also to the city of Osaka, as will be analyzed in Chapter 6.

3.17 Emilia-Romagna

The time slot for the Emilia-Romagna regional exhibition was from the 21st to the 27th of September. The external niches featured curved LED screens, displaying a video showcasing each niche's theme, and were meant to create the illusion of being a widow

to Emilia-Romagna. A curved screen was also present in the main regional exhibition area, and it was used to create a background to the main exhibited pieces: the Ferrari 296 Gtscar model and the Ducati Panigale Tricolore bike¹⁶⁰. Videos were also used as exhibition pieces in the internal niches, these videos would display themes such as sustainability, Green Blue economy, AI, and talents. The events held at the Pavilion were mainly about Emilia-Romagna's film heritage, the impact of AI on our future society, Green Energy, agri-food and included a tasting of Parmigiano-Reggiano and regional wines. The musical performances included the traditional Emilia-Romagna ballroom dance, the *Liscio*. Emilia-Romagna highlighted its land and scenery through screens and windows to the region, and the Territory area focused on the region's "Know-how" and automotive production.

3.18 Piedmont

The Piedmont week lasted from the 28th of September to the 4th of October and was the second to last Italian region to be featured at the Territory area of the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. The external niches were used to display videos on six LED walls, each of them had a different theme: chocolate, textiles, aerospace, automotive, design, and cinema. The Territory area was used to create an immersive experience, a voyage through some of the region's landmarks and UNESCO World Heritage sites, as well as space, since Piedmont contributed to half of the construction of the International Space Station. The events at the Multimedia and Multifunction room centered around themes such as the region's museums, Japan's and Piedmont's textile traditions, the region's UNESCO world Heritage sites, and about investing in the region. The violinist from Piedmont who is now based in Japan Mauro Iurato, held three concerts at the Pavilion's Theatre. Similarly to the region that preceded its exhibition, Piedmont also mainly featured screens and LED walls as part of its thematic week.

¹⁶⁰ "L'Emilia-Romagna svela Ferrari E Ducati al Padiglione Italia." *Ansa*, 21 Sept. 2025, https://www.ansa.it/expo_2025_osaka/notizie/2025/09/21/lemilia-romagna-svela-ferrari-e-ducatti-al-padiglione-italia_3337d84e-f0da-4769-bcb8-0994f8e56f11.html.

3.19 Lombardy

Lombardy was the last region to hold its temporary exhibition, from the 5th to the 13th of October, the day of the ending ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka. The external niches were used to showcase the region's culinary and wine tradition with wines and Grana Padano, the cutting-edge projects by the Polytechnic University of Milan, and Cremona's luthier tradition¹⁶¹. The main exhibition area was used to create an immersive experience with a LED wall that would display Lombardy's nature, villages, artistic heritage, gastronomy and tourism¹⁶². Part of the exhibition was dedicated to sport, and to the, at the time, upcoming Winter Olympic Games of Milano-Cortina 2026¹⁶³. After experiencing this part of the exhibition, the visitors could take a personalized picture at the interactive photo booths that were located along the area¹⁶⁴. Themes such as AI, urban regeneration, and sustainable innovation were the main focus of the events held at the Italy Pavilion's Multimedia and Multifunction room. The *Tales of Stradivari* musical performance was the main event held at the Pavilion's Theatre, with a violin performance paying homage to Stradivari. Lombardy kept the tradition mainly in the outer part of the exhibition area, as the main focus of Lombardy's thematic week seems to have been expressed through video installations. Moreover, ending the Expo with Lombardy's exhibition symbolically passed the baton to the next international event, the Milano-Cortina Winter Olympic Games.

3.20 Non-regional Thematic Weeks

As already stated, the temporary exhibitions held at the Italy Pavilion were not only organized by the 18 Italian regions that took part in the Expo 2025 Osaka. The Territory area of the Italy Pavilion was used as an exhibition area by Italian corporations and for

¹⁶¹ "Lombardia Inaugura Sua Settimana al Padiglione Italia." *Ansa*, 2025, https://www.ansa.it/amp/expo_2025_osaka/notizie/2025/10/05/lombardia-inaugura-sua-settimana-al-padiglione-italia_790bef0a-7aa6-42ff-ae14-cf7c92b6f975.html.

¹⁶² "Spazio Lombardia al Padiglione Italia Di Expo Osaka 2025, l'Inaugurazione Nel Segno Di Giorgio Armani." // *Giorno*, 5 Oct. 2025, <https://www.ilgiorno.it/cronaca/padiglione-italia-expo-osaka-2025-jwurm78w>.

¹⁶³ "Spazio Lombardia al Padiglione Italia Di Expo Osaka 2025, l'Inaugurazione Nel Segno Di Giorgio Armani." // *Giorno*.

¹⁶⁴ "Spazio Lombardia al Padiglione Italia Di Expo Osaka 2025, l'Inaugurazione Nel Segno Di Giorgio Armani." // *Giorno*.

exhibitions with more general themes that were not linked to any specific territory. One example of this is the temporary exhibition held by Moleskine, an Italian corporation that is specialized in the sale of notebooks, that went on from the 31st of July to the 23rd of August¹⁶⁵. Moleskine held its traveling exhibition *Detour* at the Pavilion, and the exhibited pieces were Moleskine notebooks transformed into artwork by artists from all over the world, namely Giorgia Lupi, Kengo Kuma, Antonio Marras, and others¹⁶⁶. This exhibition, after being exhibited at the Expo, was also exhibited in Tokyo in September of 2025, receiving 16 new pieces by Japanese artists and designer¹⁶⁷. It might be argued that the success brought by exhibiting the pieces at the Italy Pavilion might have been the reason behind the exhibition held in Tokyo and the addition of the 16 new pieces. This exhibition used the company's product, the notebook, as the common base for each one of the exhibited pieces, giving each artist a way to showcase their own personal art style and message, and the artists simply used Moleskine's notebook as their canvas. In doing so, the main focus of the exhibition is not only the end product, which in this case is the piece of art, but also the notebook as a consumer product, as something the visitors might be persuaded to buy.

Another example of a temporary exhibition that was not linked to an Italian territory was the exhibition "Italy is in Fashion" ("L'Italia è di Moda"), held from the 25th to the 31st of May and curated by Stefano Dominella¹⁶⁸. The exhibition included pieces by 17 Italian designers and the most prestigious Italian brands; amongst the pieces there were Alberta

¹⁶⁵ "Detour all'EXPO 2025 di Osaka-Tokyo The legendary power of creativity on paper." *Moleskine*, 2025, <https://www.moleskine.com/it-it/storie/detour-expo-2025-osaka/>.

¹⁶⁶ "Detour all'EXPO 2025 di Osaka-Tokyo The legendary power of creativity on paper." *Moleskine*.

¹⁶⁷ "Detour all'EXPO 2025 di Osaka-Tokyo The legendary power of creativity on paper." *Moleskine*.

¹⁶⁸ "L'Italia è Di Moda – Osaka." *Mariotto Eventi*, 2025, <https://www.mariottoeventi.it/litalia-e-di-moda-osaka/>.

Ferretti's hand painted feathers dress, a Valentino dress worn by Giulia Roberts, Ferragamo's invisible sandal, and Gattinoni's dress made with recycled materials¹⁶⁹.



Figure 28 Benedetto, Nicole. Photograph of Gattinoni's recycled materials dress. 31 May 2025. Author's Personal Collection.

According to Stefano Dominella, placing Italian fashion next to artwork made by masters of the caliber of Caravaggio and Michelangelo means that Italy has finally understood that Fashion is Art, and that it is an integral part of Italian culture¹⁷⁰. Mario Vattani stated that the Pavilion's idea of art is linked to technology, innovation, and creation, and all these elements are also present in fashion, and that fashion also has other characterizing elements such as the research of materials, and the concept of *Made in Italy*, an aspect that is often showcased at the Pavilion¹⁷¹. This exhibition highlighted Italy's strong connection with the fashion industry, and it might have helped to consolidate the status of Italian fashion brands and their pieces, as they were displayed alongside real artwork.

¹⁶⁹ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka. "La Settimana Della Moda al Padiglione Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Nelle Immagini Trasmesse Dal Tg1 Rai." *YouTube*, 27 May 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhdK9eT3X28>, 00:00:21-00:01:40.

¹⁷⁰ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka. "La Settimana Della Moda al Padiglione Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Nelle Immagini Trasmesse Dal Tg1 Rai." *YouTube*, 00:00:21-00:01:40.

¹⁷¹ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka. "La Settimana Della Moda al Padiglione Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Nelle Immagini Trasmesse Dal Tg1 Rai." *YouTube*, 00:00:21-00:01:40.

3.21 Results of the Temporary Exhibitions

After analyzing the temporary exhibitions, it could be argued that corporations, such as Moleskine, and the Italian regions worked in the same way whilst exhibiting at the Italy pavilion. For the Expo, they curated their exhibition with the Japanese public in mind and showcased products and presented a message they believed the Japanese public might favor. The common goal was gaining notoriety overseas, raising Japanese people's awareness of their product or their region. Furthermore, traditional products and private companies were also part of the regional exhibitions. They were particularly present in the exhibition niches, often promoting their products and online stores, which suggests access to more products for the Japanese public. Their participation was more about representing the region's traditions, and less about interpreting the theme of the Expo 2025 Osaka. The regions were at the Expo to promote themselves as potential vacation destinations and tourist attractions, to increase the foreign investments in their companies and territory through the events held at the Multimedia and Multifunction room, as well as individual products that the Italy Pavilion visitors had the chance to see first-hand during their visit. For these reasons, the Expo could be considered as a platform for self-promotion, for both companies and territories.

Chapter 4 - The Survey

To better understand the value visitors derived from their experience in the Italy Pavilion, a questionnaire was conducted as it is the appropriate way to collect the qualitative data necessary for the analysis. The aim of the questionnaire was to understand by what degree the Italy Pavilion could be described as “successful”, if this success was only a hyperbole perpetrated by the media, and if this “number one pavilion” title was only justified by the long queue forming outside of the Pavilion, and not by the actual impressions left on the people who entered it. The questions were written in both Japanese and English, to make it easier for both national and international visitors to answer them. The questionnaire was provided via a QR Code shown at the end of the visitor experience of the Pavilion, right at the exit of the shop. If necessary, a tutorial on how to use the QR Code in order to answer the questions was also offered in person, especially to less technically knowledgeable people such as the elderly. In a particular case it was necessary to conduct an informal unstructured interview. The respondents could answer the questions provided either with multiple choice or open-ended answers, depending on the question itself. Questions about the respondent’s degree of appreciation of various aspects of the Pavilion were, for example, multiple choice, whereas questions regarding the respondent’s own personal idea of the Pavilion’s identity and message were structured as open-ended questions. Before the administration of the survey as a data collecting method, a brief explanation of said questionnaire, its questions and its administration method was provided. It was clear that the administration of the questionnaire was completely optional, and that it was not part of the intended “visitor experience” of the Italy Pavilion; the visitors who provided the answers did it out of their own volition, thus the research and analysis will be limited to the answers given by the people who were willing to take part in the questionnaire. Another hypothesis before the questionnaire was conducted was whether a geographical factor was at play when analyzing the time spent at the Expo, or if the visitors living closer by also attended the Expo on multiple days and visited more pavilions. However, this question would need a bigger scope and more collaboration on the visitors’ part, as there were not enough entries to reach a conclusive statement on this. After consulting the research advisor, some questions were added during the first survey after a number of

visitors had already submitted their answers to the incomplete survey. Namely, eighty-four people answered these new questions. Moreover, after the first survey, it seemed necessary to conduct a second one, to further understand what kind of impression the Italy Pavilion left on the visitors. The answers gathered from the first survey were 120, and there were ten for the second. Every visitor who exited the building was asked to participate in the survey. Therefore, the people sampled were ordinary visitors willing to take part in it.

4.1 Question number one

The first survey consists of seventeen questions. The first thing that was asked was “what queue did you line up in?”. The possible answers were four: “一般・予約なし No reservation, 予約あり With reservation, VIP アクセス VIP access, 優先 Priority”.

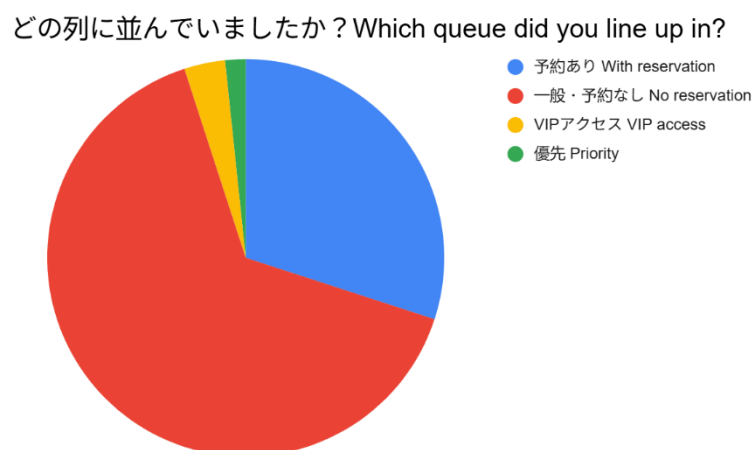


Figure 29 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “どの列に並んでいましたか？ Which queue did you line up in?”.

The aim of this question was to understand around how much time each person spent waiting in line before entering the building. The waiting time could potentially be a factor that affects visitors’ satisfaction and their perception of the exhibition. A longer waiting time could raise expectations, and higher expectations could lead to dissatisfaction. People could reserve a spot to enter the Pavilion. The “予約あり With reservation” category consisted of all the people who were able to reserve a “Fast Track” through the Italy Pavilion app. Even the people with this spot reserved would have to wait, albeit a much shorter time than the people without a reservation. 30% of the respondents had

booked a reservation. As mentioned, it was possible to enter the Pavilion with almost no waiting time with a reservation, but when these reservations were full, the only other way to visit the Pavilion was to simply queue outside. According to Italy Pavilion's Commissioner General himself, Mario Vattani, lining in the “一般・予約なし No reservation” queue could take up to five hours before ever entering the building¹⁷². This line was, of course, the longest one, thus explaining the high percentage of people who queued in it who also took part in the survey. A total of seventy-eight visitors, or 65% of the survey sample, were part of this group. The next category is the priority line, referred to as “優先 Priority” in the survey. Only a small number of people could enter through this queue. The list mainly consisted of pregnant people, families with children in strollers, people with disabilities and the elderly. Even this line had its waiting time, which was considerably shorter than the “一般・予約なし No reservation” queue, but longer than the “予約あり With reservation” one. Only two of the people who took part in this survey, or 1.7% of the total, entered after queuing in the priority line. As the sample of this survey is only a representation of the actual public of the Expo 2025 Osaka in its entirety, and that only a small percentage of people can fall into the “優先 Priority” category, it is clear why the number of people who were queueing in this line is so low compared to the overall one hundred and twenty people of the survey sample. The last group is made up of people who answered with “VIP アクセス VIP access”. VIP visitors could not only be investors, politicians, and social media influencers, but also other pavilions' delegations wanting to visit their competition. This category granted VIP visitors direct access to the start of the exhibition, which could potentially make the whole experience more enjoyable due to the complete absence of a waiting time. The VIPs who decided to answer the questions given were four, or 3.3%. The results that this question produced show that the majority of people who were interviewed took part in the line that had the longest waiting time possible. As previously stated, having to wait in line outside in the scalding July sun for hours might have skewed the perception of the visitors.

¹⁷² Netti, Enrico. “Osaka, Padiglione Italia a trazione imprenditoriale e culturale.” *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 13 June 2025, <https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/osaka-italy-pavilion-entrepreneurial-and-cultural-traction-AHmN8KFB>.

4.2 Question number two

The second question in the survey was aimed at understanding which age group was the majority amongst Italy Pavilion visitors. Since most of the perceived charm of this Pavilion was the presence of real artwork from Italian masters, it seemed necessary to gauge if a certain age group was more prone to visiting a pavilion that acted more as a museum, rather than one of the other foreign pavilions that showcase technological advancement, such as the Tech World Pavilion, which displays Taiwan's advanced semiconductors¹⁷³. This data could then be used in a cross analysis using other parts of the survey.

年齢層を教えてください。What age group do you belong to?

120 risposte

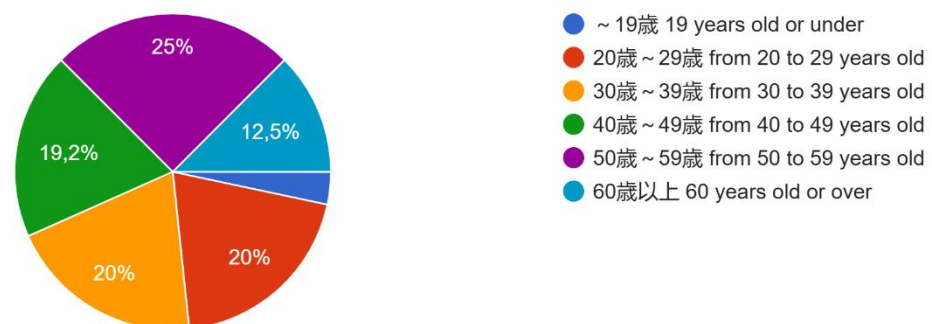


Figure 30 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “年齢層を教えてください。What age group do you belong to?”.

The answers were divided into six different age groups, in both English and Japanese. The age groups were “～19 歳 19 years old or under”, “20 歳～29 歳 from 20 to 29 years old”, “30 歳～39 歳 from 30 to 39 years old”, “40 歳～49 歳 from 40 to 49 years old”, “50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old”, and “60 歳以上 60 years old or over”. For an easier categorization, the age groups were simply split into different decades. Only four people, or 3.3%, were part of the youngest age group. Due to the Pavilion's vast number of cultural artifacts such as the *Farnese Atlas* or Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Atlanticus*, one might assume that younger generations, kids in particular, would find little interest in visiting. It

¹⁷³ Cheng, Chung Lan. “Taiwan No Saishin Tekunorojī O Hasshinsuru Banpaku Pabirion ” TECH WORLD ” : “Kyō Yoshimi” No Seishin De, Sekai to Tomoni Ayumu.” *Nippon.com*, 18 May 2025.
<https://www.nippon.com/ja/guide-to-japan/gu900306/>.

is worth mentioning that in the case of groups of visitors, such as families, not every member of the group would answer the survey. Specifically in the case of families, the children would rarely answer the questions as a representative of their family. Twenty-four people were part of the “20 歳～29 歳 from 20 to 29 years old” and the “30 歳～39 歳 from 30 to 39 years old” age group, respectively. Each of these sections represented 20% of visitors, making these age groups tie for second place in the survey. The number of 40 to 49 years olds only slightly decreases, reaching a total of twenty-three, or 19.2%. The highest percentage is represented by the “50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old” group, with thirty people and 30% of the entries. Lastly the “60 歳以上 60 years old or over” group, with fifteen entries and 12.5% overall. As already mentioned, this data will be used to analyze the preferences of different age groups. This analysis will show whether age is a determinant of the kind of artwork people tend to prefer, and if different people will have different ideas of the Italy Pavilion and Italy in its entirety.

4.3 Question number three

The Italy Pavilion had hosted numerous events during the six months of the Osaka Expo, therefore numerous people who took part in said events also crossed the doors of the Pavilion. Namely, 791 events were held at Italy Pavilion, of which 171 were Business-to-Business meetings, and 410 were events of economic nature. Moreover, around 7500 representatives of various domestic, Italian, and international companies, and around 1300 delegation representatives visited the Italian exhibition¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷⁴ “Successo economico e culturale del Padiglione Italia a Expo Osaka 2025.” *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 13 October 2025, <https://en.ilsole24ore.com/art/economic-and-cultural-success-italy-pavilion-expo-osaka-2025-AHp3sl9C>.

なぜ万博に訪れましたか？ Why are you visiting the Expo?

120 risposte

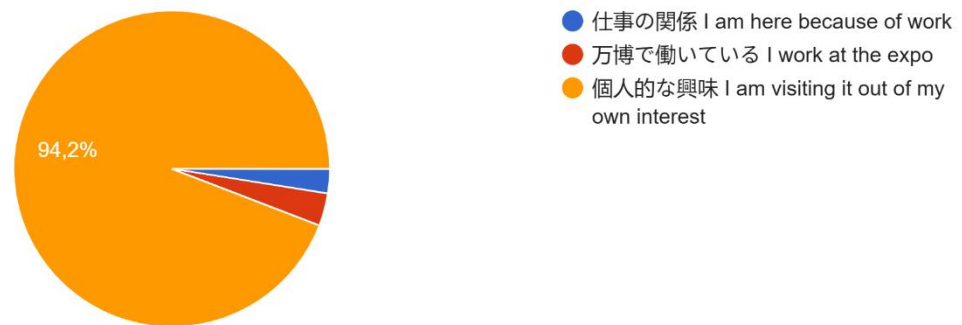


Figure 31 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “なぜ万博に訪れましたか？ Why are you visiting the Expo?”.

Another category of visitors worth considering is people working as staff at the International Exposition. These people, visiting the artificial island of Yumeshima for their own employment, have more chances than the regular person to visit all the different pavilions, without having to pay for a ticket and, sometimes, without having to queue. To show a sign of camaraderie between colleagues, some of the people employed by the pavilions to be in charge of the queues would at times let workers from other pavilions inside without making them queue. So why were the people interviewed visiting the Expo grounds? Most of the people interviewed were at the Osaka Kansai 2025 Expo out of their own interest, that is 94.2% of people paid the ticket and queued to see the exhibition. 3.3% of people were working at the Expo, and 2.5% were there because of work. It is thus clear that the vast majority of people interviewed had a real interest in Expo and had no other reasons to visit it.

4.4 Question number four

Another fundamental aspect to analyze is to know exactly what was contributing to the Pavilion's exploding popularity and in what way the word spread. It seemed necessary to question people on how they found out about the Italian exhibition.

イタリア館のことをどのように知りましたか？ How did you find out about the Italy Pavilion?

120 risposte

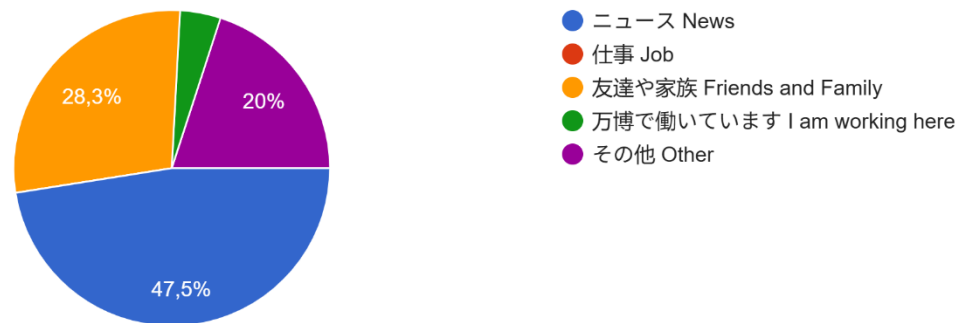


Figure 32 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリア館のことをどのように知りましたか？ How did you find out about the Italy Pavilion?”.

People directly working at the Pavilion were also invited to take part in the survey, although not many of them were in the area in which the survey was conducted. The few people who answered the questions were interns and security guards, taking up 5% of the total. Since zero respondents were part of the people on site for work, it also means that no interviewed person was on site because of a business meeting or an event. 28.3% of people visited the Pavilion after talking to friends and family, creating a word-of-mouth effect. 20% of people found out about the Pavilion through other ways. The biggest percentage is 47.5%, which represents the group of people who saw the Pavilion on the news. Therefore, it is clear the biggest factor influencing people to visit Italy Pavilion was news broadcasts. Although news broadcasts about the Pavilion might have contributed to its success, it seems that Italy Pavilion’s popularity preceded the Osaka 2025 Expo itself. In fact, the local Kansai area TV program *News Rannā* conducted a poll on the popular social network and messaging app LINE, asking its viewers which foreign pavilion they wanted to visit most. Amongst the choices available, the viewers chose Italy Pavilion as their number one exhibition¹⁷⁵. This *News Rannā* segment was broadcasted on the thirteenth of March, exactly a month before Expo’s grand opening. Additionally, only days before Expo opened its doors to the public, the NHK had a live broadcasting of the

¹⁷⁵ “Banpaku Kaimaku Chokuzen ‘Uchi no Pabirion ga Ichiban Ya!’ Senshukun Kakukoku Pabirion no Midokoro Purezen Hatsukoukai Jōhō mo (Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku).” *News Rannā*, Kantere, 13 March 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPRGx-5sPR8>, 00:25:25-00:25:42.

entrance and the main room of Italy Pavilion during Expo's "Media Day" on April 9th¹⁷⁶. It thus seems that Italy Pavilion's popularity came before the general public could experience the exhibition, thanks to the popularity survey. But showing the inside of the Pavilion might have given visitors a reason to line up. In fact, Commissioner General Mario Vattani, during the Media Day interview with NHK, put a lot of emphasis on how the artwork exhibited inside the Pavilion was original, a theme that might have been the key to its success¹⁷⁷.

4.5 Question number five

To understand if original artwork was one of the factors contributing to Italy Pavilion's high consideration amongst Expo visitors, it was necessary to find out which part of the exhibition they liked most. Understanding this aspect is essential since so much of the perceived value of the Pavilion seemed to be thanks to its original artwork exposition, with a frequent use of the word 本物 - *honmono*, which means "genuine article" in Japanese, by the Commissioner General Mario Vattani in many interviews, such as the aforementioned one with the NHK¹⁷⁸. Despite this, the Italy Pavilion did not only showcase

¹⁷⁶ NHK. "2025 Nen Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Itaria Kan Media Dē." YouTube, 10 April 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr-1TAiKE9s>, 00:01:55-00:03:00.

¹⁷⁷ NHK. "2025 Nen Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Itaria Kan Media Dē."

¹⁷⁸ NHK. "2025 Nen Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Itaria Kan Media Dē."

artwork from Italian masters from the past, and from the present, but also recent Italian patents, and other pieces showing Italy's technological advancement.

イタリア館の展示で、どの部分が一番お気に入りでしたか？ Which part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition did you like best?

120 risposte

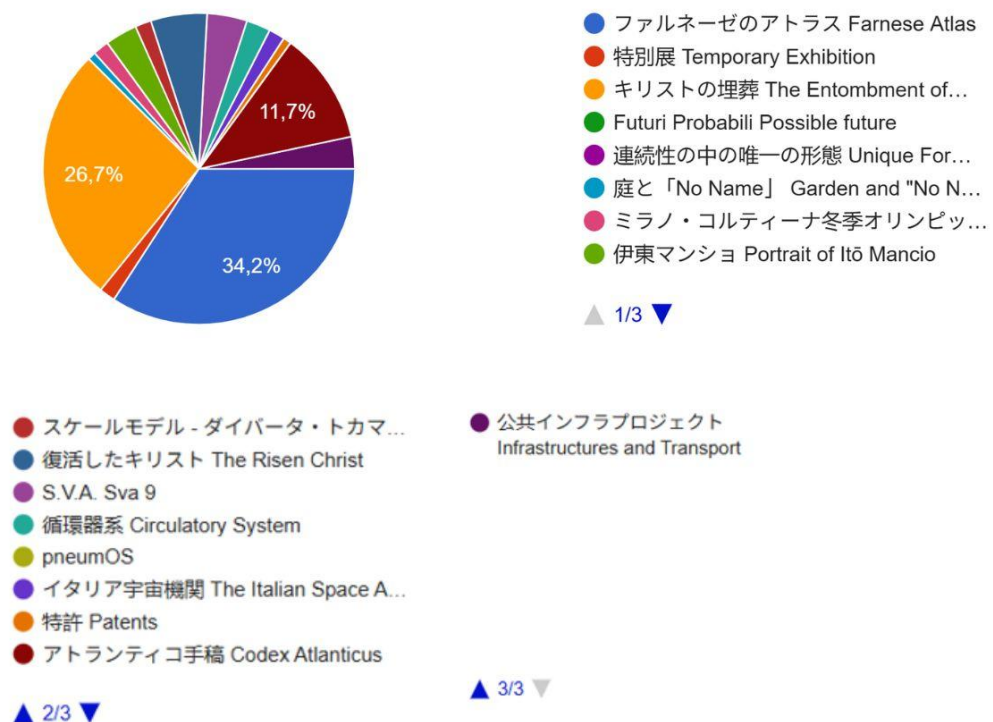


Figure 33 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリア館の展示で、どの部分が一番お気に入りでしたか？ Which part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition did you like best?”.

When answering this question, the respondents were given the name in both English and Japanese of each piece of the exhibition, alongside a picture of said piece, in order to facilitate the answer. After analyzing the exhibitions that received the highest rate of appreciation, it seems crucial, for a better comprehension of the results, to divide the remaining artwork into separate groups. The piece that was most appreciated amongst the many was the *Farnese Atlas* (ファルネーゼのアトラス), the piece that was located at the center of the main exhibition room, with 34.2% of visitors choosing it. It represented the beating heart of the exposition, becoming one of the symbols of the Pavilion. The second artwork in popularity was *The Entombment of Christ* (キリストの埋葬), gaining 26.7% of the answers. This piece was technically part of the Holy See Pavilion, a room inside the Italy Pavilion entirely dedicated to this piece. *The Codex Atlanticus* (アトラン

ティコ手稿) was the best part of the Pavilion according to 11.7% of the visitors, becoming the third most liked piece of the exhibition. Although the aforementioned artwork received the most votes, not every piece at the Italy Pavilion was as successful. In fact, some of the pieces received zero votes, namely *Futuri Probabili Possible future*, *pneumOS*, and 連続性の中の唯一の形態 *Unique Forms of Continuity*.

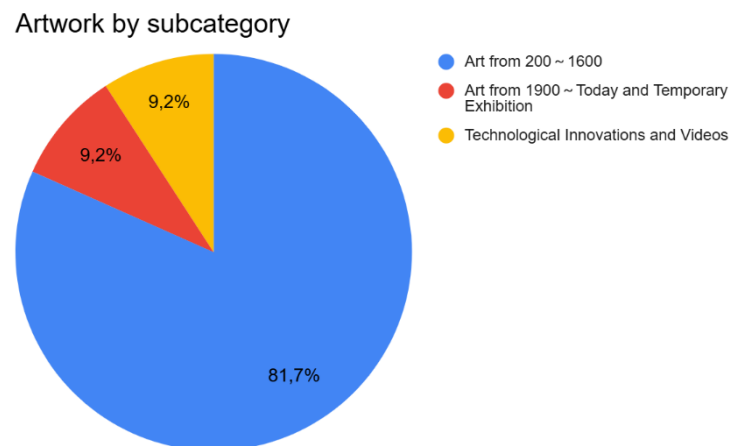


Figure 34 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph "Artwork by subcategory".

The artwork was then divided in subcategories, thus creating three new labels: "Art from 200~1600" (which included ファルネーゼのアトラス *Farnese Atlas*, キリストの埋葬 *The Entombment of Christ*, アトランティコ手稿 *Codex Atlanticus*, 復活したキリスト *The Risen Christ*, and 伊東マンショ *Portrait of Itō Mancio*), "Art from 1900~Today and Temporary Exhibition" (including S.V.A. Sva 9, 特別展 *Temporary Exhibition*, 庭と「No Name」 *Garden and "No Name"*, 循環器系 *Circulatory System*, *pneumOS*, and 連続性の中の唯一の形態 *Unique Forms of Continuity*) and "Technological Innovations and Videos" (which included 公共インフラプロジェクト *Infrastructures and Transport*, ミラノ・コルティーナ冬季オリンピック 2 本の聖火 *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games*, スケールモデル- ダイバータ・トカマク・テスト *Scale Model of the Divertor Tokamak Test facility*, イタリア宇宙機関 *The Italian Space Agency Interactive Panel*, 特許 *Patents*, and *Futuri Probabili Possible future*). The first

category included five pieces, and the other two both included six pieces. Although the “Art from 200～1600” category was in a numerical disadvantage, it was also the one that received the biggest number of preferences, with 81.7% of the visitors choosing one of the artworks in this category as their favorite. The two other groups were chosen as their favorite by the 9.2% of the visitors. Despite Italy Pavilion’s efforts to showcase the multifaceted qualities of the country it represented, not only Italy’s artistic merits, but also the image of a technologically developed country, it seems that the visitors had a preference for a particular group of exhibited pieces.

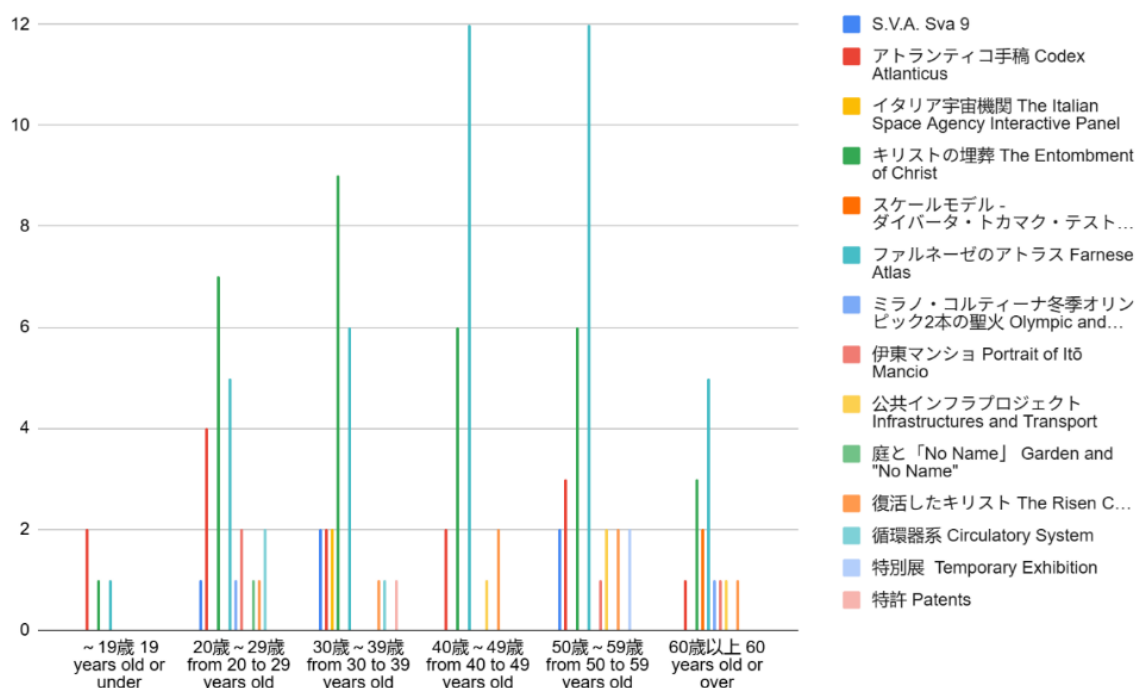


Figure 35 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリア館の展示で、どの部分が一番お気に入りでしたか？ Which part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition did you like best?” by “年齢層を教えてください。 What age group do you belong to?”.

It was then required, to further deepen this research, to understand which piece of the exhibition was the most popular amongst each age group. The age groups used were available through the results of “Question number two”. The first and less populated age group, “～19 歳 19 years old or under”, chose the *Codex Atlanticus* as its favorite piece, the second most popular one overall. The second and third age groups, “20 歳～29 歳 from 20 to 29 years old” and “30 歳～39 歳 from 30 to 39 years old”, seem to agree in choosing *The Entombment of Christ* as their favorite piece, with the *Farnese Atlas* as their

second choice. The top two is then switched for the remaining three age groups, “40 歳～49 歳 from 40 to 49 years old”, “50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old”, and “60 歳以上 60 years old or over”, for whom the top piece is the *Farnese Atlas*, followed by *The Entombment of Christ*. Since the “40 歳～49 歳 from 40 to 49 years old” and “50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old” age groups are also the ones with the biggest number of entries, the overall exhibition piece ranking is skewed towards their preference. As mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the possible reasons behind the relatively small number of preferences for the S.V.A. 9 might have been both because of its positioning and because of the lack of contrast with the Pavilion’s roof, as the visitors could have overlooked this piece entirely. *Probable Futures* had a similar problem, it is possible that not many visitors turned around after entering the Pavilion, since its position was behind them as they entered and looked at *Itō Mancio’s Portrait*, thus amassing a total of zero preferences. It is also possible that visitors were most interested in traditional artwork rather than digital videos. It was also easy to overlook the *Scale Model of the Divertor Tokamak Test* facility because of its size, especially since it was placed so close to the *Farnese Atlas*, thus only receiving two entries. Although, it did not have as bad of a fate as another piece that was close to the marble statue: *Unique Forms of Continuity*, which did not receive a single preference.

4.6 Question number six

Visitors were also asked to provide the name of the pavilion they liked the most, if they had visited more than one. The results of this question can be used as a parameter of the level of success of the Italy Pavilion. The question asked was: “他のパビリオンを訪れた

ことがある場合、どのパビリオンが最もお気に入りでしたか？ If you have visited other pavilions, which one is your favorite?”.

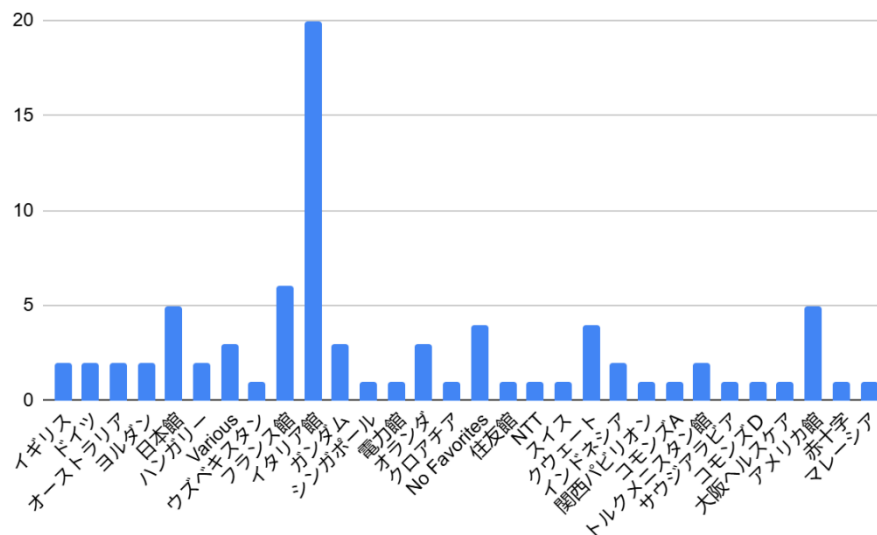


Figure 36 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “他のパビリオンを訪れたことがある場合、どのパビリオンが最もお気に入りでしたか？ If you have visited other pavilions, which one is your favorite?”.

Visitors were able to freely write any pavilion as their favorite one, as a list of all the exhibiting pavilions was not provided. This decision brought some difficulties in the processing of the analyzable data. There were many differences in the submittal of the pavilion names, such as typos; for example, there were two individual submissions of the Kuwait Pavilion, with two different Katakana renditions: クウェート and クエート. Even for the other entries there was a large variation in name choice. For the Italy Pavilion, for example, some people decided to only write the name of the country as イタリア and other people decided to type the Japanese equivalent of “Italy Pavilion”, イタリア館, some wrote the English “Italian”, or simply “This one!” (in the original Japanese: こちらです！). Moreover, some visitors decided to write down more than one preference; those entries have been categorized as “Various”. Although answering this question was not mandatory, considering that not everyone who was submitting their questionnaire answers might have visited more than one pavilion, some people still decided to explicitly say that they had no favorites. One respondent in particular provided an extensive explanation regarding their lack of a favorite pavilion, they say: “多くのパビリオンを巡

ったが、もう一度行きたいと思えるほどのパビリオンにはまだ行けていない。”, meaning “I have visited many, but I still have not visited a pavilion that made me want to go back”. All of these negative answers were categorized as “No Favorites” in the above graph.

Since the survey was open to every visitor, but was mostly filled in by Japanese visitors, it is natural that the “free form” entries would be extremely varied. After processing the data, out of eighty-four available entries, there were thirty individual pavilions submitted. The topic of this analysis, the Italy Pavilion, gained twenty individual votes, making it the most liked pavilion amongst the interviewed people, by majority. In fact, 24% percent of visitors chose the Italy Pavilion as their favorite pavilion visited, whereas the second most-liked pavilion in this research, the French Pavilion, “only” gathered six votes, or 7% of visitors. There is a fourteen votes difference between the first and second place.

The pavilions gaining the bronze medal were the Japan Pavilion and the United States of America Pavilion, both gaining five votes. It is worth noticing that some of the pavilions that received votes were not national pavilions, only representing a specific country. Namely, the “Commons D” and “Commons A” (respectively コモンズ D and コモンズ A in the survey), alongside “NTT” and “International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement” (赤十字 in the survey). The “Commons” were places in which various countries could share a smaller space. It was a series of buildings, in different parts on the Expo site, in which it was possible to see different national pavilions in the same condensed area.

Since the Italy Pavilion was chosen by many as their favorite pavilion, recency bias might have been at play. In this research, recency bias can influence the results of a survey greatly, especially when so little time passes between visiting a new exhibition and answering questions about it. It could be hypothesized that, if asked which pavilion one prefers, the answer might fall onto the most recent one visited. In fact, the survey was conducted as visitors were exiting the Pavilion grounds. Although the online survey could have been submitted at any point after visiting the Italy Pavilion, thus even after visiting other pavilions, it is hard to quantify how many of the entries might have been altered by this bias.

4.7 Question number seven

After possibly queuing for hours access to the Italy Pavilion, if the reservations for the day were not available anymore, how happy were the visitors after finally accessing the Pavilion? Did the waiting time cloud their judgment or were they satisfied with the artwork exhibited in the Square? This is what the next question aims to analyze. The question asked to the visitors was fairly straightforward: “イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?”. The possible answers were three: a positive one “はい Yes”, a negative one “いいえ No”, and a neutral one “ある程度 Partially”. Offering a somewhat neutral answer was meant to provide the visitors with a way to show partial dissatisfaction, but it might have made it considerably harder to choose the completely negative answer. This phenomenon becomes apparent whilst analyzing the answers provided by the visitors. In fact, none of them chose the “いいえ No” option.

イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?

120 risposte

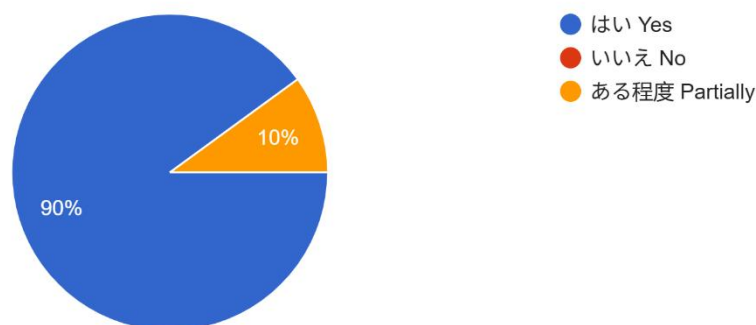


Figure 37 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?”.

Furthermore, out of the one hundred and twenty people who answered this question, nobody chose the negative option. Only twelve people, 10%, chose the neutral option “ある程度 Partially”, whereas most respondents, 90% or 108 people, believed that the Italy Pavilion completely met their expectations. Therefore, it cannot be said that the visitors

of the Italy Pavilion thought that the exhibition did not meet their expectations. It is worth analyzing if there is a correlation between the type of queue the visitor lined up in and their expectations, to understand if the people who were somewhat content with the experience were also the ones who had to wait multiple hours in order to enter the building. To do so, creating a table with the type of access as the columns and whether or not the Pavilion met the visitors' expectations as the rows was required. The table will showcase whether or not these two aspects are correlated.

COUNTA di イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations? どの列に並んでいましたか？ Which queue did you line up in?	イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?		
	ある程度 Partially	はい Yes	Totale generale
VIPアクセス VIP access		4	4
一般・予約なし No reservation	9	69	78
予約あり With reservation	3	33	36
優先 Priority		2	2
Totale generale	12	108	120

Figure 38 Benedetto, Nicole. Table “イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?” by “どの列に並んでいましたか？ Which queue did you line up in?”.

The table indicates that none of the four people who entered through VIP access were partially satisfied, the same can be said of the two people who entered after queuing in the Priority line. Only three of the thirty-six people with a reservation were neutral regarding their experience. The biggest portion of people who chose “ある程度 Partially” as their answer is the “一般・予約なし No reservation” row. However, this portion also represents the biggest number of visitors overall. Thus, saying that the people without a reservation were more likely to be dissatisfied might be inaccurate. It is necessary to understand what percentage of visitors with and without reservations were completely satisfied. Through a simple mathematical proportion, it can be found out that around 11.5% of visitors without a reservation were partially satisfied, whereas the percentage for visitors without a reservation is 8.3%, and subsequently that around 88.5% of people without a reservation were completely satisfied, alongside 91.7% of people with a reservation. Although the percentage of partially satisfied people without a reservation is still greater than the one of the people who had a reservation, there is only a less than 5% difference between them. It could then be said that the kind of access had little to no

impact on the visitors' level of satisfaction. As *Esquire* has theorized in the article “Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai – 5 Pavilions That Will Stimulate Your Intellect” (“EXPO 2025 大阪・関西万博 | 知性が揺さぶられるパビリオン 5 選”), the queue to enter the Italy Pavilion was a core part of the visit¹⁷⁹. It could be said that the area right in front of the Pavilion, the Piazza Italia, or Italy Square, could be considered the first part of the visitor experience, so it might be argued that the people who were waiting in line were already visiting the Italy Pavilion. As a matter of fact, many events and shows were held in the Piazza Italia almost every day. For example, during the month of June, a group of flag bearers from the Marche Region of Italy, entertained people of all ages who were lining up to enter the main building and attracting a large number of people who were simply passing by, perhaps even convincing them to visit the Pavilion¹⁸⁰. Additionally, there was a big screen located in Piazza Italia. This screen projected a live stream of any event happening at the Pavilion's Auditorium or Theatre, meaning that anyone could see and hear these events even from the outside, and while queuing. The last section of the queue was inside the building, where the structure in the shape of the Colosseum was situated. This was the area in which the “exhibition niches” were located. These niches were used as exhibition areas for the Italian regions exhibiting their artwork during the thematic weeks, during which they could also showcase the region's traditional craftsmanship through interactive stands where visitors could see the craftsmen at work with their own eyes¹⁸¹. After considering this aspect of the visitor experience, it seems that the long waiting hours did not have a significant effect on how the visitors perceived the Pavilion.

4.8 Question number eight

Eighty-four of the one hundred and twenty people who answered this survey were asked the question: “イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか？ What sets the

¹⁷⁹ “EXPO 2025 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku | Chisei Ga Yusaburareru Pabirion Sen.” *Esquire*. 7 August 2025.

<https://www.esquire.com/jp/lifestyle/travel/a65358795/expo2025-best-pavilions/>.

¹⁸⁰ “Asukori Pichēno No Kishu Niyoru Geijutsutekina Engi.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025,

<https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/lbentokarend%C4%81/asukorihichienonoqishouniyoruyunshudenayanji>.

¹⁸¹ “Padiglione Italia – Expo 2025 Osaka Percorso “Nicchie Espositive”.” *Camera di Commercio Brindisi-Taranto*, 4 March 2025, <https://www.brta.camcom.it/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka-percorso-nicchie-espositive>.

Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions?”. This question was aimed at understanding the characteristics that might have made the Italy Pavilion so popular amongst Expo visitors. As this question was an open-ended one, the answers provided were extremely varied. For the purpose of this analysis only a small number of these questions will be examined in their entirety, whereas the rest will be categorized into subgroups.

A person from Osaka in the 40 to 49 age group said: “Compared to other pavilions, which feature many screens and replicas, I was intensely moved by the overwhelming authentic pieces of the Italy Pavilion” (“他のパビリオンが映像や複製品が多いのに対し、イタリア館は本物の圧倒的な迫力に感動しました。”). This is one of the twelve entries which mentioned the word 本物 *honmono* (authentic article) in them. Most of the entries have the words 芸術 *geijutsu* (art), 美術 *bijutsu* (fine art), 展示 *tenji* (exhibition), アート/アート作品/作品 *āto/ātosakuhin/sakuhin* (artwork) in them. These entries find that the presence of art is what makes the Pavilion unique. Some of the entries quote more than one of these words, including the previously mentioned *honmono*. Overall, 50 of the 84 entries have at least one of these words used to describe the perceived Italy Pavilion’s uniqueness.

One of these entries was written by a person from Osaka with no reservation in the 50 to 59 age group who said: “The fact that it does not only exhibit videos, but also numerous authentic articles with a high artistic value. The fact that the entry is not entirely based on a reservation system, but there are also arrangements that make it possible to enter if people queue is also wonderful” (“映像だけではなく芸術的価値の高いホンモノを何点も展示している点。全て予約制にせず、並べば入場できるように配慮されている点も素晴らしい。”). They also thought that the Pavilion met their expectations.

Although most of the entries are extremely positive, some visitors decided to use this open-ended section of the survey to freely complain about some aspects of the Pavilion they found subpar. A person in the 50 to 59 age group from Osaka who entered with a reservation on the 25th of July had this to say: “The inside is crowded and hot and humid, please turn the air conditioning on” (“館内が渋滞していて蒸し暑い、空調を効かせて欲しい”). This person ticked “はい Yes” when asked if the Italy Pavilion met their

expectations. Another person, from Yamatotakada City in the 50 to 59 age group who was able to obtain a reservation, said: “The waiting time (queue) is too long, and it is too hard to get a reservation” (“待ち時間が長すぎる、予約が取れなすぎる”). This person also visited the Italy Pavilion on the 25th of July, and they ticked “ある程度 Partially” when asked if the Pavilion met their expectations. The next critique comes from a person in the 30 to 39 age group coming from Tokyo, who had no reservation and simply said: “It was crowded” (“混んでた”). This person, like the previous one, chose the neutral option when asked about their expectations regarding the Pavilion. They also visited the Expo on the 25th of July. A visitor with no reservation coming from the Miyagi Prefecture in the 20 to 29 age group, also visiting on the 25th of July, said: “It is hot inside” (“室内が暑い”). They also ticked “ある程度 Partially” on the “イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?” questions. From these complaints, it would seem that the 25th of July might have been a particularly hot and busy day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, or at the Italy Pavilion, so much so that the visitors decided to use the survey as an outlet for their frustrations.

Some of the other entries pointed at the size of the Pavilion as the thing that sets it apart, for example “The structure is big and it enables extended visits” (“規模が大きく長く滞在できる”), or simply “The size” (“大きさ”). Others talked about Italy’s seriousness (“イタリアの本気度”), the availability of outdoor restaurants (“屋外レストランの有無”); the events (“The organized events apart from the regular visit”); amongst others, a visitor from Singapore quoted the coexistence of history and innovation (“The storytelling, history intertwined with innovation”); some even quoted the presence of shade during the queue as a uniqueness of the Pavilion (“並ぶ列が日陰で涼しいこと”).

If some people used this section to complain, others used it to convey how moved and thankful they were after visiting the exhibition. For instance, a person in the 60 years old and over age group from Osaka who works at the Expo and queued to get inside said: “Thank you so much for bringing such precious items! I was deeply moved” (“すごく貴重な物を持って来てくださってありがとうございます！感動しました”). Another person

from Osaka in the 30 to 39 age group who had a reservation said: “I was deeply moved by the number of exhibited pieces” (“たくさんの展示品があって感動しました”). Of course, both visitors thought that the Pavilion met their expectations.

4.9 Question number nine

After better understanding what the visitors thought was the uniqueness of the Pavilion, it is also worth analyzing if after experiencing what the Italy Pavilion had to offer, the exhibition centered around the slogan “Art Regenerates Life” changed the visitors’ preconceived idea of what Italy as a country represents. This begs the question if the Italy Pavilion change the way they thought about Italy.

イタリア館を体験した後、イタリアの文化に対する意見は変わりましたか？ Did your understanding of Italian culture change after the experience?

120 risposte

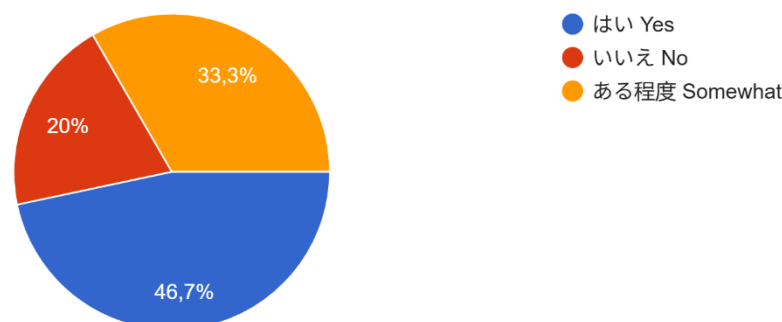


Figure 39 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリア館を体験した後、イタリアの文化に対する意見は変わりましたか？ Did your understanding of Italian culture change after the experience?”.

It seems that around half of the 120 people sample of visitors, 56 people, or 46.3%, of visitors thought that experiencing the exhibition was enough to change their idea of Italy. Only 20% of visitors seemed to have a strong enough grasp on Italian culture that the experience of the Italy Pavilion did not change their understanding of it at all, whereas 33.3% of them thought that their understanding of it was only somewhat changed. An analysis on what a smaller sample of visitors thought what the message of the Italy Pavilion was and subsequently what the perceived “Italian culture” represents will be showcased in a later section of the survey.

4.10 Question number ten

It was then asked the visitors if they would ever consider Italy as a holiday destination. The aim of this question was to speculate whether Italy could receive a monetary return, which could be represented by tourism, from the big investment of the participation at the Expo 2025 Osaka.

イタリアは旅行先として考えますか？ Would you consider Italy as a holiday destination?

120 risposte

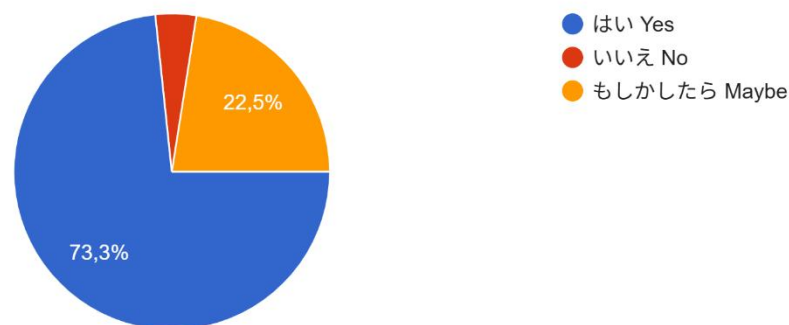


Figure 40 Benedetto, Nicole. Graph “イタリアは旅行先として考えますか？Would you consider Italy as a holiday destination?”.

The majority of the sample visitors would consider Italy as a holiday destination, in particular 73.3% of them. This means that the experience of the Pavilion itself, was positive enough to convince visitors to visit Italy, or not negative enough to change their minds if they had already planned to do so. The neutral “もしかしたら Maybe” was chosen by twenty-seven people, or 22.5% of them, and only five people overall, 4.2%, would not travel to Italy even after sampling what Italy has to offer through the Expo. Therefore, excluding the people who might have already had an interest in Italy and Italian culture, some visitors might have been completely convinced by the curated idea and message of the Italy Pavilion to visit the country itself, thanks to the combination of culture, innovation, events and culinary traditions. Moreover, some of the visitors might have been enticed to see the pieces, the upcoming events, and the infrastructures with their own eyes directly in Italy.

4.11 Informal Unstructured Interview

Most of the people interviewed had no problem understanding the way in which the survey was conducted. Only one person, who was eager to take part in the survey created for this paper, could not understand how to submit her questions via QR code. Because of this reason, an informal unstructured interview was conducted. This interview was conducted on the 23rd of July 2025. The person interviewed was a woman in the “60 歳以上 60 years old or over” age group. She came from Hyogo Prefecture, from a city near Itami.

It was her second time visiting the Pavilion with her daughter, because she liked it so much the first time. She was asked what she liked the most about the Italy Pavilion and she gave multiple answers. She thought that the people working at the Pavilion were really kind. The visitors would, in fact, be able to interact with the people working as interns, who were inside the Pavilion and could provide further explanation regarding the Pavilion and the artwork, the people working at the food trucks and restaurant, the people working at the gift shop, and the people working outside who were in charge of the queue. It seemed that all the people this interviewee came in contact with were nice enough to leave a lasting impression on her. Another element that she pointed out was the surprise effect of the Theatre’s screen turning into doors to enter the main exhibition area, the Pavilion. The element of surprise of the Square doors often instilled fascination in the visitors, as they would sometimes be audibly amazed, and at times, even clap. This visitor’s favorite piece of the collection was the *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games*. Although this piece was not one of the most popular ones of the Pavilion, as it received only two preferences in the survey, one from someone in the 20 to 29 years old age group, and one from someone in the 60 and older age group. The 60 and over age group were not only able to see the most recent Olympic Games in Japan, in 2021, but also the Winter Olympic Games of Sapporo 1972 and Nagano 1998, and they might have been small children during the Tokyo 1964 Olympics. This means that they might have felt nostalgic towards the Olympic Games, thus making them value that part of the exhibition more. This woman was also particularly moved and grateful for being given the chance to see authentic artwork from Michelangelo, Caravaggio and Leonardo da Vinci, she too had used the word *honmono* in her description. It thus seems that, no matter if these pieces

represented the visitor's favorite one, it was hard not to be somewhat moved by the sight of artwork of such value.

4.12 The second survey

After the first survey, a second one was conducted to further understand the individual opinions of a small sample of visitors. This second survey implemented two new open questions, meaning without an already provided list of possible answers, to the questions already analyzed. The visitors were able to answer these questions with a small text, providing their insight on the exhibition, and how the Italy Pavilion's message was understood by them. As the open questions can provide a wide array of answers, the sample of this survey consisted of ten people who were subjected to them, making the analysis more in-depth. The open-ended questions supplemented to the already existing questionnaire were two: “イタリア館を訪問した理由は何ですか? Why did you visit the Italy Pavilion?”, and “イタリア館を訪問した後、イタリアが自らにどのようなイメージを与えていると思いますか? After visiting the Pavilion, what do you think is the image Italy presents of itself?”. These questions were asked to have a clearer idea of why the visitors were so drawn to the Italy Pavilion, and to better understand what the perceived message of the Italy Pavilion was.

The first entry in this second section of the questionnaire was submitted by a person in the 20 to 29 years old age group from the Oita Prefecture. They were not able to make a reservation but were satisfied with the Pavilion. The reason that brought them to this Pavilion in particular was the fact that they wanted to visit the restaurant (“レストランに行きたかったから”), they were probably talking about the Eataly restaurant on the last floor of the Pavilion. About the message of the Italy Pavilion they said: “It changed the way I think about art” (“芸術に対する考え方を変えてくれた”). Although this person might not have been initially drawn to the exhibition itself, it seems that being able to experience it firsthand fundamentally changed the way they perceive art.

The second person was a 50 to 59 years old person from Osaka Prefecture with a reservation. They too were satisfied with the exhibition. As for the reason that made them

decide that the Pavilion was worth a visit, they indicated that: “It is because I heard it is a very popular pavilion” (“すごく人気があるパビリオンだと聞いていたので”). As it has been previously noted, the fame that the Italy Pavilion was able to gather preceded the opening of the Expo 2025 Osaka itself, namely on the *News Rannā* segment regarding the online survey on the foreign pavilion the viewers wanted to visit the most¹⁸². Although they did not provide their unique interpretation of Italy Pavilion’s messaging, they said that they would like to visit Italy (“旅行でいってみたい”). This might mean that the part of the exhibition such as the *Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games*, the *Video Installation by The Ministry of Infrastructures and Transport*, which were part of the exhibition that showcased events and new infrastructures in Italy, or the Italian regions temporary exhibitions, might have enticed some visitors to consider Italy as a travel destination, as it already has been analyzed.

A visitor in the 40 to 49 years old age group from Hyogo Prefecture who entered without a reservation and was partially satisfied with the Pavilion was the third person to submit their entry. The reason that brought them there was: “I wanted to see it” (“見てみたかった”). The way this visitor perceived the Italy Pavilion’s message was: “The Country of Art” (“芸術の国”). It is true that the Italy Pavilion gave a lot of importance to the country’s art. As it already has been established, the original artwork was brought especially from Italy, they used the *Farnese Atlas* as their symbol and almost created a museum space. To say that Italy’s message is to call itself “The Country of Art” seems somewhat accurate.

The next entry was submitted by a queuing 60 to 69 years old visitor from the city of Osaka, who thought that the Pavilion met their expectations. They had this to point as their reason of visiting: “To see the artwork” (“芸術作品を観るため”). Similarly to entry number two, the section dedicated to pointing out what the visitor thought was the message conveyed was, was used as a way to talk about the impressions left by the Pavilion. This visitor says: “I really want to visit Italy” (“イタリアを是非訪問したい”). In

¹⁸² “Banpaku Kaimaku Chokuzen ‘Uchi no Pabirion ga Ichiban Ya!’ Senshukun Kakukoku Pabirion no Midokoro Purezen Hatsukoukai Jōhō mo (Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku).” *News Rannā*, Kantere, 13 March 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPRGx-5sPR8>, 00:25:25-00:25:42.

fact, this visitor ticked the positive answer when asked about whether or not, after visiting the Pavilion, they would consider Italy as a travel destination. Thus, it could be said that visiting the Pavilion was enough to persuade people to visit the country that it represented.

The sixth person to submit their entry was part of the 40 to 49 years old age group, from Osaka (not specified if City or Prefecture). This visitor had a reservation, and they thought that the Pavilion met their expectations. As the reason they wanted to visit the Italy Pavilion they indicated: “To see the authentic (*Farnese*) *Atlas*!” (“ホンマもんのアトラスを見るため！”). As previous parts of the survey have indicated, *The Farnese Atlas*, as the symbol of the Pavilion, was also the piece that received the biggest number of entries as the visitors’ favorite amongst the pieces, with 34.2% of people choosing it. This visitor too chose to say that: “I thought that I would like to visit Italy someday!” (“いつかイタリアに行ってみたいと思いました！”). Visiting Italy seems to be a popular thought amongst visitors after experiencing the exhibition.

One of the people working at the Italy Pavilion was the seventh person to submit their entry. In fact, they cite the fact that they were working as an intern at the Pavilion as the reason they were visiting it (“I work here as an intern”). They are in the 20 to 29 years old age group and entered through VIP access and submitted the positive answer when asked if the Pavilion met their expectations. This insider thought that the messaging of the Italy Pavilion was the fact that “It showed in particular its history through art”. Art and history are two of the elements that came up time and time again in the survey as the element that sets the Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions (“イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか？ What sets the Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions?”).

The next person who submitted their entry is a 20 to 29 years old person from Nishinomiya in the Hyogo Prefecture. They could enter the Italy Pavilion via VIP access and thought that the Pavilion met their expectations. The reason that brought them to visit the Italy Pavilion was the fact that they had lived in Italy for a year and therefore had an interest in visiting it (“Perché ho vissuto in Italia un’anno! E così mi interessa!”). The answer to the next question, regarding the Pavilion’s message, was as follows: “I liked Caravaggio’s artwork (*The Entombment of Christ*)! I would like to see it again!” (“Mi è

piaciuto l'opera di Caravaggio! Mi piacerebbe rivederlo!"). It is clear that Caravaggio's painting was one of the most popular pieces of the entire exhibition. In fact, the piece protagonist of the Holy See Pavilion, was also the second most popular one in the ranking created with the survey, gaining 26.7% of the visitors' preference. It is interesting to note that this Japanese person decided to use Italian to write every open-ended question present in the survey.

The second to last entry was written by a visitor from the city of Kobe in the 50 to 59 years old age group. They had no reservation and thought that the Italy Pavilion met their expectations. The answer to the “イタリア館を訪問した理由は何ですか? Why did you visit the Italy Pavilion?” question they provided was simply: “The artwork” (“美術品”). This is the fourth entry that quotes the artwork, or a piece of art in particular, as the reason they decided to visit the Pavilion. As for the second question, the one about Italy Pavilion's message, they said: “It is really true that Italy is the birthplace of Western art” (“やはりイタリアは、西洋美術の発信地だと”). As already mentioned, the Italy Pavilion took the 15th century concept of the “ideal city” of the Renaissance period as a basis to build the whole Pavilion¹⁸³.

The last entry was made by a 40 to 49 years old visitor from Osaka (again, not specified if Osaka City or Osaka Prefecture) who entered with a reservation and thought that the Italy Pavilion met their expectations. They visited the Pavilion because they wanted “To discover the authentic Italy” (“本物のイタリアを知るため”). The various pavilions could then have worked as a condensed way to experience what each of the countries that were exhibiting at the Expo 2025 Osaka had to offer. Namely, in the case of the Italy Pavilion, it could have been a way to experience Italy the way the Italian organizers wanted Italy to be perceived. The message of the Italy Pavilion that transpired according to this visitor was: “I feel a sense of closeness” (“親近感を感じます”). This sentiment could be explained by the fact that part of the Italy Pavilion's exhibition was entirely dedicated to showcasing the connection between Italy and Japan as countries. Specifically, the *Portrait of Itō Mancio* and *The S.V.A. 9*. After analyzing the artwork

¹⁸³ “Itaria Kan.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

exhibited, it can be said that conveying a feeling of closeness between the two countries was something that the Italy Pavilion did consciously.

Three of the ten visitors explicitly used the word *honmono*, or the variant *honmanmono*, as part of the reason that brought them to visit the Italy Pavilion, whether it was used to refer to the artwork, particularly the *Farnese Atlas*, or as the overall “authentic” atmosphere of Italy that could have been experienced inside the Pavilion. Many of them talked about the artwork as either the reason they wanted to visit the Pavilion or the aspect that most distinguished it from the “competition”. The message that was perceived by the visitors was one of history and art, the value of authentic artwork and the connection between Italy and Japan. In particular, the Pavilion was almost functioning as a museum, giving visitors the opportunity to see artwork made by some of the Italian masters like, Caravaggio and Leonardo da Vinci, directly in their home country.

Chapter 5 - Visitors' Opinions on X

The Italy Pavilion was the subject of various praise and criticism. The praise was given regarding the Pavilion's exhibited pieces and popularity, while the criticism might be a result of said popularity, as more visitors increase the chances of someone not finding some exhibits gratifying. This criticism might also highlight some fundamental flaws that the Pavilion might have had. To further understand the positive and negative points of the Italy Pavilion, public posts made on the social media website X regarding the Italy Pavilion were analyzed. The social media website X, formerly known as Twitter, has been chosen to look for posts regarding the Italy Pavilion, as it is possible to research tweets by keywords, and by date. In this case, the keyword chosen was “イタリア館”, and the dates chosen for the research were sample dates spanning in the timeline between the opening of the Expo, the 13th of April 2025, and the closing day, 13th of October 2025.

5.1 Reservations

Many of the posts analyzed were made by people who were voicing their criticism about not being able to get a reservation. Thus, the difficulty in getting a reservation for the Italy Pavilion exhibitions seemed to have been an experience many Expo visitors had in common. For example, @mamiym states on the 9th of May 2025 that because of the popularity of the Pavilion, they were unable to reserve anything until after the 17th of August, more than three months after the post was made ¹⁸⁴. Similarly, user @namaehamada_nai on the 12th of June 2025 posted

“I tried downloading the Italy Pavilion application, but it seems that reservations are fully booked until October and now they are not accepting any more bookings [...]” (“イタリア

¹⁸⁴ @mamiym. “イタリア館アプリ入れたけどどうやら人気すぎて 8/17 以降しか取られへん....。ま、しゃーない出遅れてるし。”. X (formerly Twitter), 9 May 2025, x.com/mamiym/status/1920678505261506979?s=20.

館のアプリ入れてみたけど 10 月までいったん予約満タンで今は受付してないみたい [...]”¹⁸⁵.

In @namaehamada_nai’s case, the reservations were not available for the next four months. X user @mkukun on the 25th of July posted

“[...] I will be lining at the Italy Pavilion forever. Booking a ticket is too hard. Maybe the only option is to strenuously wait in line forever” (“[...] イタリア館に並んでる永遠に チケット予約むずすぎる 永遠に並ぶ力技しか俺にはないかもしれん”)¹⁸⁶.

Thus, if getting a reservation was not possible, the only other way to enter the Italy Pavilion was to queue in the “no reservation” line.

5.2 Waiting Time

The long waiting time seems to be the element gaining the biggest number of critiques, but grievances about the long queues did not often turn into complete dissatisfaction towards the exhibition. In fact, user @Miemie1313 decided to create a post talking about the long waiting time, but the overall sentiment of the post was positive. They said on the 25th of May 2025

“I waited in line for five hours, but it was definitely worth it” (“イタリア館 5 時間並んだけど得られたもん大きかった”)¹⁸⁷.

This user then explains how they managed to wait such a long time whilst giving suggestions to other possible Italy Pavilion visitors, saying

¹⁸⁵ @namaehamada_nai. “イタリア館のアプリ入れてみたけど 10 月までいったん予約満タンで今は受付してないみたいまあまた予約枠復活するでしょう。初動が遅すぎたが仕方ない。”. X (formerly Twitter), 12 June 2025, x.com/namaehamada_nai/status/1933189013239935007.

¹⁸⁶ @mkukun. “万博！むずすぎワロタ イタリア館に並んでる永遠に チケット予約むずすぎる 永遠に並ぶ力技しか俺にはないかもしれん”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 July 2025, x.com/mkukun/status/1948587308007260617?s=20.

¹⁸⁷ @Miemie1313. “イタリア館 5 時間並んだけど得られたもん大きかったし折りたたみ椅子や杖持参だから不安もそんなに無かった。周りも折りたたみ椅子持参者そこそこにいたよ。ユスリカは対策スプレー持ってっただけ南側の方あんま行かなかったから結果全然出会わなかったんだろうな。体験もせず文句言ってる人ないわー”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 May 2025, x.com/Miemie1313/status/1926519418269344211?s=20.

“Since I brought a folding chair and walking cane, I was not that worried. There were a few people who also brought a folding chair. [...]” (“折りたたみ椅子や杖持参だから不安もそんなに無かった周りも折りたたみ椅子持参者そこそこにいたよ。 [...]”)¹⁸⁸.

It seems that visitors who were ready to queue for many hours came already prepared from home, bringing folding chairs, since standing in line for hours on end could be exhausting, especially for the elderly. This person then says:

“I cannot believe people would complain about it without first-hand experience” (“体験もせず文句言ってる人ないわー”)¹⁸⁹.

This last part might be aimed at the people who complained about the waiting time, despite not having been able to enter the Pavilion and could therefore not form a concrete opinion. A term that was frequently found in relation to the Italy Pavilion and its long waiting time was *Asa Ichi* (“朝イチ”), meaning to queue for a pavilion first thing in the morning. This strategy was used as a way to cut the waiting time that came with trying to enter the Italy Pavilion without a reservation. The user @YM_MHF said on July 15th 2025 that

“The Italy Pavilion usually has a four-hour wait, but if you go there first thing in the morning you only have to wait a little over two hours [...]” (“いつもは四時間待ちのイタリア館が、朝イチなら二時間強待ちだって [...]”)¹⁹⁰.

If lining in the morning might have cut the waiting time, queuing in the evening might have represented a risk, as the waiting time might have been longer than the opening time of the Pavilion, as user @British22sh posted:

“Italy Pavilion, even at this hour [approximately 18:25 JST] the waiting time is at least 2 hours. I do not think I will get in” (“イタリア館、この時間でも 2 時間以上待ち。入れる気がしない。 ”)¹⁹¹.

¹⁸⁸ @Miemie1313. X (formerly Twitter), 25 May 2025.

¹⁸⁹ @Miemie1313. X (formerly Twitter), 25 May 2025.

¹⁹⁰ @YM_MHF. “いつもは四時間待ちのイタリア館が、朝イチなら二時間強待ちだって(´ω´)”. X (formerly Twitter), 15 June 2025, x.com/YM_MHF/status/1934052896024473944?s=20.

¹⁹¹ @British22sh. “イタリア館、この時間でも 2 時間以上待ち。入れる気がしない。”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 July 2025, x.com/British22sh/status/1948676077704151426?s=20.

Not every visitor's experience was the same, as some visitors were more fortunate with their waiting time. For example, on the last day of the Expo, the user @ff14_ruin was able to get into the Italy Pavilion, as they posted:

“[...] right at the very end, unexpectedly, there was a one and a half-hour line for the Italy Pavilion, I got in and it was a wonderful conclusion” (“最後の最後でまさかのイタリア館 1 時間半待ちで入場できて最高の締めくくりだった”)¹⁹².

User @t_yamamori created a thread about their experience queuing for the Italy Pavilion. They start their thread saying that queuing is a “test of patience” and that they were taking on the “no reservation Italy Pavilion challenge” (“がまん比べダヨー”; “予約無しイタリア館チャレンジしてる”)¹⁹³. The X user then said that the staff responsible for the queues told them that queuing would take around three hours, and they were 20 minutes in (“「とりあえず 3 時間かかりますね」 とスタッフさんに言われて 20 分経過”)¹⁹⁴. In their second post of the thread, @t_yamamori states that after a three-hour wait, they were still underneath the Grand Ring, and thus not yet at the section of the queue directly in front of the Pavilion, and they estimate the wait might take one more hour (“「さ、3 時間たったヨーまだまだかかるヨー！」 まだ大屋根の下あと 1 時間では終わらなそう心もそうだが脚が。。”)¹⁹⁵. After four hours of waiting time, @t_yamamori reached the last section of the line, and whilst lining they noticed the vegetable garden exhibited on the Italy Square area outside the main Pavilion building (“4 時間！ パビリオン下までたどり

¹⁹² @ff14_ruin. “万博最終日も楽しかった～！最後の最後でまさかのイタリア館 1 時間半待ちで入場できて最高の締めくくりだった”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 October 2025, x.com/ff14_ruin/status/1978089113023598740?s=20

¹⁹³ @t_yamamori. “「がまん比べダヨー」予約無しイタリア館チャレンジしてる「とりあえず 3 時間かかりますね」 とスタッフさんに言われて 20 分経過がんばる。。 #ミクダヨー”. X (formerly Twitter), 8 June 2025, x.com/t_yamamori/status/1931524573637628104?s=20.

¹⁹⁴ @t_yamamori. X (formerly Twitter).

¹⁹⁵ @t_yamamori. “「さ、3 時間たったヨーまだまだかかるヨー！」 まだ大屋根の下あと 1 時間では終わらなそう心もそうだが脚が。。 #ミクダヨー”. X (formerly Twitter), 8 June 2025, x.com/t_yamamori/status/1931564704721506479?s=20.

着いた！ほら、植物もあるよ[...]”¹⁹⁶. After being let in, they stated that they expected to be disappointed with the exhibition due to exhaustion; but the Pavilion was “a work of art”, and they were “drawn in from the first moment”, and were captivated not only by the real artwork but also by the architecture of the Pavilion, and how it was used to showcase the pieces (“イタリア館 待ち時間で疲れ切って、これだけ待ったのにこんなものかと白けて終わるのかと思ってたが、パビリオン自体がアート化されてて最初の演出から引き込まれた 本物の作品の迫力に加えて建築物を使った見せ方に魅入らせられた”) ¹⁹⁷. Once again, the concept of *honmono* is being brought up to describe genuine artwork. This thread additionally highlights why the visitor’s response to the Pavilion’s waiting times was worth analyzing via the survey, specifically the question of whether the long waiting time would alter the visitor experience. This thread is coherent with what emerged from this research’s survey, as the level of appreciation of the Italy Pavilion expressed by the visitors did not seem to have a direct correlation with the waiting time they had to withstand. Moreover, some visitors did not see the long waiting time as a negative aspect, rather they were grateful for the possibility to queue in the first place, as user @nezukochan says:

“Compared to Luxembourg and Kuwait pavilions, which impose entry restrictions and suspend reservations when they are popular [...] the Italy Pavilion, which lets you wait for hours, is a godsend” (“人気なら完全予約にすりゃいいのにそれとすぐに入場制限かけるルクセンブルク館やクウェート館(しかもスタンプだけでも押させてくれない)に比べたら、何時間でも待たせてくれるイタリア館は神やと思う。”) ¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹⁶ @t_yamamori. “4 時間！パビリオン下までたどり着いた！ほら、植物もあるよ（やけくそ）”. X (formerly Twitter), 8 June 2025, x.com/t_yamamori/status/1931579883928641989?s=20.

¹⁹⁷ @t_yamamori. “イタリア館 待ち時間で疲れ切って、これだけ待ったのにこんなものかと白けて終わるのかと思ってたが、パビリオン自体がアート化されてて最初の演出から引き込まれた 本物の作品の迫力に加えて建築物を使った見せ方に魅入らせられた 気付いたら 1 時間ほど中にいたけどあつという間だった”. X (formerly Twitter), 8 June 2025, x.com/t_yamamori/status/1931600060233527389?s=20.

¹⁹⁸ @nezukochan. “人気なら完全予約にすりゃいいのにそれとすぐに入場制限かけるルクセンブルク館やクウェート館(しかもスタンプだけでも押させてくれない)に比べたら、何時間でも待たせてくれるイタリア館は神やと思う.”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 August 2025, x.com/nezukochan/status/1955877377114038416?s=20.

5.3 25th of July 2025

As discovered in the survey portion of this research, some of the visitors had complaints regarding the Italian exhibition, namely the temperature of the Pavilion and how crowded it was. It is worth noticing that all the critiques regarding these aspects were not only not asked by the survey questions, but they were all given on the same day, the 25th of July 2025. Therefore, it might have been a rather popular date to visit the Pavilion. After further research regarding the date, it can be speculated that the reason behind such big crowds at the Italy Pavilion might have been because of an event that took place there on the same day. The event in question was called “Sport and Made in Italy: United to Win”. During this event a panel on sports was held, and the speakers were the president of ICE Agency Matteo Zoppas, the Legal Advisor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Marco Rago, Mario Vattani, and, most importantly, Roberto Baggio, described by the official event page as the winner of the 1993 Ballon d’Or, an international ambassador for sport, and a football legend¹⁹⁹. The presence of this “football legend” might have brought even more visitor to the Italy Pavilion, increasing the amount of people inside the Pavilion and thus raising the temperature inside. On the 25th of July 2025, @hamayanse said

“I am waiting in line at the Italy Pavilion, but I might see [Roberto] Baggio whilst waiting”
(“イタリア館並んでるけど、待ってる途中でバッジヨ拝めそう”)²⁰⁰.

This specific X post is of particular interest to this paper since it is coherent with two of the points that arose from this research. The first point is that, whilst visitors were queuing, it was possible for them to see the screen and the stage attached to it. This area was not only used to stream a live video of what was happening in the Multimedia and Multifunction room, but it was also used as a stage for appearances and performances.

¹⁹⁹ “Supōtsu to Meido in Itarī: Shōri O Tomoni.” *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/lbentokarend%C4%81/suhotsutomeitoinitarishengliwotomoni>.

²⁰⁰ @hamayan_se. “イタリア館並んでるけど、待ってる途中でバッジヨ拝めそう”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 July 2025, x.com/hamayan_se/status/1948566720995799063?s=20.

Thus, even the people who were queuing would be able to see a special guest or be entertained by a performance.



Figure 41 Picture of Matteo Zoppas, Marco Rago, Roberto Baggio, and Mario Vattani. @itatradeagency. Instagram, 25 July 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/itatradeagency/p/DMic5Chocku/>.

The second aspect relevant to this analysis is the great interest in the event that took place on the 25th of July, which is the aforementioned “Sport and Made in Italy: United to Win” event. Events like these, in which it is possible to see a famous person, such is the “football legend” Roberto Baggio, could spark great curiosity in visitors. Regardless of this specific instance, the crowdedness of the Italy Pavilion is a recurring critique. It seems that it was so crowded at times that the visitors were not able to properly look at the exhibited pieces, as user @13x2_7 stated that

“[...] it was such a shame that I could not carefully look at da Vinci’s sketches (*Codex Atlanticus*) since it was so crowded” (“混みすぎてダヴィンチのスケッチじっくり見れなかったの残念”)²⁰¹.

5.4 The exhibition

Although the Expos seem to be revolving around technology, some visitors still have a preference for national pavilions that chose to have an exhibition less reliant on screens, and more reliant on real artwork. That is the case of user @danpen20200216 who said:

²⁰¹ @13x2_7. “万博3回目 イタリア館行ってきたよ～混みすぎてダヴィンチのスケッチじっくり見れなかったの残念 #兄博”. X (formerly Twitter), 9 May 2025, x.com/13x2_7/status/1920839590148972641?s=20.

“Looking at the Expo’s information it is about “presentation techniques using the latest technology”, it is all digital [...] the spirit of the Italy Pavilion, with pieces such as Michelangelo’s sculpture [*The Risen Christ*], is truly amazing, I am so grateful” (“万博の情報を見てるとね「最新の技術を使った魅せ方」もうデジタル [...] ただミケランジェロの彫刻等イタリア館の心意気はスゴいね、ありがたい”)²⁰².

Almost all of the posts on X about the artwork of Italy Pavilion cite the same pieces that also were the most popular in the survey conducted for this research, namely *The Farnese Atlas*, *The Entombment of Christ*, and *The Codex Atlanticus*, some people also talked about their personal favorite part of the exhibition. For instance, user @yuariscore seems to have preferred the more “digital” aspect of the exhibition, saying:

“The Italy Pavilion has wonderful sculptures and paintings, but personally I was captivated by this touchscreen display [*The Italian Space Agency Interactive Panel*] ... honestly, I think it is neat. [...] If you operate the transparent display near the front, the detailed image in the background also moves at the same time... you definitely have to try it... [...]” (“イタリア館、彫像や絵画も素晴らしいが、個人的にはこのタッチモニターの展示に心奪われた、。正直カッコイイ。 [...] 手前のスケルトンモニターを操作すると奥の詳細映像も同時に動く、ぜひ触ってみて欲しい、”)²⁰³.

Although *The Italian Space Agency Interactive Panel* only received two preferences in the survey, it seems that this piece might have left a lasting impression in other visitors, such is the case of @yuariscore. The user @ohadaokun commented on the craftsmanship demonstrations at the exhibition niches saying

²⁰² @danpen20200216. “万博の情報を見てるとね「最新の技術を使った魅せ方」もうデジタルデジタル。乗り物酔い子映像酔いするて。で、映像酔いするか否か関係なくあいう作品って1 展覧会に1 つ1日1つで良くない？日々こつこつ行動しようとあらためて。ただミケランジェロの彫刻等イタリア館の心意気はスゴいね、ありがたい”. X (formerly Twitter), 10 May 2025, x.com/danpen20200216/status/1920982242190409791?s=20.

²⁰³ @yuariscore. “イタリア館、彫像や絵画も素晴らしいが、個人的にはこのタッチモニターの展示に心奪われた、。正直カッコイイ。私が知らないだけで珍しくないのかな？手前のスケルトンモニターを操作すると奥の詳細映像も同時に動く、ぜひ触ってみて欲しい、 #大阪関西万博”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 April 2025, x.com/yuariscore/status/1915766674260639940?s=20.

“[...] it was incredible to actually see the artisans at work before arriving at the national treasure-level artwork [...]” (“[...] 実際に職人の方の手仕事を見る流れもすばらしかった。 [...]”)²⁰⁴.

Once again, the *honmono* is a recurring theme when talking about the success of the Italy Pavilion, and even posters online have found that aspect as a positive element of the Pavilion. User @gugby_ is one of the people who used the word *honmono* when talking about the Pavilion, stating that

“The Italy Pavilion, with its authentic art pieces that might only be seen in textbooks, is the best possible experience at the Expo and I am extremetey pleased” (“イタリア館、教科書に載ってるような美術品のホンモノを持ってきて実際に見せてくれてるの万国博覧会としてこれ以上無い体験で嬉し過ぎる”)²⁰⁵.

5.5 Reasons for repeated visits

Some of the visitors might have visited the Italy Pavilion Multiple times, but what is the reason that brought them back to the Italian exhibition? As previously stated, the temporary exhibitions might have given some visitors a reason to come back to the Pavilion. For example, user @yuyuyutarokun states that

“The Italy Pavilion... it is truly amazing and worth seeing. It took me around one hour to see everything but since it seems that they change some exhibition changes weekly, I would want to come back [...]” (“イタリア館...本当にすごくて見応えがある。全部見終わるの

²⁰⁴ @ohadaokun. “万博、イタリア館 国宝級のアートにたどり着くまでに、実際に職人の方の手仕事を見る流れもすばらしかった。テーマは「芸術は生命を再生する」だそうです。ここでいう「芸術」は古代ギリシャ語の「テクネ」を意味し「美しさ、創造性、文化、職人技」を表す。（Casa EXPO2025 より引用）”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 September 2025, x.com/ohadaokun/status/1967131446679925039?s=20.

²⁰⁵ @gugby_. “イタリア館、教科書に載ってるような美術品のホンモノを持ってきて実際に見せてくれるの万国博覧会としてこれ以上無い体験で嬉し過ぎる”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 August 2025, x.com/gugby_/status/1955901238182338754?s=20.

に 1 時間くらいかかったけど、週一で変化する展示もあるらしいのでまた来たいよ [...]”)²⁰⁶.

X user @marron55 on the 12th of June states

“I came back [...] I booked through Italy’s website [Italy Expo 2025 Osaka] around April. This was my second time at the Italy Pavilion, but it was my first time seeing Michelangelo [*Risen Christ*]” (“また来ちゃった [...] 4 月くらいにイタリアのサイトから予約してたの。イタリア館は 2 回目だけどミケランジェロははじめましてでした。”) ²⁰⁷.

The Risen Christ was part of Lazio’s temporary exhibition and was then kept in the main exhibiting area until the end of the Expo. The Italy Pavilion had the special perk of giving its visitors the chance of having a new experience each time they visited it and thus encouraging repeated visits. Pavilions that did not have changing exhibitions might have had a harder time to encourage repeated visits in comparison to the Italy Pavilion. User @x_pregiera_x also provided useful information to other potential Italy Pavilion visitors. They stated

“[...] the Italy Pavilion apparently changes its exhibits by region every week, so in order to experience Italy [Pavilion] in fullness, it seems that you have to queue every week or win the ticket war. [...] But if you love art I highly recommend it. I suggest going with a group of at least two people, taking turns whilst queuing. [...]” (“[...] イタリア館、週替わり州替わり展示らしくて、イタリア満喫するなら毎週並ぶかチケ争奪戦に勝利しないといけならしい [...] でも美術とか大好きなら本当におすすめ。2 人以上で行って交代で並ぶの推奨。 [...]”) ²⁰⁸.

²⁰⁶ @yuyuyutarokun. “イタリア館...本当にすごくて見応えがある。全部見終わるのに 1 時間くらいかかったけど、週一で変化する展示もあるらしいのでまた来たいよ、レストランも行きたい”。X (formerly Twitter), 25 April 2025, x.com/yuyuyutarokun/status/1915752536449159322?s=20.

²⁰⁷ @marron55. “また来ちゃった \ (^o^) / 4 月くらいにイタリアのサイトから予約してたの。イタリア館は 2 回目だけどミケランジェロははじめましてでした。”. X (formerly Twitter), 12 June 2025, x.com/marron55/status/1933147878215877015?s=20.

²⁰⁸ @x_pregiera_x. “しかもイタリア館、週替わり州替わり展示らしくて、イタリア満喫するなら毎週並ぶかチケ争奪戦に勝利しないといけならしい私が行った時ラツィオ州だった。でも美術とか大好きなら本当におすすめ。2 人以上で行って交代で並ぶの推奨。万博楽しすぎたからパスチケ買うわ。”. X (formerly Twitter), 25 May 2025, x.com/x_pregiera_x/status/1926707757345919241?s=20.

The tone of the first part of the post might be ironic, seemingly trying to convey how hard it was to get a chance to enter the Italy Pavilion once, through numerous hours of waiting time or by obtaining a reservation, which was difficult to do, so being able to do it multiple times, maybe once a week, in order to fully experience what the Italy Pavilion had to offer, was somewhat amusing. While the tone of the already analyzed section could be perceived as almost sarcastic, the second part seems to be written earnestly. The user recommends the Pavilion to art lovers, whilst also giving a useful suggestion to other visitors, telling them to take turns whilst queuing to reduce the strain of continuously waiting in line for hours. It seems that on the 14th of July 2025, the two exhibited pages of the *Codex Atlanticus* were replaced by two other pages of the same piece, and the Japanese news broadcast YTV News broadcasted this change of showcased pages, this broadcast was then reposted by the official Italy Pavilion X account²⁰⁹. On the day the aforementioned post was shared, numerous X users shared their opinion on the changing of the exhibited pieces, replying to the tweet made by @ItalyExpo2025. User @azazannzu stated

“[...] another amazing one has arrived [...] seriously, how many times do I have to visit before I can understand Italy Pavilion’s spirit? [...]” (“[...] またすごい来た！ [...] ほんまに何回詣でればイタリア館の真髓を知れるのか [...]”)²¹⁰.

Another user, @Deepblue_tycoon, said

“[...] Thank you Italy Pavilion! I will definitely wait in line for four hours again just to see it [...]” (“イタリア館ありがとう！絶対もう一度 4 時間並んでも観させて頂 [...]”)²¹¹.

And user @hamata000 said that

“The Italy Pavilion is really going to make us happy right until the very end with all their power. I really plan to visit the Expo only because of the Italy Pavilion” (“イタリア館、最

²⁰⁹ @ItalyExpo2025. “読売テレビの報道：レオナルド・ダ・ヴィンチの『アトランティコ手稿』の新規 2 点が、2025 大阪・関西万博イタリア館に到着。ヴェネランダ・アンブロジーアーナ図書館とミラノ市との共同プロジェクト。@news_ytv @mariovattani @expo2025_japan @ComuneMI”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 July 2025, <https://x.com/ItalyExpo2025/status/1944742320689328208?s=20>.

²¹⁰ @azazannzu. “なんでや！！またすごい来た！（嬉しい悲鳴w）ほんまに何回詣でればイタリア館の真髓を知れるのかマジでディアゴスティーニ！”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 July 2025, x.com/azazannzu/status/1944749085531246804?s=20.

²¹¹ @Deepblue_tycoon. “ホントイタリア館ありがとう！絶対もう一度 4 時間並んでも観させて頂く”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 July 2025, x.com/Deepblue_tycoon/status/1945071658978390166?s=20.

後まで全力で私達を喜ばせようとしてくれてる 本当イタリア館だけのために万博行く
日計画しないと”)²¹².

This addition to the exhibition seems to have brought even more traction to the already popular Italy Pavilion, leading people to visit it multiple times and to visit the Expo just to visit this specific pavilion. Some people were simply captivated enough by the Pavilion to want to go back immediately, no matter how long the waiting hours were; that is the case of the X user @Jackgun0 who stated

“Yesterday at the Expo I spent seven hours under the Grand Ring (waited in line in the “no reservation” queue of the Italy Pavilion) but then surprisingly I went back for seconds [visited the Pavilion again] [...]” (“きのうの万博、大屋根リングの下で 7 時間過ごした (イタリア館の予約なし列に並んでた) [...]”)²¹³.

For some, the charm of the Italy Pavilion was enough to make them want to come back, no matter the waiting time.

5.6 Ichiban Ninki

Although the aim of this research is to find out if the Italy Pavilion could really be considered the “Number One” and why, users on X have been referring to the Italy Pavilion as the *Ichiban Ninki* (“1 番人気”) or the “number one in popularity” for quite some time.

For example, @jr223221 stated that

“[...] to say this is the pavilion number one in popularity is not an exaggeration, it features pieces such as Leonardo da Vinci’s hand drawn sketches, pieces that are even hard to see

²¹² @hamata000. “イタリア館、最後まで全力で私達を喜ばせようとしてくれてる本当イタリア館だけのために万博行く日計画しないと”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 July 2025, x.com/hamata000/status/1944938232418066658?s=20.

²¹³ @Jackgun0. “きのうの万博、大屋根リングの下で 7 時間過ごした (イタリア館の予約なし列に並んでた) のだかどそのあとまさかのおかわりがあった これはおかわりされる直前の写真”. X (formerly Twitter), 14 August 2025, x.com/Jackgun0/status/1955912252827296184?s=20.

in Italy [...]” (“[...] 1 番人気と言っても過言ではないパビリオン レオナルド・ダ・ヴィンチの直筆スケッチ等、本国でも体験するのが困難なものばかり [...]”)²¹⁴.

User @ronegalliano said that

“[...] I did not have much interest in the Expo, but when my friend told me ‘Ferrari was there!’ I wanted to go there, so I went. Of course it is the number one in popularity, Italy Pavilion. I was the first person there and I got to observe that luxurious space” ([...] あまり興味の無かった万博ですが、フェラーリあったよと友人に言われ行きたくなって行ってきました。もちろん 1 番人気のイタリア館。一番乗りで贅沢空間の中見てきました。)”²¹⁵.

As already stated, being regarded as the most popular pavilion could have created a dichotomy for the Italy Pavilion, as it attained prestige at the cost of longer waiting times due to drawing in more visitors. As X user @mai_maku426 explains,

“[...] the most popular pavilion at Expo is as expected the “Italy Pavilion”, even on weekdays if you do not have a reservation you have to wait around two to three hours, especially on the weekends and holidays the wait to be as long as five hours; even if you book a reservation in advance, it is already fully booked until September; but since I have a disability certificate (intellectual disability certificate) the waiting time was drastically shortened and I got in 30 minutes” (“[...] 万博の中で一番人気なのは、やっぱり“イタリア館”で、予約無しでは平日でも 2～3 時間程度で特に土日祝は最大 5 時間待ちとなり事前予約しよーとしてももー9 月位まで埋まっててねえ、でも私は障害者手帳(療育手帳)持てれば待ち時間大幅に短縮し実際 30 分位で観れましたあ”)²¹⁶.

User @Saigi48 also called the Italy Pavilion the *Ichiban Ninki*, saying

²¹⁴ @jr223221. “イタリア・バチカン館 1 番人気と言っても過言ではないパビリオン レオナルド・ダ・ヴィンチの直筆スケッチ等、本国でも体験するのが困難なものばかり 西洋の美術館の感じがしました～”. X (formerly Twitter), 26 July 2025, x.com/jr223221/status/1948923485507527161?s=20.

²¹⁵ @ronegalliano. “番外編その 1 あまり興味の無かった万博ですが、フェラーリあったよと友人に言われ行きたくなって行ってきました。もちろん 1 番人気のイタリア館。一番乗りで贅沢空間の中見てきました。”. X (formerly Twitter), 28 July 2025, x.com/ronegalliano/status/1949850658640916967?s=20.

²¹⁶ @mai_maku426. “そして万博の中で一番人気なのは、やっぱり“イタリア館”で、予約無しでは平日でも 2～3 時間程度で特に土日祝は最大 5 時間待ちとなり事前予約しよーとしてももー9 月位まで埋まっててねえ、でも私は障害者手帳(療育手帳)持てればスタッフに提示すれば待ち時間大幅に短縮し実際 30 分位で観れましたあ”. X (formerly Twitter), 29 June 2025, x.com/mai_maku426/status/1939319345399955846?s=20.

“I went to the number one in popularity of the Expo, the Italy Pavilion; everything is an authentic piece, they are serious... if [Italy] competes with cultural artifacts, nobody else can win...” (“万博 1 番人気のイタリア館行ってきました [Italian flag emoji] 本物ばかりで本気ですね... [Italian flag emoji] に文化財で勝負されたら他は勝てないよ...”)²¹⁷.

This user not only used the word *honmono* to refer to the reason the Pavilion was so popular, but also referred to the Expo as a competition, a competition that the Italy Pavilion was set to win.

5.7 Visitors’ Overall Sentiment

The Italy Pavilion ran into some difficulties, mostly due to the high number of people wanting to visit it. The main complaints regarding the Pavilion were certainly about the waiting time and how crowded the inner area could get. The difficulty of being able to obtain a reservation can also be linked to the popularity of the Pavilion. Thus, being named *Ichiban Ninki* unfortunately came with downsides. The contents of the exhibition garnered the most praise, and the possibility of seeing new pieces every week was enough to make people queue for several hours, multiple times.

²¹⁷ @Saigi48. “万博 1 番人気のイタリア館行ってきました [Italinflag emoji] 本物ばかりで本気ですね... [Italian flag emoji] に文化財で勝負されたら他は勝てないよ...”. X (formerly Twitter), 6 July 2025, x.com/Saigi48/status/1941717884633538856?s=20.

Chapter 6 - After Expo

The impact of the Expo did not stop at the conclusion of its ending ceremony. Analyzing what happened during and after its end is of vital importance to the understanding of the Expo as a whole, and also to measure the influence of the Italy Pavilion on the event as well as on Japan itself.

6.1 The Awards

On October 12, 2025, the day before the closing ceremony of the Exposition, the Bureau International des Expositions, the Intergovernmental Organization that oversees all non-commercial international exhibitions that last more than three weeks, held the “BIE Day Ceremony of Prizes and Awards”²¹⁸. During this celebration, many international pavilions became the recipients of the “Expo 2025 Official Participant Award”. These prizes were broken down into distinct categories, with a further differentiation by the size of the pavilion. A jury of experts visited every pavilion and attributed prizes to five distinct categories: Architecture and Landscape (which was only awarded to self-built pavilions), External Design (which was only awarded to module pavilions), Exhibition Design, Theme Development, and the Sustainability Awards²¹⁹. The Gold Award for the Theme Development category was awarded to the Italy Pavilion²²⁰. In an interview for Sky TG24, Mario Vattani stated that bringing real artwork, both contemporary and from antiquity, was a determining factor in Italy’s achievement of the Theme Development Gold Award²²¹. Vattani also talked about how bringing exceptional artwork both from antiquity, such as the *Farnese Atlas*, and contemporary times, such as Jago’s *Circulatory System*, helped the Pavilion to showcase a modern version of Italy²²². The Commissioner General also declared that receiving that award represented a triumph for Italy, and that the Theme

²¹⁸ “What is the BIE.” *Bureau International des Expositions*, <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/what-is-the-bie>; “BIE Day Ceremony of Prizes and Awards at Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai” *Bureau International des Expositions*, 12 October 2025, <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/news-announcements/world-expo/bie-day-ceremony-of-prizes-and-awards-at-expo-2025-osaka-kansai>.

²¹⁹ “BIE Day Ceremony of Prizes and Awards at Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai.” *Bureau International des Expositions*.

²²⁰ “BIE Day Ceremony of Prizes and Awards at Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai.” *Bureau International des Expositions*.

²²¹ Vattani, Mario. “Trafug'Arte, l'Atlante Farnese al Padiglione Italia.” Sky TG24, Interviewed by John Pedeferra, Sky, 12 October 2025, <https://tg24.sky.it/cronaca/video/2025/10/12/trafugarte-latlane-farnese-al-padiglione-italia-1042751>, 00:00:30-00:00:54.

²²² Vattani. “Trafug'Arte, l'Atlante Farnese al Padiglione Italia.” Sky TG24, 00:00:30-00:00:54.

Development prize is seen as the most prestigious one, since it evaluates how a pavilion developed the theme “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”, thus awarding the idea that Italy gave of itself²²³. This, according to Vattani, is a system that works as a team with the Italian regions that participated in the temporary expositions within the Pavilion, showcasing the exceptional quality of Italian products²²⁴. Moreover, this prize has never been awarded to Italy before, further confirming the success achieved at this Expo²²⁵.

Another important achievement for the Italy Pavilion was the Expo Innovation Award in Social Innovation, a prize awarded to Special Kids Future Concept Challenge Consortium for their “Docodemo Expo” program²²⁶. The Docodemo Expo project allowed disabled and ill children residing in healthcare facilities in both Italy and Japan, who would not have had the opportunity to experience the Expo otherwise, to visit the International Exhibition remotely²²⁷. Italy Pavilion was the only national pavilion taking part in this initiative, recognizing the value of the Docodemo Expo project²²⁸. Mario Vattani stated that Docodemo Expo was “a special collaboration between Italy and Japan, which has been recognized by the BIE as a model of inclusion and accessibility”²²⁹. Vattani also stated that

“[t]he Italian Pavilion confirms its status as a privileged place for inclusion and innovation, promoting the use of tools capable of combining technology with harmonious and conscious development of society”²³⁰.

The children were able to remotely control a robotic avatar that could freely move inside the Pavilion. The tour would be held by a host and by one of the Italian interns working at the Pavilion. The host would explain each part of the exhibition using easy language and

²²³ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka, Il commento del Commissario Generale per l’Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Amb. Mario Vattani, *LinkedIn*, 13 October 2025, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/italy-expo-2025-osaka_huhhus2025-expo2025-iwvollo-activity-7383381691890835456-uhKo?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios&rcm=ACoAAFyfgvgB3Dlt6qERDqZRKLmv-u1JT_zJ498,00:00:51-00:01:50.

²²⁴ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka, Il commento del Commissario Generale per l’Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Amb. Mario Vattani, *LinkedIn*, 00:00:51-00:01:50.

²²⁵ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka, Il commento del Commissario Generale per l’Italia a Expo 2025 Osaka Amb. Mario Vattani, *LinkedIn*, 00:00:51-00:01:50.

²²⁶ “Expo Innovation Awards.” *Bureau International des Expositions*, 2 September 2025, <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/news-announcements/world-expo/inaugural-expo-innovation-award-laureates-announced>.

²²⁷ “Expo Innovation Awards.” *Bureau International des Expositions*.

²²⁸ “Expo 2025 Osaka: al Padiglione Italia va il premio innovazione.” *La Repubblica*, 3 September 2025, https://finanza.repubblica.it/News/2025/09/03/expo_2025_osaka_al_padiglione_italia_va_il_premio_innovazione-217/.

²²⁹ “Expo 2025 Osaka: al Padiglione Italia va il premio innovazione.” *La Repubblica*.

²³⁰ “Expo 2025 Osaka: al Padiglione Italia va il premio innovazione.” *La Repubblica*.

interesting anecdotes to entertain the young audience. The host would ask questions about the artwork to the children. For example, the children would be asked what *Circulatory System* by Jago depicted and, after some time for consideration, the Italian volunteer would reveal the answer, in this case the answer would be “hearts”. At the end of the tour there would be a question-and-answer segment in which the viewers could ask the intern questions. The questions were mainly about national cuisine, culture, and about the artwork, such as how it was transported to Japan. Some of the children showed an interest in the volunteers, asking about their favorite part of the exhibition or about what they missed the most from home. This cultural exchange allowed the children to not only visit the Pavilion but also be face to face with a different culture in an interactive and accessible way. Thanks to the Docodemo project, they were given the opportunity to visit a multicultural space such as the International Exhibition, a place that they could not have visited otherwise, maybe giving them a chance to see people from other parts of the world for the first time, while still being safely sheltered in healthcare facilities.

6.2 Mario Vattani - Italian Ambassador in Japan

Even after its end on October 13th, 2025, the success of the Expo 2025 Osaka, and the Italy Pavilion, might have had a lasting impact on international geopolitics. In fact, on the 27th of February 2026, Mario Vattani announced through a video on his social media platforms, that he was appointed as the new Italian Ambassador in Tokyo²³¹. In his social media post, he states:

Dear compatriots, dear Japanese friends; in the occasion of the 160th anniversary of friendship between Italy and Japan I start – today – with great honor and great joy my mission as Italian Ambassador in Tokyo. This new assignment comes after the important experience at Expo 2025 Osaka, which was, without any doubt, a significant step towards the strengthening of the visibility and presence of Italy in Japan. And the recent visit of our President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni, who has been warmly welcomed by

²³¹ Vattani, Mario. “Nel 160^o Anniversario Dell’amicizia #Italia #Giappone Sono Onorato E Felice Di Iniziare Oggi La Mia Missione Di #Ambasciatore d’Italia a #Tokyo.” *LinkedIn*, 27 Feb. 2026, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mario-vattani-178617a6_italia-giappone-ambasciatore-activity-7433067229094526976-Jhxp?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_ios&rcm=ACoAAfYfgvgB3Dlt6qERDqZRKLmv-u1JT_zJ498,00:00:00-00:02:23.

the Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi and also welcomed with affection by many Japanese people. This visit confirmed, once again, the depth and also the quality of our bilateral relationship. A relationship that today has reached a new level because, thanks to our governments' action, it has been elevated to "special strategic partnership". This situation opens important perspectives for our nations, in cutting-edge sectors, in high technology, aerospace, research, industry, energy, and life sciences. Today, Italian companies are operating in Japan with increasing success, and it is thanks to the quality of our expertise, our ability to innovate, and also to the credibility of the Italian system. Alongside the prestige of our traditional excellences such as fashion, design, agri-food, and culture, today in Japan there is a strong awareness of Italy's technological, scientific, industrial, cutting-edge prowess. In such a complex international environment, the collaboration between Italy and Japan is of key importance, not only for economic growth, but also for stability, resilience, and security. Naturally, the countless cultural exchanges remain a deep foundation of our bond. For Italy and Japan, culture is a living resource capable of generating creativity, ingenuity, and thus ensuring our competitiveness. I would like to thank and pay tribute to my predecessors, and I know I can count on an exceptional Italian community in Japan, as well as on the support of many Japanese friends. My commitment in the coming years will be to further strengthen this partnership and to foster new collaborations, especially in the most innovative and strategic sectors [...]²³².

In the video, Vattani stressed the success of the Italy Pavilion at the Expo 2025 Osaka. Most of the elements that Vattani noted as elements of Italy's prestige, such as agri-food, technology, and aerospace, were elements showcased in both the exhibition and in the events held at the Pavilion. In fact, the pieces in the Italy Pavilion exhibition, such as the *Italian Space Agency's Interactive Screen*, and the events that took place in the Multimedia and Multifunction room might have helped to increase the awareness of Italy's technological advancements in Japan. Moreover, he talks extensively about the relationship between the countries of Italy and Japan. This relationship was also one of the themes of the main Italy Pavilion exhibition area, with pieces such as the *Portrait of Itō Mancio* and the *S.v.a. 9* model. Thus, remembering the deep history of friendship between the two countries might have not only shown gratitude towards the hosting country and

²³² Vattani, Mario. "Nel 160° Anniversario Dell'amicizia #Italia #Giappone Sono Onorato E Felice Di Iniziare Oggi La Mia Missione Di #Ambasciatore d'Italia a #Tokyo." *LinkedIn*, 00:00:00-00:02:46.

its citizens, but it was also as a way to introduce the 160th anniversary of the relationship between Italy and Japan.

6.3 Built Heritage

The modern-day Expos only last up to six months. During these six months, the various countries were showcasing numerous elements of cultural value, such as the pavilions' structures and what they contained. But what remains after their time is up?

According to Pascal Honisch, what is left after an Expo can be categorized into two groups: intellectual legacy and material legacy²³³. The first category is attributable to the dialogue that develops around the Expo itself, involving both the media and disciplines like political science, ethnology, architecture, economy, history, urban planning, archeology, and communication²³⁴. The material legacy is mostly linked to architecture, as the structures used or built for such events are arguably the elements that stand out the most²³⁵. Honisch thinks that “built heritage” is central when talking about the material legacy of international expositions²³⁶. This is because the debates regarding anthropology have moved from the mere descriptive study of humans, moving towards interdisciplinary methods that embrace architectural and urban heritage²³⁷. Many approaches have been used regarding “built heritage”, namely sustainability, gentrification, identity and more²³⁸.

Expos often receive critiques regarding various aspects. An example of this is the Milan Expo of 2015. Both before and after the event, criticism arose regarding sustainability, the selection of the site and its use after the event²³⁹. Although the Milan Expo received said critique, it also represented a successful Expo in terms of visitor

²³³ Honisch, Pascal. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.” *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 2.

²³⁴ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 2.

²³⁵ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 2.

²³⁶ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 2.

²³⁷ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 2.

²³⁸ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 2-3.

²³⁹ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 3.

numbers and efforts to demonstrate both tangible and intangible heritage²⁴⁰. Even the first Expo in 1851 attracted critics, as well as supporters. One of the most prominent detractors of said event was Karl Marx, who was a young journalist at the time. He described the Expo as a “pantheon of the bourgeoisie”²⁴¹. On the contrary, amongst the admirers of the event there was Prince Albert, who was also the chair of the Royal Commission, which was in charge of organizing the event²⁴². He thought that the Expo had established a period of “unity of mankind”²⁴³. Thanks to the exhibition, investors, inventors, consumers, and producers were all present in the same area, thus bringing, in both national and international terms, economic agreements, deregulation policies and tariff cuts²⁴⁴.

London’s Crystal Palace became a venue for various kinds of events after the end of the Expo, thus shaping the image and identity of London itself, before burning down on the 30th of November 1936²⁴⁵. Although the Crystal Palace had an unfortunate fate, the building and the Great Exhibition had already managed to forge a legacy that was set in stone, also because both the event and the building were able to create an enduring architectural and imperialist influence on later Expos²⁴⁶. This was not the only area of Expo grounds that was tragically lost, amongst it are the “Rotunde” of the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair, and the “Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building”, part of Chicago’s 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition²⁴⁷.

Some of the buildings built especially for the Expos, such as the Eiffel Tower of the Paris Fair of 1889, had the chance of becoming symbols not only of the past Expo but of the host city. These structures also became tourist attractions, consequently giving the

²⁴⁰ Honisch, Pascal. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.” *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 3.

²⁴¹ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 3.

²⁴² Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 3.

²⁴³ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 3.

²⁴⁴ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 3.

²⁴⁵ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 4.

²⁴⁶ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 4.

²⁴⁷ Honisch. “Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.”, 4.

host country a return on their initial investments²⁴⁸. Another example of this phenomenon is the Expo Commemoration Park, which was created on the grounds of the 1970 Expo in Osaka. This site does not only offer leisure attractions, but the presence of the National Museum of Ethnology grants visitors the chance to look at artifacts from different countries, donated to Japan during the aforementioned Expo²⁴⁹. Therefore, these kinds of buildings aid in the preservation of the built heritage of the Expos.

6.4 The Fate of Yumeshima

Then, after the end of the Expo 2025 Osaka, what will happen to Yumeshima and the Expo grounds? Will the built heritage of the latest Expo persist, or will it be completely destroyed? On the 13th of April 2026, the Yumeshima Expo Grounds opened for the media. The site was almost entirely bare, with the exception of the Czech Pavilion, which had still remained untouched at the time. 30% of the Grand Ring had already been demolished²⁵⁰. The official deadline for the demolition of the pavilions was set for mid-April, but it has been postponed until mid-July²⁵¹. The area of Yumeshima that was used for the Expo 2025 Osaka is set to be given back to Osaka City by the end of February 2028²⁵². This means that the demolition work has to be completed by then. There are already some plans regarding the future of the redevelopment of Yumeshima, the artificial island of around 390 hectares, of which only around 50 hectares had been used as Expo grounds. The current concept behind Yumeshima's development is "A Future City Division inheriting the Ideal of Expo" ("万博の理念を継ぐ未来都市区画")²⁵³. Carrying the idea of Expo will be done thanks to three plans: the creation of an Entertainment City (which will include leisure facilities, theatres, commercial spaces, and arenas), realizing an SDGs Future City

²⁴⁸ Honisch, Pascal. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015." *Built Heritage*, vol. 8, no. 1, 23 Aug. 2024, 4.

²⁴⁹ Honisch. "Making History, Making Place—Contextualising the Built Heritage of World Expos 2010 and 2015.", 4-5.

²⁵⁰ Oka, Juntaro. "Banpaku Kaijō No Ima, Sugata Kesu Pabirion Ringu Wa 3 Wari Kaitai Kaimaku Kara 1 Nen." *Asahi Shinbun*, 14 Apr. 2026, <https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASV4F2S5CV4FPQIP00FM.html>.

²⁵¹ Oka. "Banpaku Kaijō No Ima, Sugata Kesu Pabirion Ringu Wa 3 Wari Kaitai Kaimaku Kara 1 Nen."

²⁵² Oka. "Banpaku Kaijō No Ima, Sugata Kesu Pabirion Ringu Wa 3 Wari Kaitai Kaimaku Kara 1 Nen."

²⁵³ Kuroshi, Taichi. "IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... "Afutā Banpaku " Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu." *TOMORUBA (トモルバ) - Jigyō O Kassei Ka Suru Media*, 8 Dec. 2025, <https://www.tomoruba.eiicon.net/articles/5382>.

(which will reach carbon neutrality, whilst restoring the natural ecosystem), and the implementation of cutting-edge technologies²⁵⁴. Hence, it seems that the goal for Yumeshima is to reach the “Future Societies for Our Lives” that represented the motto of the entire Expo.

In the current plans for the island, the construction of an Integrated Resort, or IR, is also included²⁵⁵. This IR will have an initial investment of 1.27 trillion yen and is expected to have an economic ripple effect of around 1.14 trillion yen a year²⁵⁶. The structures that were part of the Expo 2025 Osaka and that will be kept in this new project are: the Grand Ring, The Forest of Tranquility, and the Osaka Healthcare Pavilion²⁵⁷. These structures will therefore represent the physical legacy of the Expo²⁵⁸. Around 200 meters of the Grand Ring will be kept, and it will be used as an urban monument to the event²⁵⁹. The Grand Ring was a wooden structure of a diameter of 675 meters that became one of the symbols of the Expo. The structure was built thanks to the traditional Japanese *nukikōhō* (“貫構法”) construction method that was reinvented with modern technologies, becoming the symbol of the motto “Diversity in Unity”²⁶⁰. The Forest of Tranquility will also, in a way, be kept. It consisted of a 2.3-hectares area in which 1500 trees were transplanted²⁶¹. In its reinterpretation, the trees that made up the Forest of Tranquility will be kept on the island, but they will be relocated to different areas²⁶². The Osaka Healthcare Pavilion worked as

²⁵⁴ Kuroshi, Taichi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.” *TOMORUBA* (トモルバ) - Jigyō O Kassei Ka Suru Media, 8 Dec. 2025, <https://www.tomoruba.eiicon.net/articles/5382>.

²⁵⁵ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁵⁶ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁵⁷ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁵⁸ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁵⁹ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁶⁰ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁶¹ Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

²⁶² Kuroshi. “IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... “Afutā Banpaku ” Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu.”.

the official pavilion of Osaka City. The pavilion's goal was to showcase the future of health and medicine. The current plan is to keep this structure to maintain its role as a center for the medical sector, offering services such as health promotion, preventive medicine services, and international medical care²⁶³. This site is planned to become a medical tourism attraction, as the surrounding grounds will host hotels and various commercial facilities²⁶⁴. It seems that the aim of this plan is to preserve the Expo's cultural heritage, through its physical legacies. The built heritage of the Expo 2025 Osaka will continue to exist for future generations in the form of the Grand Ring, part of the Forest of Tranquility and the structure of the Healthcare Pavilion. This will be analogous to the Expo Commemoration Park, aimed at remembering the cultural heritage of the previous Expo that took place in Osaka. The expected yearly monetary return will also represent a beneficial aspect of such plan, reimbursing the initial investment in less than two years.

6.5 What stayed behind

The Italy Pavilion has always been a temporary addition to Yumeshima, even from its earlier conception stages, and not meant to be a permanent exhibition²⁶⁵. The building was constructed with wood modules that would be easy to disassemble when the time would come, and that would be equally easy to reuse, giving the used wood a second life²⁶⁶. Then, what will be left of the Italy Pavilion after the Expo 2025 Osaka?

As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, the Molise temporary exhibition featured a bell created by the foundry Fonderia Marinelli that was positioned on the outer area of the Pavilion. The cherry blossom and cherry tree were used as a symbol of Japan, giving the bell its name. In fact, the bell was named *Molisakura*, as an homage to the hosting country of the Expo and as a way to permanently link the region of Molise and Japan. Moreover, the outer part of the bell had decorations that were aimed at this particular goal, as the

²⁶³ Kuroshi, Taichi. "IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... "Afutā Banpaku " Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu." *TOMORUBA (トモルバ) - Jigyō O Kassei Ka Suru Media*, 8 Dec. 2025, <https://www.tomoruba.eiicon.net/articles/5382>.

²⁶⁴ Kuroshi. "IR Ya Dai Yane Ringu Nado No Regashī ... "Afutā Banpaku " Ga Motarasu Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Heimaku Go No Keikaku to Keizai Kōka O Kaisetsu."

²⁶⁵ "Mario Cucinella Architects." *Mario Cucinella Architects*, 2025, <https://www.mcarchitects.it/progetti/padiglione-italia-expo-2025-osaka>.

²⁶⁶ "Mario Cucinella Architects." *Mario Cucinella Architects*.

bell was adorned with symbols of the 2025 Expo and the Italy Pavilion, such as the mascot of the Pavilion *Italia-chan*, alongside the 1970 Osaka Expo and the 1990 Osaka Horticultural Expo. An outline of both countries, Italy and Japan, was also present on the bell. To commemorate the eightieth anniversary of Hiroshima's atomic disaster, the artists also decided to depict the Hiroshima Peace Memorial on the *Molisakura*. The bell that was once rung by visitors on the outer part of the Pavilion, the Italy Square, has found its permanent home in Japan. *Molisakura* is now located in the outer yard of the St. Mary's Cathedral of Osaka-Takamatsu, thus changing a part of the hosting country for the foreseeable future²⁶⁷. People who might not have been able to visit the Italy Pavilion, or who might have missed the thematic week of the region of Molise, can now visit St. Mary's Cathedral and see the bell outside of its intended initial environment. Furthermore, this addition might even create more traction for the Cathedral.



Figure 42 Picture of the *Molisakura* in the front yard of the St. Mary's Cathedral of Osaka-Takamatsu. *Tamatsukuri Kyōkai*. <https://tamatsukuri.ostk.catholic.jp/en/menu/expo2025>.

Another regional piece that will remain in Japan is the piece *Controluce*, which was part of Marche's temporary exhibition; this piece will be given to the Japanese university

²⁶⁷ "EXPO 2025 Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Regashi." *Ōsaka Takamatsu Sei Maria Dai Seidō Katorikku Tamatsukuri Kyōkai*, 2025, <https://www.tamatsukuri.ostk.catholic.jp/menu/expo2025>.

Ritsumeikan, becoming a permanent addition to the host country's cultural patrimony from the 25th of June 2026²⁶⁸. This piece will be formally gifted by the Italian university Università degli Studi di Camerino, sealing the academic partnership between the two universities on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Japan²⁶⁹. The formal gift-giving ceremony has yet to take place, but it will celebrate a bond that will transform the legacy of the past Expo into future cooperation²⁷⁰.

There is another part of the Italy Pavilion that stayed behind after the end of the Expo 2025 Osaka on October 13th 2025, albeit only for a limited period of time. From the 25th of October 2025 to the 12th of January of 2026, some of the pieces that were originally part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition were showcased at the Osaka city Museum of Fine Arts²⁷¹. The exhibition was created as part of the celebrations of the 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the countries of Italy and Japan²⁷². The exhibition had the preservation of the legacy of the Expo 2025 Osaka and the Italy Pavilion²⁷³. Although the title of the exhibition was “Atlas of the sky – Italy Pavilion's Greatest Treasures” (“天空のアトラス イタリア館の至宝”), the *Farnese Atlas* was not the sole attraction, as there were two more exhibited pieces: the aforementioned *Farnese Atlas* was thus accompanied by Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Atlanticus* and Perugino's *Gonfalon of Justice*²⁷⁴. The reasoning behind the choice of the Osaka City Museum of Fine arts to select those pieces was that each one of them symbolizes the universal human themes

²⁶⁸ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka (@italyexpo2025osaka). “Italy Expo 2025 Osaka on Instagram: Dall’Expo 2025 Osaka al futuro: l’arte e il saper fare delle Marche conquistano il Giappone.” *Instagram*, 19 June 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/DZxDtaqjbJc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==.

²⁶⁹ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka (@italyexpo2025osaka). “Italy Expo 2025 Osaka on Instagram: Dall’Expo 2025 Osaka al futuro: l’arte e il saper fare delle Marche conquistano il Giappone.” *Instagram*.

²⁷⁰ Italy Expo 2025 Osaka (@italyexpo2025osaka). “Italy Expo 2025 Osaka on Instagram: Dall’Expo 2025 Osaka al futuro: l’arte e il saper fare delle Marche conquistano il Giappone.” *Instagram*.

²⁷¹ “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei! Nichi I Kokkō 160 Shūnen Kinen Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kaisai Kinen Tokubetsuten “Tenkū No Atorasu Itariakan No Shihō” Kaisai.” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*, 10 Oct. 2025, <https://www.prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000119.000135074.html>.

²⁷² “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei!” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*.

²⁷³ “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei!” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*.

²⁷⁴ “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei!” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*.

of “universe”, “knowledge”, “faith”, and “justice”²⁷⁵. The *Farnese Atlas*, depicting the giant from Greek mythology bearing the weight of the universe, represents the very essence of the ancient sculpture; the *Codex Atlanticus* is a piece that demonstrates in full Leonardo da Vinci’s knowledge in astronomy, mathematics, zoology, and botany; and the *Gonfalon of Justice* represents faith and spirituality, by Perugino, Raphael’s teacher who greatly influenced his art, an artist who fully embodies the spirit of the Renaissance²⁷⁶. Mario Vattani stated that Italy managed to continue being a protagonist in Japan even after the Expo, saying that this exhibition was a symbol of gratitude from the host country, as well as proof of the lasting impact of the Italy Pavilion Exhibition on Japan’s society and culture²⁷⁷. He also stated that the exhibition, which began in 2026, was the perfect way of celebrating the 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Japan²⁷⁸. The Minister of Culture Alessandro Giuli stated that when the question to extend the *Atlas*’ stay in Japan arose, the Ministry of Culture did not hesitate to do so, as the sculpture served as the manifesto of the anniversary of diplomatic relations of the countries²⁷⁹. The President of the Umbria Region, Stefania Proietti, stated that the choice of showcasing the *Gonfalon of Justice* at the Osaka Museum of Fine Arts brought a great sense of satisfaction and pride, as it would contribute to the promotion of Umbria’s culture in Japan²⁸⁰. This piece was, in fact, part of the Umbria thematic week, a temporary exhibition that was held in the Territory area of the Pavilion from the 31st of August to the 6th of September 2025. Monsignor Rocca, director of the Pinacoteca Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana proclaimed that the opportunity of prolonging the two pages of the *Codex*

²⁷⁵ “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei! Nichi I Kokkō 160 Shūnen Kinen Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku Kaisai Kinen Tokubetsuten “Tenkū No Atorasu Itariakan No Shihō” Kaisai.” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*, 10 Oct. 2025, <https://www.prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000119.000135074.html>.

²⁷⁶ “Ōsaka Kansai Banpaku de Ninki O Hakushita Itaria No Shihō Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan Nite Tenji Kettei!” *Puresurirīsu Nyūsurirīsu Haishin Shea No. 1* / *PR TIMES*.

²⁷⁷ “Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra “Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion.”” *Gazzetta Diplomatica*, 11 Oct. 2025, <https://gazzettadiplomatica.it/expo-2025-osaka-annunciata-la-mostra-atlante-farnese-and-the-treasures-of-the-italy-pavilion/>.

²⁷⁸ “Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra “Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion.”” *Gazzetta Diplomatica*.

²⁷⁹ “Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra “Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion.”” *Gazzetta Diplomatica*.

²⁸⁰ “Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra “Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion.”” *Gazzetta Diplomatica*.

Codex Atlanticus' stay in Japan was welcomed with great enthusiasm²⁸¹. The Director general of the National Archeological Museum of Naples Francesco Sirano stated that the presence of the Farnese Atlas at the exhibition embodies the museum's mission to share the legacy of the classical world, as well as strengthening their international cooperation and cultural diplomacy, whilst consolidating the relations between Italy and Japan²⁸². The, at the time, Italian Ambassador in Japan, Gianluigi Benedetti, who was then succeeded by Mario Vattani at the end of his term, stated that the Italy Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka was one of the most visited and most popular pavilions, and that this exhibition was created to allow Japanese visitors to continue to have the opportunity of admiring pieces that represent Italy's cultural heritage²⁸³. This exhibition, while only lasting four months, was able to extend the Italy Pavilion's cultural legacy, showcasing pieces that were especially selected and curated to fully embody the Pavilion's message, "Art Regenerates Life", through fundamental concepts such as knowledge and faith²⁸⁴. The 160th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries was a welcome coincidence. It might have been used to curate the area of the Italy Pavilion's exhibition that highlighted the link between Italy and Japan, such as the S.V.A. 9 biplane. This exhibition possibly gave people who did not have the chance to visit the Pavilion at the height of its popularity a chance to witness firsthand some of the best pieces it had to offer, as the *Farnese Atlas* and the *Codex Atlanticus* were respectively the first and third most liked artwork according to the survey. Because of their popularity, it might even be said that some visitors of the Italy Pavilion then visited the "Atlas of the sky – Italy Pavilion's Greatest Treasures" exhibition in order to have the chance to see the pieces that spoke to them best another time.

²⁸¹ "Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra "Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion."" *Gazzetta Diplomatica*.

²⁸² "Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra "Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion."" *Gazzetta Diplomatica*, 11 Oct. 2025, <https://gazzettadiplomatica.it/expo-2025-osaka-annunciata-la-mostra-atlante-farnese-and-the-treasures-of-the-italy-pavilion/>.

²⁸³ "Giappone: Da Oggi Mario Vattani Nuovo Ambasciatore Italiano." *Giornale Diplomatico*, 26 Feb. 2026, <https://www.giornalediplomatico.it/giappone-da-oggi-mario-vattani-nuovo-ambasciatore-italiano.htm>; "Expo 2025 Osaka, Annunciata La Mostra "Atlante Farnese and the Treasures of the Italy Pavilion."" *Gazzetta Diplomatica*.

²⁸⁴ "Itaria Kan." *Italyexpo2025osaka.it*, 2025, <https://www.italyexpo2025osaka.it/ja/itariaguan>.

Conclusion

This Thesis analyzed the Expo, and how the Expo can be considered a competition amongst participating countries. In the case of the Expo 2025 Osaka, it was not possible to determine which pavilion was the most visited one, as such data is not available for the Pavilion that is subject of this research. To determine its success and popularity, it was necessary to conduct a survey directly on site.

Moreover, analyzing the contents of the Italian exhibition, both permanent and temporary, was used to discover what the determining factors that made it successful were. The exhibition, although it still featured technological and scientific pieces, seemed to have favored real artwork, both antique and modern. And in the case of the temporary exhibitions, the regional ones showcased products typical of their region, such as agri-food and commercial products, alongside their crafts. This provided visitors with an interactive experience whilst the regions promoted their products. The same can be said about the temporary exhibitions held by corporations, which showcased design objects or pieces of art whilst improving their prestige in Japan.

As it was discovered from both the survey and the analysis of the visitors' opinions on the social media platform X, the majority of visitors who voiced their opinion preferred the pieces that were considered *honmono*, meaning real pieces of art, whilst only some visitors preferred the technological pieces. The artistic and historical relevance of said the pieces considered *honmono*, especially the ones of renown masters such as Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and da Vinci, brought prestige to the Italy Pavilion, making the Japanese public interested in visiting it. The critical aspects, such as the long waiting time and the unavailability of the reservations, were not seen as negative by every visitor, as some were happy to have the chance of queuing for the Pavilion even if they were not able to obtain a reservation. In fact, the reservations were often sold out for months on end, because of the popularity of the Pavilion. Furthermore, the visitors questioned did not seem to let the long waiting times tamper with their experience of the exhibition, as the survey concluded that the waiting times and the level of satisfaction were not closely related. Another aspect that contributed to making the wait more enjoyable was the presence of events, musical numbers, exhibition pieces, and craftsmanship

demonstrations all along the queue, arguably rendering the experience of the people who were granted direct VIP access less complete.

Some of the results of the survey were confirmed by the public posts made by visitors of the Italy Pavilion on X. In these posts the X users would frequently refer to the Italy Pavilion as the *Ichiban Ninki*, substantiating the claim that the Italy Pavilion could have been considered the number one pavilion in popularity.

The Italy Pavilion had a lasting impact on the hosting country of the Expo 2025 Osaka, as some of its pieces were kept in the country even after the closing ceremony of the Expo. Namely through the exhibition “Atlas of the sky – Italy Pavilion’s Greatest Treasures”, although only for a limited amount of time, the piece *Controluce*, and the *Molisakura* bell.

To further support the status of the Italy Pavilion, not only in popularity but also regarding the significance of its themes and exhibited pieces, the BIE awarded the Pavilion with two prizes: one “Theme Development” awards, and one “Social Innovation” award for the *Docodemo Expo* project. Additionally, the Commissioner General of the Pavilion Mario Vattani was appointed Ambassador of Italy in Japan, arguably because of the perceived success of the Pavilion.

As a result of this research, the Italy Pavilion can be considered the most appreciated pavilion within the surveyed sample, and also because of the rankings made by websites such as *PEN* and *Nikkei Trendy*. Moreover, after analyzing the answers that the visitors gave to questions such as “イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか？ What sets the Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions?” and “イタリア館を訪問した後、イタリアが自らにどのようなイメージを与えていると思いますか？ After visiting the Pavilion, what do you think is the image Italy presents of itself?” it becomes apparent that the data suggests that the Pavilion’s perceived success was strongly associated with the presence of authentic artwork.

In the survey, people who visited multiple pavilions were asked which one was their favorite, and an overwhelming majority of them chose the Italy Pavilion. Nonetheless, recency bias might have been at play, since the survey was administered immediately after they had visited the Pavilion. However, this was attempted to be accounted for by reviewing unbiased posts on the social media platform X. Nonetheless, the results

emerging from this research are limited to the sample of visitors and might not reflect the opinions of the entirety of Expo visitors. With further research, it might be possible to conduct similar surveys either one year after the surveyed sample's visit and check if their answers changed as time passed or repeat the questionnaire at future Expos. Moreover, asking the same questions again could potentially render the recency bias null. Furthermore, since the perceived popularity of the Italy Pavilions seemed to have preceded the opening of its doors, analyzing what happened before the Expo, and the opinions the Japanese public held regarding Italy prior to the mega-event could be relevant.

Appendix A: First Questionnaire Questions

Open questions

- 1) どこ出身ですか？日本の場合、お住まいの都市を教えてください Where are you from? If you are from Japan, please specify the city you are from.
- 2) 他のパビリオンを訪れたことがある場合、どのパビリオンが最もお気に入りでしたか？ If you have visited other pavilions, which one is your favorite?
- 3) イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか？ What sets the Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions?

Multiple choice questions

- 1) どの列に並んでいましたか？ Which queue did you line up in?
 - a. 一般・予約なし No reservation
 - b. 予約あり With reservation
 - c. 優先 Priority
 - d. VIP アクセス VIP access
- 2) イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?
 - a. はい Yes
 - b. いいえ No
 - c. ある程度 Partially
- 3) 年齢層を教えてください。 What age group do you belong to?
 - a. ～19 歳 19 years old or under
 - b. 20 歳～29 歳 from 20 to 29 years old
 - c. 30 歳～39 歳 from 30 to 39 years old
 - d. 40 歳～49 歳 from 40 to 49 years old
 - e. 50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old
 - f. 60 歳以上 60 years old or over

4) イタリア館のことをどのように知りましたか？ How did you find out about the Italy Pavilion?

- a. ニュース News
- b. 仕事 Job
- c. 友達や家族 Friends and Family
- d. 万博で働いています I am working here
- e. その他 Other

5) なぜ万博に訪れましたか？ Why are you visiting the Expo?

- a. 仕事の関係 I am here because of work
- b. 万博で働いている I work at the expo
- c. 個人的な興味 I am visiting it out of my own interest

6) イタリア館の展示で、どの部分が一番お気に入りでしたか？ Which part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition did you like best?

- a. ファルネーゼのアトラス Farnese Atlas



- b. 特別展 Temporary Exhibition



- c. キリストの埋葬 The Entombment of Christ



- d. Futuri Probabili Possible future



e. 連続性の中の唯一の形態 Unique Forms of Continuity



f. 庭と「No Name」 Garden and "No Name"



g. ミラノ・コルティナーナ冬季オリンピック 2 本の聖火 Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games



h. 伊東マンシヨ Portrait of Itō Mancio



i. スケールモデル - ダイバータ・トカマク・テスト Scale Model of the

Divertor Tokamak Test facility



j. 復活したキリスト The Risen Christ



k. S.V.A. Sva 9



l. 循環器系 Circulatory System



m. pneumOS



n. イタリア宇宙機関 The Italian Space Agency Interactive Panel



o. 特許 Patents



p. アトランティコ手稿 Codex Atlanticus



q. 公共インフラプロジェクト Infrastructures and Transport



7) イタリア館を体験した後、イタリアの文化に対する意見は変わりましたか？

Did your understanding of Italian culture change after the experience?

- a. はい Yes
- b. いいえ No
- c. ある程度 Somewhat

8) イタリアは旅行先として考えますか？ Would you consider Italy as a holiday destination?

- a. はい Yes
- b. いいえ No
- c. もしかしたら Maybe

Appendix B: Second Questionnaire Questions

Open questions

- 1) どこ出身ですか？日本の場合、お住まいの都市を教えてください Where are you from? If you are from Japan, please specify the city you are from.
- 2) イタリア館を訪問した理由は何ですか？ Why did you visit the Italy Pavilion?
- 3) イタリア館を訪問した後、イタリアが自らにどのようなイメージを与えると思いますか？ After visiting the Pavilion, what do you think is the image Italy presents of itself?
- 4) イタリア館を訪問した理由は何ですか？ Why did you visit the Italy Pavilion?
- 5) 他のパビリオンを訪れたことがある場合、どのパビリオンが最もお気に入りでしたか？ If you have visited other pavilions, which one is your favorite?
- 6) イタリア館が他のパビリオンと異なる点はどこですか？ What sets the Italy Pavilion apart from the other pavilions?

Multiple choice questions

- 1) どの列に並んでいましたか？ Which queue did you line up in?
 - a. 一般・予約なし No reservation
 - b. 予約あり With reservation
 - c. 優先 Priority
 - d. VIP アクセス VIP access
- 2) イタリア館はご期待に応えましたか？ Did the Italy Pavilion meet your expectations?
 - a. はい Yes
 - b. いいえ No
 - c. ある程度 Partially
- 3) 年齢層を教えてください。 What age group do you belong to?

- a. ～19 歳 19 years old or under
- b. 20 歳～29 歳 from 20 to 29 years old
- c. 30 歳～39 歳 from 30 to 39 years old
- d. 40 歳～49 歳 from 40 to 49 years old
- e. 50 歳～59 歳 from 50 to 59 years old
- f. 60 歳以上 60 years old or over

4) イタリア館のことをどのように知りましたか？ How did you find out about the Italy Pavilion?

- a. ニュース News
- b. 仕事 Job
- c. 友達や家族 Friends and Family
- d. 万博で働いています I am working here
- e. その他 Other

5) なぜ万博に訪れましたか？ Why are you visiting the Expo?

- a. 仕事の関係 I am here because of work
- b. 万博で働いている I work at the expo
- c. 個人的な興味 I am visiting it out of my own interest

6) イタリア館の展示で、どの部分が一番お気に入りでしたか？ Which part of the Italy Pavilion exhibition did you like best?

- a. ファルネーゼのアトラス Farnese Atlas



- b. 特別展 Temporary Exhibition



- c. キリストの埋葬 The Entombment of Christ



d. Futuri Probabili Possible future



e. 連続性の中の唯一の形態 Unique Forms of Continuity



f. 庭と「No Name」 Garden and "No Name"



g. ミラノ・コルティーナ冬季オリンピック 2 本の聖火 Olympic and Paralympic Torches of Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games



h. 伊東マンシヨ Portrait of Itō Mancio



i. スケールモデル - ダイバータ・トカマク・テスト Scale Model of the



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q. 公共インフラプロジェクト Infrastructures and Transport



7) イタリア館を体験した後、イタリアの文化に対する意見は変わりましたか？

Did your understanding of Italian culture change after the experience?

- a. はい Yes
- b. いいえ No
- c. ある程度 Somewhat

8) イタリアは旅行先として考えますか？ **Would you consider Italy as a holiday destination?**

- a. はい Yes
- b. いいえ No
- c. もしかしたら Maybe

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