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110
RUE DE LYON
METRO BASTILLE

VENISE RÉVÉLÉE

IMMERSIVE EXHIBITION

21 SEPT. 2022
- 19 FEB. 2023



iconem



CITTÀ DI VENEZIA



OPERA
NATIONALE
DE PARIS

Grand Palais Immersif
110 rue de Lyon, 75012, Paris
Metro: Bastille

From 21 September 2022 to 19 February 2023
Mondays from 12 to 8 pm
Wednesday to Sunday from 10 am to 8 pm
Late opening on Fridays until 10 pm
Closed on Tuesdays

This exhibition is supported by



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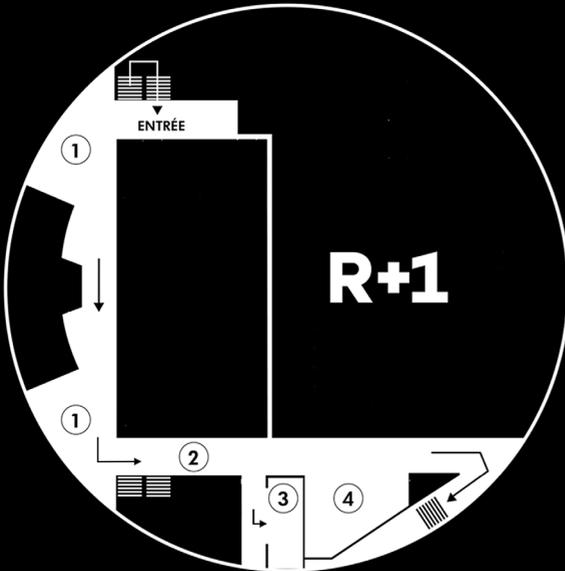
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THE CENTENARY

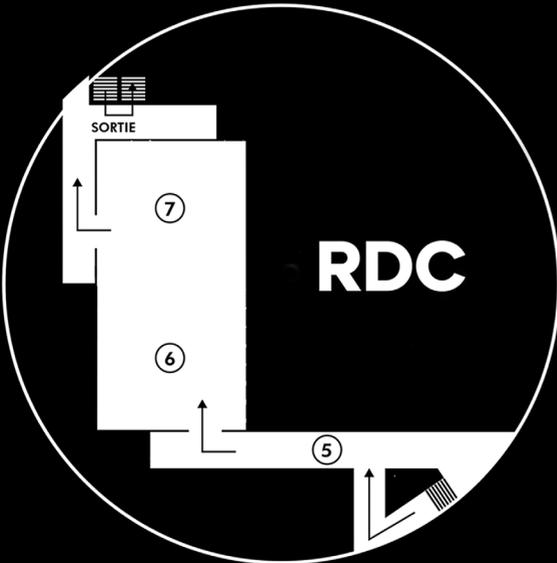
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EXHIBITION MAP



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3. VENISE, 1481: THE ASSASSIN'S CREED EXPERIENCE
4. THE GRAND CANAL: PALACES AND SCENERY



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6. ST. MARK'S SQUARE: SEATS OF POWER
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INTRODUCTION

The existence of a city such as Venice is nothing short of a miracle – a miracle of ingenuity, a miracle of architecture and art, a miracle of society and politics. Built on the muddy bed of a lagoon, with no stable ground or fresh water, La Serenissima has been under attack from the sea ever since, a merciless threat that was also the source of its wealth and global reputation. Each of Venice's canals and narrow streets keeps this heritage alive, and as they lose themselves in the city, visitors unearth the countless treasures that escape the eye. To walk through walls and discover what hides behind them is the dream of all lovers of Venice. It is this dream that is going to become your reality.

The images presented in this exhibition are taken from a massive 3D model, a digital double made in photogrammetry, using drones. Through this technology, La Serenissima and its monuments have been fully reconstructed in volume. Billions and billions of points recreate the urban space and the architecture of the palaces with millimetre accuracy, as well as the details of some of the works they house, made by the greatest painters.

This digital material documents an exceptional UNESCO World Heritage Site. This makes it a precious tool for scientists in particular, defenders

of the city who work tirelessly to find innovative solutions to help preserve it and rise to the challenges of climate change. It offers a new perspective on the city, its architecture, its history and its emblematic sites, such as the Grand Canal and its palaces, St. Mark's Square and its Basilica, the Doge's Palace and its masterpieces. Finally, it makes for a unique behind-the-scenes tour of Venice, its foundations, the resilience of a Republic that has withstood a thousand years – all the secrets of a city like no other in the world and which continues to reinvent itself in the 21st century.

1. THE LAGOON: A PLACE OF MEANDERS

The history of Venice begins with that of its lagoon, a unique topography formed at the point where Venice's rivers and the waters of the Adriatic converge. Over the millennia, the accumulation of alluvial deposits has created a natural barrier, consisting of narrow strips of land that separate the lagoon area from the sea. Sheltered by this barrier breach, a 550-km² marshy ecosystem with brackish, shallow water and muddy islands has developed. Tidal peaks, sometimes exacerbated by the force of the sirocco, can cause the low-lying islands to become submerged. This phenomenon is known as *acqua alta*, the "high water" that has been a mortal threat to Venice since the beginning.

A city built on water

It was necessity that drove a community to settle in such a hostile environment. In the 5th century, to escape barbarian invasions, Venetian peasants sought refuge in the lagoon, on land that was inaccessible on foot and invisible from the mainland. Their primitive huts became permanent and they learned to stabilise the soil by driving wooden stakes into the mud. Soon, this method allowed them to build heavier structures. Thanks to the salt trade, medieval Venice began to grow rich. The city expanded, appearing to float on the water.

2. THE GRAND CANAL: THE SCENE OF COMMERCIAL POWER

After salt from the Adriatic came spices, silk, glass, precious stones and more, with Venice trading both in its own crafts and in goods from the other side of the world. The queen of commerce with the East due to its network of trading posts, it was the point through which all that was rare and expensive passed on its way to continental Europe. Its diplomacy as a merchant, and above all its fleet, maintained its strength against its major rivals, Genoa and Constantinople. The ships produced

at the Arsenal at an unprecedented rate ruled Mediterranean sea routes. Venice was powerful both in times of peace and war.

The Grand Canal, a central artery running through the city, served as a commercial port. Ships waited in double or triple lines to unload their holds before setting off again with new goods. On the jetties, officials inventoried the goods that the dockers transferred to the warehouses. The Rialto district, which gave its name to the oldest bridge over the Grand Canal, was the commercial heart of the city. Here, traders would exchange shares in merchant ships. To finance their business, banks proliferated. This financial power was based on the official currency of the Republic, the gold ducat, which was traded all over the world.

3. VENICE, 1481: THE ASSASSIN'S CREED EXPERIENCE

Welcome to Venice in 1481! Grand Palais Immersif and Ubisoft are taking you on a unique journey through Venice in the late 15th century (1481), from the world of the video game Assassin's Creed II.

The success of the Assassin's Creed series lies in the detailed and lifelike reconstruction of towns, monuments and forgotten civilisations. It is a portal

into history for millions of players around the world. Enter this room and follow Ezio, the video game's cult hero, through four emblematic districts of Venice: Castello, Dorsoduro, San Marco and San Polo. Through four interactive videos displayed alongside never-before-seen engineering drawings, Ubisoft and Grand Palais Immersif have joined forces to offer you an immersion in the glorious past of Renaissance Venice.

Climb to the very top of the city's towers, explore the lagoon, discover the wooden Rialto bridge and sneak into a colourful masked ball!

4. THE GRAND CANAL: PALACES AND SCENERY

The *fondachi*, the warehouse-palaces of the Venetian merchant aristocracy, were designed according to a typical model. The ground-floor *portego*, often open and spanning the entire floor, was used to store goods. Lateral staircases led to the upper levels where the living quarters were located. In some cases, a mezzanine with bedrooms and offices was added. The “noble” first floor or *piano nobile*, was occupied by a large and sumptuous reception room. Powerful families such as the Rezzonicos would call on the greatest masters to decorate these formal rooms with paintings and frescoes.

The Venetian art of the façade

Arriving in Venice, travellers and merchants could not fail to be amazed by the beauty of the buildings lining the Grand Canal, the city's central maritime artery. Water doors enabled palaces to be accessed by boat, but they also had a street or courtyard entrance. A blend of Gothic, Byzantine, Renaissance and Baroque styles, the architecture is in constant dialogue with the water and its reflections. The façades, which are not load-bearing, are punctuated with numerous windows, some of them very ornate, giving an impression of lightness.

The recycling of materials, bricks, sculpted stones and even wooden pieces, contributes to the timelessness and infinite visual wealth of the banks of the canal.

5. LIFE AS A VENETIAN

From 1297, the names of noble families, the men of which sat on the Grand Council, were recorded in the Libro d'Oro, or Golden Book, of Venice. This aristocracy included the merchant class, which took part in government through magistratures and various positions of public office. Being in the service of the state was a costly but coveted privilege. The inherent expertise of the arts and craft trades were protected by guilds, which were responsible for passing on this knowledge and for guaranteeing the rights of workers. There were other societies, the *scuole*, which for example brought different foreigners together by origin (such as Genoese, Albanian

or Greek). Venetian society was a melting pot in which nationalities and religions (Jewish, Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic and Protestant) coexisted according to strict rules but without any major tension, occupying the city's different *sestieri* (districts).

6. ST. MARK'S SQUARE: SEATS OF POWER

Venice had neither a prince nor a king. Governed from 697 by an elected doge, its republican system ensured a thousand years of political stability and therefore prosperity. Eager to rival Rome, the city of the Doges chose Saint Mark as its patron saint and in 828 built a basilica dedicated to him, to house the relics of the evangelist looted in Egypt. In St Mark's Square, facing the sea, La Serenissima showcased its prestige and assembled its powers. Opposite the basilica, the *Procuratie*, immense administrative buildings whose arcades structure the square, demonstrated the hold of bureaucratic governance.

The Doge's Palace: the seat of all power

Nevertheless, it was the Doge's Palace, the seat of government since 810, that represented the political heart of the city-state. The ducal residence housed the legislative and executive assemblies as well as the courthouse and prisons, and a host of officials.

The legend of Venice and the keys to its power are showcased here in a unique way, through its spectacular architecture teeming with mythological symbols and its rooms decorated with frescoes by the greatest masters.

7. VENICE TODAY AND TOMORROW

Despite the upheavals of history and the end of the Republic, La Serenissima has never yielded to decline. By replacing naval and commercial hegemony with the economy of art and prestige, it has been able to develop and maintain a thriving cultural life. For more than a century, it has hosted events such as the Mostra for film and the Biennale for contemporary art. The greatest architects, particularly Carlo Scarpa, Renzo Piano, Tadao Ando and David Chipperfield, have given palaces and other historic buildings a new lease of life in order to host major cultural institutions such as the Pinault collection, which is on display at Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana, and the Vedova Foundation, which is housed in former salt warehouses.

Avoiding submersion, inventing the future

Such beauty poses constant challenges to the future. Admired by 30 million visitors every year, Venice is becoming depopulated and now has only 50,000

inhabitants. The soil and foundations have been weakened by the pumping of groundwater and visits from giant cruise ships (now banned from St Mark's basin and the Giudecca canal). Venice and its lagoon are suffering the full force of our modern problems, namely an increase in severe flooding and ecosystem degradation. To ensure it remains sustainable in the 21st century, the city is counting on technological solutions. For the first time, in 2020, it activated the MOSE system, a set of retractable barriers that block high water at the entrance to the lagoon. Beyond this initial and resolute success, engineers continue to compete with excessive tourism, and many projects are still being studied. Venetians, the city's defenders and the municipality are developing projects on a daily basis to ensure that the city maintains its global reputation. As such, Venice continues to reinvent itself.

WHERE DO THE IMAGES THAT YOU ARE SEEING COME FROM?

The images in the exhibition are not “shots” in the cinematographic sense of the term.

They are extracts of 3D reconstructions of Venice, using a series of digital images. Each pixel in each photograph is triangulated in space to recreate what is known as a “point cloud”: billions of dots in space that reproduce the form and colour of what is visible.

These models, created using a vast number of photographs, cannot reproduce movement, monochrome materials or glazed elements such as windows. This is why there is no “living” element in these landscapes and why certain surfaces become transparent if shiny or plain-coloured, or conversely if they are highly detailed, such as artworks or façades.

We have chosen to present these models in their raw state, with the digital material at times featuring holes, transparent or even incomplete, in cases where reality cannot be reconstructed by machine. Dust points can be seen at times; these are the traces of partially shiny structures or ones that had some form of movement when the image was taken.

These renderings give the scenes a timeless feel, reminiscent of early photos, when the very long exposure time would make people disappear, or make their silhouettes appear ghostlike. The exploration of digital materiality is a resolutely contemporary process and, as such, evokes the dawn of photography, perhaps heralding the start of an equally wonderful adventure in the new territories we are looking to today, in the absence of anything better in the metaverse and the Web3.

This exhibition is co-produced by Grand Palais Immersif and Iconem, in collaboration with the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.

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Chief curator

Gabriella Belli, Director of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, with the collaboration of Elena Marchetti, Curator of the Doge's Palace

Associate curator

Yves Ubelmann, President of Iconem

Exhibition design

Agence Clémence Farrell

Graphic design for the exhibition

Bénédicte Rolland

Lighting design

Aura Studio

Audiovisual engineering

Museomaniac

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

ENCOUNTERS

Studio Bastille (Opéra Bastille), 18h30

Free upon reservation: grandpalais-immersif.fr

Thursday 22 September

Venice Revealed: inaugural lecture

Presentation of the exhibition by its French and Italian designers: Gabriella Belli, Director of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, chief curator of the exhibition, Yves Ubelmann, President of Iconem, associate curator, and Roei Amit, Managing Director of Grand Palais Immersif.

Thursday 20 October

Venice and the opera: a long musical history

From Baroque to romanticism, a lecture on Venice and the opera through the centuries. By Patrick Barbier, music historian.

Wednesday 23 November

Venice: music, space and sound

Revived by new technologies, the subject of sound spatialisation was skilfully studied as far back as the 16th century in St Mark's Basilica.

With David Chalmin, composer, musical designer for the exhibition, Franck Madlener, Director of Ircam, and Zad Moultaqa, composer and visual artist. Chair: Marion Mirande, playwright, Editorial Manager at the Opéra de Paris

Wednesday 25 January

What does the future hold for Venice?

A discussion on the future of Venice, its history, its situation and the actions implemented to preserve it. With Isabelle Autissier, President of WWF France, author of *Le Naufrage de Venise* (“The Sinking of Venice”) published by Stock, Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, historian, professor at Sorbonne Université, Philippe Rahm, architect, and Ernesto Ottone Ramirez, Assistant Director-General for Culture at Unesco

EVENT

Saturday 1 October

Nuit Blanche 2022

Free admission to the exhibition from 8pm to midnight
(Subject to availability)

DIGITAL

THE MOBILE APPLICATION

Find all the content and information on the exhibition on the Grand Palais mobile app!

Available on the AppStore and on Google Play:
tinyurl.com/appligrandpalais

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Plan or prolong your visit and read the latest news about *Venice Revealed*, as well as all the information on the travelling exhibitions by Grand Palais Immersif.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Behind the scenes at the exhibition, videos, key dates, interviews, quizzes, live events, TikTok filters in augmented reality and more... Follow us on social media and share your visit **#VeniseRevelee**
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PUBLICATIONS

Exhibition catalogue

24 x 17 cm, 160 pages, 175 illustrations,
Rmn - Grand Palais publishing house, € 30

Following the progression of the exhibition, the catalogue combines a historical chronology with an exploration of the city's key sites. Each part of the book is based on an interpretation of an emblematic site, an essay by a specialist and a focus on a symbolic work of art. Scientific insight from the curators of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia and other leading contributors help unlock the mysteries of Venice.