

CRISTINA MAZZUCHELLI

CLOROFILLA KINDERGARTEN

Milan, Italy, 2013



In 2012 the Clorofilla Kindergarten in southeastern Milan asked designer Cristina Mazzucchelli to provide an enchanting, educational space that would stimulate the senses of small children. Mazzucchelli has achieved this using fragrant, aromatic plants with soft textures that encourage the children to engage and interact. The teachers also use the plants to inform the youngsters about plants, nature and seeds. There are spaces to sit and learn and be totally immersed in nature, to watch the insects and enjoy the scents and sounds. This rooftop space of about

300 square metres (3,200 square feet), on a building that previously housed a convent, then theatre and latterly a cinema, had its limitations. It had arches that span the space, and it was important that the floor not be damaged by construction or penetrating roots, allowing water into the floors below. Since grass would not be a sensible option, Mazzucchelli brought unity and harmony to the built elements and the planting using stress-resistant coloured flooring that simulates a coloured carpet, and a plant palette that tones beautifully. With its continental climate, Milan

is very hot in the summer and cold and wet in the winter, although neighbouring buildings help to reduce wind damage to this roof garden. One half of the garden is sunny and open, while the other is in shade. Raised beds ensure that the plants – which include *Salvia rosmarinus* (rosemary), *Agastache 'Blue Fortune'* (giant hyssop), *Senecio vira-vira* (dusty miller) and the fountain grass *Cenchrus alopecuroides* (also known as *Pennisetum alopecuroides*) – are at the children's eye level and safe from damage.