

**Part I.****Christina Hainzl: *Mario Peliti – On Venice***

Taking place at dawn, and passing through winter, spring, summer and autumn, Mario Peliti's *Venice Urban Photo Project* presents a mosaic of Venice in over 20,000 photographs. Against the backdrop of the city's pressing problems with *aqua alta* and overtourism, Peliti portrays Venice in the form of structures and materials: stone, concrete, iron, glass. The article follows the traces of Peliti's work and its different views of the Venetian urban ecosystem. His photographs document and question these developments, challenges and co-existences. They enable us to rethink the fragile relationship between people and the environment.

**Alice Ongaro Sartori: *Venice Doesn't Exist. Deconstruction as an Aesthetic Tool on Screen***

This paper examines Venice's identity through Jacques Derrida's concept of deconstruction, focusing on six contemporary video artworks. The deconstruction of Venice's stereotypical image is a tool for highlighting underlying and underrepresented aspects of a constantly evolving reality, intertwined with its ecosystem. Matteo Stocco's web archive and film fragment the city's narratives, while Sonia Levy's underwater perspectives highlight Venice's materiality. Antoni Muntadas revisits urban *dérives*, juxtaposing changes from 1978 to today, and Andrea De Fusco's visual essay addresses Venice's potential disappearance and the aesthetics of destruction. Yuri Ancarani's *Atlantide* delves into marginalised youth on the lagoon's islands, and Sara Tirelli's VR project deconstructs the city's imagery to explore European identity in decline. These hybrid works – bridging video and cinema – redefine Venice as an unstable

and multifaceted cultural and natural ecosystem, a ‘thinking-machine’ in the Anthropocene, revealing hidden narratives and challenging fixed representations.

## Part II.

### **Cristina Baldacci: *Alternative Venice. A Look at the Last Twenty Years of Artistic Autonomy, Activism and Research***

Laboratory, observatory, model: As a city on the water and part of a lagoon archipelago that has always been strongly anthropised, in its environmental, social and cultural complexity and uniqueness, Venice is today considered an ecosystem that symbolises and tries to cope with the repercussions of the climate crisis. Imagining and practising possible alternatives to the stereotypical reality of a Venice agonising under the waves of ever-higher water, unstoppable depopulation and excessive mass tourism – the three major causes of fragility for the city and its lagoon – is a necessary form of resistance for those trying to regenerate, and not only preserve, both its environmental and its socio-cultural biodiversity. By adopting strategies against the neo-liberalist cultural hegemony, environmental groups, cultural associations and independent art collectives are among the most active and tenacious militants. This chapter aims to offer an account of some of the most effective – even if apparently unsuccessful – independent art and curatorial practices of the last two decades in Venice, which, through their reflections and actions, try to answer a fundamental ethical-political question: *What is to be done?*

### **Giorgio Andreotta Calò: *Letter to Salvatore Settis on the Island of Sant’Andrea***

Written in the form of a letter, this artist’s reflections on one of the last islands in the Venetian archipelago that has so far escaped touristification addresses a fundamental question: *What is to be done?* Without seeking a direct answer from its recipient, the text defines itself as a manifesto for the island of Sant’Andrea and its *Forte* (fortress). Once a defensive outpost for Venice, the *Forte* is reimaged as a space to be defended and preserved in its current transitional state. With this change of perspective, the *Forte* becomes a place for reflection on humanity’s destructive tendencies and on the possibility of artistic *non-action*, with a strong philosophical-ethical and ecological connotation. Sant’Andrea thus emerges as a monument to deceleration and to a (new) ecological balance between the natural and the anthropic.

**Natalie King: *Coexistence and Care: Notes on Curating Three National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale***

This essay reflects on the author's curation of three national pavilions at the Venice Biennale situated in the Giardini, *Tracey Moffatt: My Horizon*, Australian pavilion, Venice Biennale 2017; the Arsenale, *Yuki Kihara: Paradise Camp*, New Zealand pavilion, Venice Biennale 2022, and offsite in Spazio Rava, *Maria Madeira: Kiss and Don't Tell*, the inaugural Timor-Leste pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2024. The author examines the history of the Venice Biennale and the role of the biennial more broadly as a platform for transnational solidarities. While considering these three curatorial case studies within the lagoon habitat of Venice, the author ponders the role of slow curating, coexistence and care as a key relational modality. She draws on the archipelagic writings of Édouard Glissant as a way to formulate an interdependent system of relations.

**Adrian Praschl-Bichler: *The Architecture Biennale as a Platform for Socio-Ecological Interventions***

In the heart of the city of Venice, which is threatened by climate change and mass tourism, the Architecture Biennale acts as a platform for socio-ecological interventions. Architects are increasingly recognising the significant role of architecture in addressing environmental issues and social challenges. This article emphasizes the ethical responsibility of architects. From the starting point of Warwick Fox's ethical *theory of responsive cohesion*, it is argued that architecture should prioritise ecological and environmental compatibility in its creations. The article then presents a range of innovative projects from recent biennales that address architecture's potential for contributing to the socio-ecological transformation of society.

### Part III.

**Matteo Stocco and Rita Vianello: *The Expanded Enquiry: Reflections on an Interdisciplinary Approach Between Anthropology and Multimedia***

*The Expanded Enquiry* by Rita Vianello and Matteo Stocco explores an innovative interdisciplinary approach that merges anthropology and multimedia, focusing on the socio-cultural and ecological transformations of the Venice lagoon. This multifaceted environment, which faces challenges such as ecosystem crises and overtourism, requires new research methodologies. The authors advocate combining traditional anthropological practices – centred on narra-

tive collection – with visual storytelling through film and digital platforms to deepen understanding and convey emotional aspects of human experience. The piece highlights the value of interviews enriched by visual documentation as a way of preserving intangible knowledge and crafts, underscoring the necessity of collaboration between anthropologists, filmmakers and other experts. The authors present *Metagoon* as a case study, illustrating how cross-media and collaborative approaches can enhance public engagement and the dissemination of complex research findings, paving the way for future participatory, multimedia-driven projects.

**Barbara Naradacchione: *Disorientation and Where to Find Oneself***

The text explores the theme of physical and emotional displacement in the Venetian context. As the city's historical centre grapples with demographic decline, overtourism and economic shifts, the sense of disconnection intensifies. Yet, beyond the city's core, a cultural and social substratum is emerging, particularly in the lagoon and its surrounding areas, where artistic research and community-driven initiatives are fostering new ways of engagement. The *Convivial Tables* research programme is described here as a case study. It combines food, ecology and community, addressing local environmental challenges. Through communal meals and collaborative practices, this initiative emphasises the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue, mutual learning and critical/creative commitment.

**Petra Schaefer and Axel Braun: *On Axel Braun's Venice Project 'Machina Mundi/Reign of Reason'***

Beauty, brutality, science and atrocity are often densely entangled. Despite being one of the most admired examples of human creation, Venice is no exception. Axel Braun's artistic case study approaches the city as a fragile relict of a glorious past. It is used as a sample that enables us to observe the fundamental structures and vulnerable points of global networks. Framed by the crumbling ruins of a majestic empire, his mixed-media essay touches on controversial aspects of Venetian history related to theft and looting, the slave trade and the extraction of resources. Against the background of the devastating consequences of human interference in the Earth system, the contribution reflects the ambiguity and evanescence of cultural achievements.

## Part IV.

### **Viola Rühse: *Venetian Art Prints from Their Beginnings to Today's Sustainability Initiatives***

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, Venice was an important centre of Italian printmaking. This period continues to offer an inspiring cultural legacy for local artists today. A small selection of artists as well as other people and institutions that made outstanding contributions to the history of Venetian printmaking, which spans more than five centuries, is presented below. With regard to the present, this essay also focuses on sustainability aspects related to the development and use of less toxic printing processes and the situation of handicrafts and tourism in Venice. Particular attention is paid to the exemplary activities of the *Scuola Internazionale di Grafica* and the Fallani screen printing workshop.

### **Matteo Silverio: *Glass: Millennia-Old Excellence between Innovation and Sustainability***

This paper explores the intersection of Murano's ancient glassmaking tradition and contemporary technological innovation, driven by the pressing need for sustainability. Through the *Glass Matters* project, a dialogue was started between Murano's artisans and digital fabrication technologies such as CNC milling, 3D printing and laser cutting. The results revealed how innovation could enhance creative possibilities without compromising the authenticity of craftsmanship. Furthermore, the *rehub* project proposes a new approach to glass waste management by transforming non-recyclable glass into a sustainable, versatile material. This innovative process reduces energy consumption by 70% and opens up new applications in design and architecture. *Rehub* represents not only a business model but also a hub for research and sustainable development, demonstrating that even ancient traditions can evolve to meet modern environmental challenges and positioning Murano as a centre for the circular economy.

