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# ADVANCING THE MIDDLE EAST

BRITISH COUNCIL  
VENICE FELLOWSHIP  
PROGRAMME 2023

# 2023 Fellows Showcase

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# Introduction

Text by Grace Higgins Brown

This whole experience has felt incredibly fast and incredibly slow. Fast in the sheer adrenaline of our physical time in Venice, slow in the chance for pause it provided. For months we've gathered physically and virtually, a series of exercises in both preparation and reflection that has extended far beyond our physical journeys to Venice. Four cohorts of us successively traveled to the city over a period of four months to undertake our own research and work as exhibition ambassadors for *Dancing Before the Moon* at the British Pavilion of the Biennale Architettura 2023. We lived and worked together, drank spritz, ate cicheti, rode around on boats together, sweated, scratched our mosquito bites, swam in the lagoon, and explored together. This publication is a reflection not only of our experience living and working in Venice as part of the 2023 British Council Fellowship programme, but of a continued sense of collectivity and a desire to maintain connection to the people, work, ideas, and memories involved.

This experience was a collective one on many levels; directly, in how we gathered in Venice and have continued to work together virtually since, but also in our wider participation with the *Dancing Before the Moon* as an exhibition itself. We shared space with the artists, curators, artworks, and visitors, but also in what the show holds and reflects; it feels as though to participate in *Dancing Before the Moon* was to participate in the idea of collectivity itself, in how we share and define space, spatial histories and rituals. Part of our work entailed collecting feedback from visitors, which resulted in some interesting and valuable (and funny and strange and disconcerting) conversations. One recurring comment we fielded was that this was “more of an art than architecture exhibition”; some people welcomed this as an expanded exploration of architecture and space, and others were disappointed or even angered. As not all fellows are working within an architectural practice or education, this felt a brilliant crux from which we were given pause to question architecture as an expanded field. From this, we have discussed space as something shared; with each other, artworks, artists, visitors, water, plants, animals, sensations, buildings, and histories. Architectural thinking thus became an expansive idea that encompassed the rituals of our everyday traversing a new city and the new opportunities this presented.

The following pages provide not only a chance to showcase the work and research that has resulted from the fellowship so far, but as a moment for us to pause once again, and reflect upon our new sense of collectivity. We are joined in a collective commitment to our experience encapsulated by this time in all its various speeds; we hold on to the rituals discovered, building upon these in an embodied way, thinking through various and alternate knowledge bases, collectively expressing care for our shared histories and how we navigate our environments with all of this in our pockets.

Under the heading of the Biennale Architettura, architectural thinking became a catalyst to expand the field of our usual rituals, stimulating a collective dialogue around space in all its various forms.

Word cloud of 2023 Fellows ideas, observations and reflections:

Architecture

Space

Labyrinth

Rituals

Memory

Seafaring

Journey

Place

Networks

Meditation

Environment

Land

Hand

Walking

Charm

Witchcraft

Literary

Belonging

Making

Timeless

Gaze

Reclamation

Housing

Sound

Male

Dialogue

Drift

Navigating

Waterways

Coastal

History

Dreamlike

Diaspora



# The Biennale

The British Council was delighted to present *Dancing Before the Moon* at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2023 from 20 May to 26 November 2023. *Dancing Before the Moon* aimed to inspire debate that will challenge and influence the future of British architecture. Through its installations of new work, a film and soundscape, the celebratory exhibition promoted the idea that everyday rituals (from growing food and cooking to playing games and dancing) are forms of spatial practice for diasporic communities and present new ways of thinking about architecture and the built environment.

The British Pavilion was curated by Jayden Ali, Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay and Sumitra Upham in collaboration with Sevrá Davis,

Director of Architecture Design Fashion at the British Council and Commissioner of the British Pavilion. *Dancing Before the Moon* shared new pieces by six UK-based artists and architects, Yussef Agbo-Ola, Madhav Kidao, Sandra Poulson, Mac Collins, Shawanda Corbett, and Jayden Ali. Collectively they highlighted the central role that rituals play in reflecting the traditions and community values of people living in the UK.

The British Pavilion was awarded a Special Mention for National Participation at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia ‘for the curatorial strategy and design propositions celebrating the potency of everyday rituals as forms of resistance and spatial practices in diasporic communities’.



Materials and prototypes for Mac Collins' work: 'Runout'.



Yussef Agbo-Ola in the creative process of his artwork.



Cyril Khamai (91yr old, Veteran pannist) and Haroun Shah, conducting the first performance on Thunder and Simsek by Jayden Ali



Madhav Kidao building 'Bardo'.



# The Venice Fellowships Programme

British Council is proud to introduce our Fellowships Programme, a scheme which activates and enriches our world renowned exhibitions at the Venice Biennale. The Biennale itself has long-standing international cultural significance. Alternating each year between a focus on art and architecture, our national presentations influence the future of contemporary culture at a global level.

Initiated in 2014, the aim of the Fellowships Programme is to strengthen the British Pavilion as a space for ideas, innovation and research. In 2023 31 emerging UK creatives were given the opportunity to contribute to and support the Pavilion in Venice. As exhibition ambassadors for *Dancing Before the Moon*, they listened and learned with

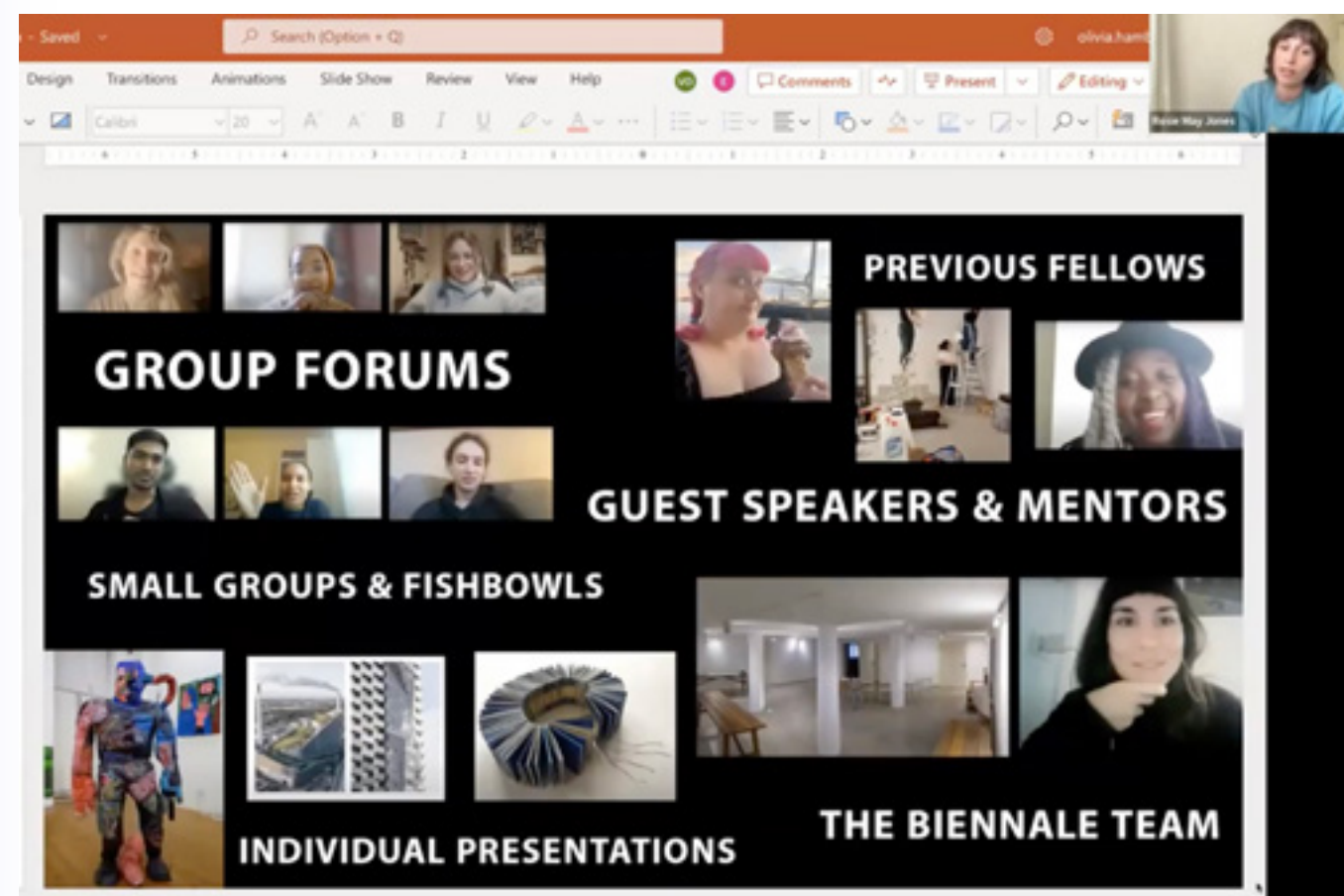
our international visitors, discussing the work and underlying ideas on display. Alongside this practical role, they were given precious time and space to develop their own research and creative projects, drawing on the Biennale's unique energy as a platform for creative, scholarly and international development. Through these contributions, Fellows elevate the Pavilion to an important reference point for universities, artists, architects and creative organisations around the world. Their presence underscores wider efforts to build a much more representative, inclusive international art sector in the years to come.

Fellows include some of the most exciting emerging creative minds in the UK today. In collaboration with our exceptional Partners

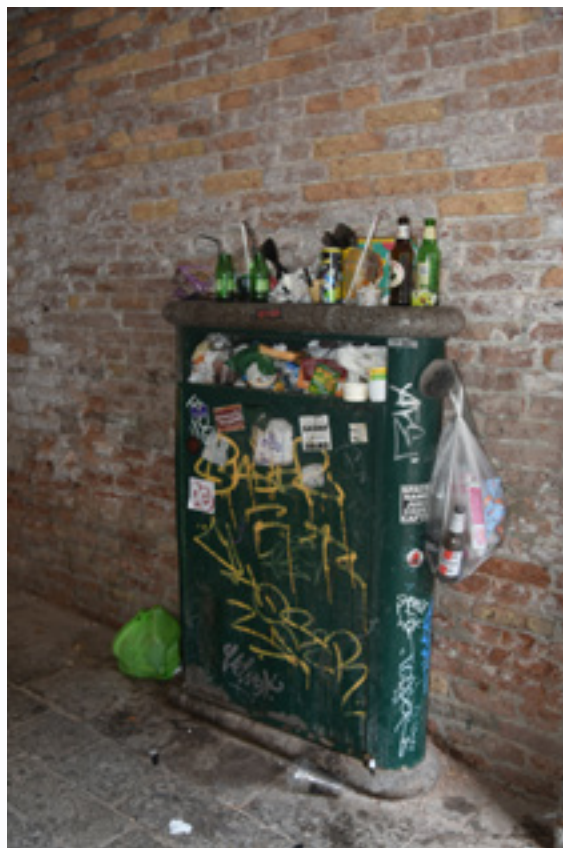
(Higher Education Institutions and creative enterprises), the Fellows are selected from a diverse range of backgrounds and areas of interest. The British Council works closely with them as individuals and as a group to build their careers, confidence and connections, and to encourage them to consider how to foster a welcoming environment and important dialogue with our international visitors at the British Pavilion. Before they arrive in Venice, Fellows attend induction training and talks online in order to build group culture, intercultural fluency, and a foundation for their own creative research projects. In total, they participate in over eighteen hours of dialogues, peer-led and collaborative workshops over an eight-week period. They enjoy first-hand interactions with the curators, mentors, industry professionals, their peers and alumni, and have time to delve into the intentions and practical concerns of the exhibition, and their own individual projects. Their final sessions assist them in navigating the city and the Italian cultural scene. Fellows are supported on a practical level with a grant, funded by participating institutions and sponsors, to help support the cost of their travel as well as their accommodation and living costs for their month in Venice.

Alongside the crucial support Fellows offer *Dancing Before the Moon* itself, they also develop a personal research or artistic project whilst in Venice. Their projects respond to the Biennale and British Pavilion themes, the city itself, its population and the practices of the other artists, architects and visitors they meet. As seen in this publication, the creative

projects demonstrate the strength and significance of the Fellows' practices, the powerful roles they played as the welcoming faces of the British Pavilion, and the extent to which their stay in Venice has inspired them. In turn, we hope they inspire you.







“It’s been a personal joy to work with outstanding partners in both the UK and Venice, and most of all, engaging with and observing the inspiring journeys that our Fellows each went through.

Throughout our year-long engagement, Fellows have not only built their own networks but also shared and piloted ideas, fostering remarkable creative collaboration. Being able to witness the profound personal and professional growth of these creatives has been both an inspiring and humbling reminder of the need for more opportunities like these in the creative sector. I eagerly look forward to following the upcoming works of all Fellows and strongly believe we have powerful careers in-the-making between this amazing group.”

Juliana Peppi  
Venice Fellowships Programme Manager  
British Council





# EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

## EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

Text by Joshua Smith

A true analysis of the body does not merely see it as an object amongst others, it is to see the body as a constitutive or transcendental principle precisely because it is involved in the very possibility of experience. It is deeply implicated in our relations to the world, our relations to others, and in our self-reflection. Thus, to be born is to be situated in both nature and culture, to find oneself in a sociological context one did not establish, and in a body one did not choose; our existence, in other words, is from the very beginning an intersubjective phenomenon, defined by and navigated around the inherent interrelation of people, culture, and emotions.

The projects that follow all take the body, and embodied experience, as a main theme. Whether this be through our senses, our ideas of belonging, or how different environments shape the way we navigate the world, there is a deep seated investigation not only into our ontic, but a deep ontological, relationship with the embodied self and intersubjective experience in all the work.

We are taken on a journey of the mind, senses, and soul as we traverse the paths set out by the projects, with Matteo Spiga and Grace Higgins Brown guiding us through the complex world of scent; Matteo's work imagining the scent of emotions and the future, Grace recording her subjective experience of place through its

smell; Joshua Smith exploring what the concept of 'belonging' means to people, Laura Green challenging architectural narratives on accessible spaces for disabled and neurodivergent individuals, Jo Holt translating audience interactions with art and the built environment into artistic studies; and Flo Rowsell and Olivia Hamblett respectively guiding us through the poetic, and emotional, dimensions of life in Venice. All the projects seek to reshape narratives, and put the embodied individual at the centre of its enquiries in spiritual, affective, and sentimental ways.









22/07/23  
Just past Calle Dolfìn, Cannareggio  
- towards Rialto  
10am-ish

Truffle

I walk past the truffle shop almost every day + ever since it was mingled with the smell of hot bins (see prev. Pages), it makes me gag.

A smell I used to enjoy has been “polluted” by association (like when you’re sick after eating a certain food you like + can’t eat it again without boking).

There’s some truffle oil in my flat here + smelling that made me gag too.

27/07/23  
Fondamenta San Felice, outside my house  
11:55am

Fishy smell  
General canal  
Wet stone

Occasionally a really pungent “gross” smell becomes apparent but is often fleeting. Fishiness peered out from the general smells of the canal and wet stone - tried to smell it really hard but it ran away from me - doesn’t really seem to work like that.

29/07/23  
Giardini Main Pavilion exhib.  
3.30pm  
Familiar smell of a cold sound-proofed room

I’ve yet to test it). But the heat and particular swamp-like climate feels particular here.

I was told that the canal smells different at different tides.  
I wonder if the smell of the city will be radically altered by the rising and warming of its waters.

We can talk around buildings, or cities in general, as containers of an abundance of sensory information.

Do we have the language to contain this?

So much of what I noticed was how deeply textural and temperature-sensitive all these smells were, but I don’t know how we smell temperature. Is it because we associate certain smells with certain temperatures? So, to mimic the smell of a hot day I’d give you: suncream, tar, warm bins

Or is there an actual scent in the warmth itself?

There is also such differing density, viscosity even, to smell: do scents have texture?  
Its thickness is definitely one way in which I’d describe the experience of smelling certain things.  
The feeling of the scent entering your body akin to the experience of that thing running over your skin.  
Is the language of describing scent only available to us via comparison?

I know exactly what water smells of, but I couldn’t tell you what.

The city smells of wet stone the way wind chimes sound like the wind.

Carpet  
Recent paint  
Air conditioning  
Plastic-y

29/07/23  
Fondamenta Nove x Calle Longa S. Caterina - petrol stop  
19:55

Petrol  
And marine smell

Liquid petrol (not fumes)

30/07/23  
On the Vaporetto 4.2 to work  
10:29am

Sat on the right-hand side of the back of the boat (outdoors) today - pretty constant reek of petrol (fumes)

didn’t notice this when sat on the left-side on prev. days

Marine smell peeking through  
Then occasional, but persistent smell of eggs

(Persistently occasional smell?)

01.08/23  
Rialto Mercato  
1.34pm

Overripe peaches  
Hot fruit  
Tomatoes  
Vegetables  
Basil

Fish market packed up, fish, debris

We bought a bunch of basil and

kept getting whiffs of it when walking around - confused at origin of smell at first (but it was stuck out the top of the plastic bag hung over our shoulders)

09/08/23  
Outside Chiesa della Madonna dell’Orto (Cannareggio)  
11:47am

Proper seaside-salty-marine smell  
Seaside vegetation  
green - marine  
Humid





# Laura Green

Ulster University

1 in 5 people in the UK are disabled and around 80% of these disabilities are hidden disabilities. That's over 10 Million People in the UK. A hidden disability is a disability or health condition that is not immediately obvious. It can defy stereotypes of what people might think disabled people look like. These include but are not limited to ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), dementia, anxiety, depression, learning difficulties, and some forms of autism.



People with hidden disabilities have difficulty using everyday buildings that neurotypical people may find simple or natural. This research looks into how space can be non-threatening and supportive for people that have hidden disabilities that can often be disturbed by stimuli that a neurotypical person wouldn't recognise.

Building regulations in Britain prevent people with physical disabilities from being discriminated against, although people with hidden disabilities are discriminated against every day.

Designing for people with hidden disabilities is a crucial aspect of creating inclusive and accessible environments, products, and services. Hidden disabilities, such as people with non-profound autism, anxiety disorders, or chronic pain may not be immediately apparent, making it essential to consider the diverse needs of this population. Designers should prioritise clear and intuitive communication, minimise sensory overload, and offer flexibility in their designs. This includes providing quiet spaces in public areas, using plain and concise language in signage and instructions, and ensuring digital interfaces are user-friendly and adaptable. By recognising and accommodating the needs of individuals with hidden disabilities, designers can help create a more inclusive and equitable world where everyone can participate fully and comfortably in society.

Updating the British Pavilion to adapt for hidden disabilities can be achieved through thoughtful and inclusive design strategies. First and foremost, it is important to prioritise clear signage and wayfinding within the Pavilion, using simple and universally understandable symbols and language. Providing noise cancelling headphones at the entrance to the Pavilion can be extremely helpful for users with sensory issues.

The addition of sensory-friendly spaces or quiet areas (wellbeing pods) can offer respite for individuals

who may be overwhelmed by sensory stimuli. Furthermore, incorporating adjustable lighting, temperature control, and sound-dampening elements can enhance the comfort of visitors with hidden disabilities. Interactive exhibits and displays should also be designed with sensory sensitivities in mind, offering options for reduced stimulation or alternative ways to engage. Overall, ensuring that the British Pavilion is welcoming and accommodating to individuals with hidden disabilities will promote a more inclusive and enriching experience for all visitors.





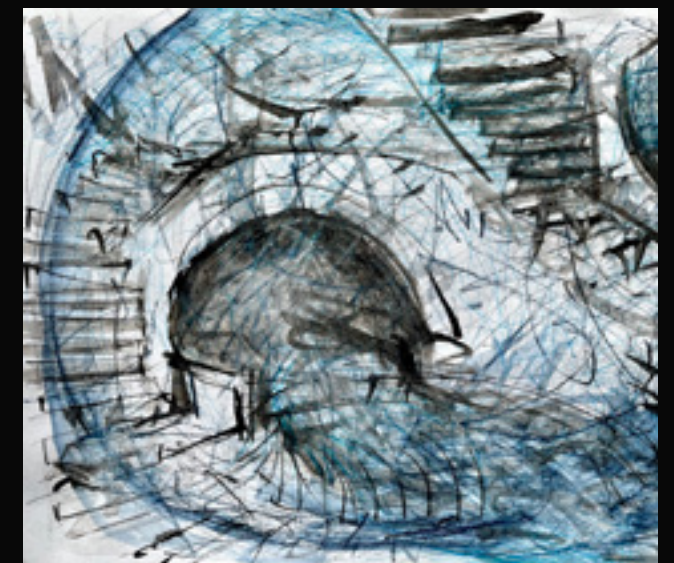
As an installation artist, I am interested in audience experience and engagement. I applied to take part in the Fellowship because for my masters research project I am questioning what is absorbing for an audience. Through this I have been considering audience interaction and participation, the body and the senses. I wished to observe and connect with audiences and study how they experience exhibitions. Working as an invigilator gave me the perfect opportunity to do this. I sat to draw, making a large number of observational notes and sketches in relation to the British Pavilion exhibition and the artworks on display. This enabled audiences to feel relaxed as they passed by, improved my drawing skills and gave me great insight into my own interests. Encouraging visitors to interact with Jayden Ali's artwork, assisting them to make sounds and seeing their responses was a real joy. Visiting the showcase, particularly viewing the varied architectural models exhibited at Arsenale has been instrumental in the development of my project and sparked inspiration for it. Whilst invigilating, I felt profoundly that my true passion lies in creating interactive and immersive artworks.

Navigating the city of Venice has been hugely inspirational, propelling the concept for my piece 'World between worlds' to deeper depths. I granted myself permission to venture on foot without following a map and feel present in the moment,

adrift in a sensory experience of exploration. There is a rhythm of movement of peoples and vessels on the streets and on the waterways of the city. I found myself lost, floating endlessly down the copious narrow passageways, bridges and waterways. In this city, I was able to transform the concept of my artwork from one of disorientation and confusion to puzzlement and adventure. I discovered that some of the juicy nuggets of information regarding my research came from the act of being lost. When lost and desiring to find oneself, there is a necessity to be alert, to have the eyes and ears wide open. There is an acute sense of presence in the moment. Being lost in this city is distinctly different from other experiences in that I never felt stuck or stagnant, I felt in fluid motion, in a playful dance of questioning the way forward. The city itself became my companion, travelling with me. I am very much inspired by and interested in themes of timelessness and weightlessness and with this I will be forever thankful as I can think of no better place on earth to feel the fluidity of this concept than in the city on water that has no roads and even though my time in the city has now past I have lasting memories of the charming dreamlike labyrinth in which I became engulfed.

My body of artwork began in the form of numerous pen and ink sketches which came out frantically during my last few days in the city

and have continued to flow out since my return to the UK. These are now forming a collection of works on paper that are strengthening my concept for the piece. I am collaborating with a spoken word artist to incorporate audio content with the piece and experimenting with making 3D Models. I plan to go on to experiment with various architectural forms in space that audiences can actively engage with to inform my installation design ideas.



I would like to express my gratitude to the British Council, Arts University Plymouth and the Venice Biennale for giving me this opportunity to be a fellow. It was priceless. It has helped to shape my sense of self as an artist and where I want to go with my arts practice and brought about an interest and desire to apply for Artists Residency in the future. I am excited to continue work on my project and I intend to culminate the work into an immersive interactive installation piece that is accessible to the public.



# Florence Rowsell

University of Exeter



Please click on the image to view the short film.

# Joshua Smith

University of Exeter



We are reborn in the sense that everything we do means we transform into something new, all the detours through the past, present, and future weave into a complex set of questions about our identity. While in Venice, I asked people throughout the month what the word “belonging” meant to them, and asked them to write it down on a piece of paper, so I could photograph them holding it up. A key part of the project was that people wrote their responses in their native language. The purpose of this was not to “find” words, but to express things absolutely, in the way which is most natural. The idea was inspired by a similar project undertaken by Gillian Wearing on the streets of London. For her project, entitled ‘Signs that say what you want them to say and not Signs that say what someone else wants you to say’, Wearing asked strangers on the street to write their innermost thoughts on a sheet of paper and hold them up to be photographed.

The answers range from ‘I’m desperate’ to ‘I signed on and they would not give me nothing’. The power of them encapsulates a time of economic recession, loneliness, and uncertainty.

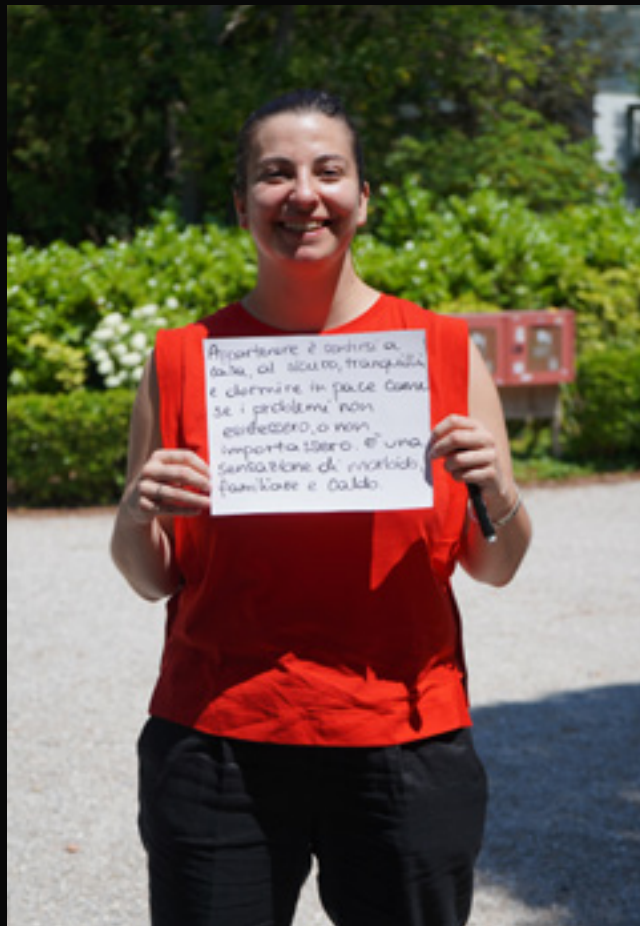
For my project I wanted a word which would encapsulate the importance the cross section between our inner and outer selves has to the ideas we formulate about our lives. Belonging is a concept which concerns not only our psyche’s as independent things belonging to just ourselves, but their socio-temporal positioning towards everything and everyone else, too. Our identity is constituted by what the Japanese philosopher Tetsuro Watsuji calls “betweenness”; the idea that we exist fundamentally in relation to others. His idea, however, isn’t just about mere ontic relationships





we have in everyday life, but has a deep ontological significance bound up with a rich network of interconnections that the subject (us) share with other embodied beings.

Human life is organised by spatiality, a “lived space” which is essential to our existence as embodied, subjective beings. I write this about Watsuji after having come back from Venice since it wasn’t until I landed back home that I realised how important his ideas could be for illuminating the project, and understanding the reason why I picked ‘belonging’ as the concept behind the whole project. The responses range from being able to “freely express + pursue your dreams + desires” and “language, food, and culture” to “at home with those I love”. They speak of the things which at their core, navigate our lives and guide how we live.



Reading them all again makes me reflect: what would I have answered if a stranger came up to me and asked what this ambiguous, shape-shifting concept, belonging, meant to me? I reckon it would have stopped me in my tracks and made me reflect on everything which has encompassed my life thus far, but I wouldn’t have an idea of what to write for that reason. There is nothing in any language I could have written which I thought did justice to what I really felt. This is why looking at this project, I decided to present all the responses as a poem, and not just through the photographs, since I personally, and I’m sure many people would, resonate with more than they would write down. I have presented them below in the order I gathered them, so as not to impose too much of myself on a collective creative consciousness.

## “Belonging”

The ability to freely express + pursue your dreams + desires,  
Place, memory, imagination, possibility, reflection, the place where we re-imagine ourselves in comfort, Feeling at home,  
I belong nowhere but with myself (I’m still learning this),  
At home with those I love,  
The communities that accept me wholeheartedly,  
the people I feel inspired by  
and the people who make me a better person.  
I am a mosaic of the people who have impacted me positively and negatively that make me belong confidently.  
Being permanently comfortable,  
Appartenza i riconosciorsi nell’alto- persone, euophi, fantasie  
Condivisione di desideri

To feel you can fully sink into yourself without fear of judgement from those around you,  
Appartenere è sentirsi a casa, al sicuro, tranquilli e dormire in pace come se i problemi non esistessero, o non importassero. È una sensazione di morbido, familiar e caldo.  
A feeling I can settle into like I would a big sofa at the end of a long day, it exists with those I love and in the places I know as well as I know myself.

Sentirsi parte di qualcosa o qualcuno

Un luogo ipotetico in cui vi è una porta sempre aperta, per entrare o eventualmente uscire A sense of community where there are mutual or respected beliefs and values. Having shared experiences with others.

Identity + community.

RECIPROCITY

Language, food, culture.





# Matteo Spiga

Middlesex University

What is the scent of the future? Today we live in a world dominated by pleasant fragrances, but the perception of good or bad smell is a social construct. This project replicates the smell of our emotions.

The end result was a personal fragrance, representing a smell that does not truly exist and with a story, likely associated with places or forgotten memories, or perhaps a dystopian future.

My initial idea was to create a machine through which the use of different parameters was going to create a different fragrance according to the materials used. Then, during my time in Venice, this changed. Inspired by the Japanese pavilion and the different people, this project turned into a workshop (with another fellow, Megan W. Hack) in which everybody created their own fragrance and actively collaborated. The final result was much more than the initial idea, because it brought together people from different backgrounds and the local Venetian community.



# Olivia Hamblett

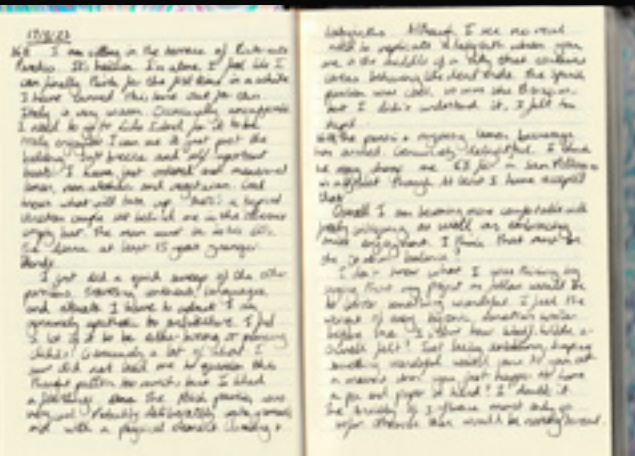
Birkbeck College, University of London — olivia.hamblett@gmail.com

Initially, my project was focused on paper marbling. A skill I had honed back at home and proceeded to take a class while in Venice. I even had beautiful images taken by my fellow fellows, the talented Charlie McGee and Meghan Willow Hack, of me in a class and some of the final pieces. However, my contribution does not show that side of my project. Instead, you have a few brief words that I stole time to scribble when I was in the sinking city. As an English Literature student, it felt disingenuous to pretend I was a fine artist. As you can see, there are many talented artists in this cohort!

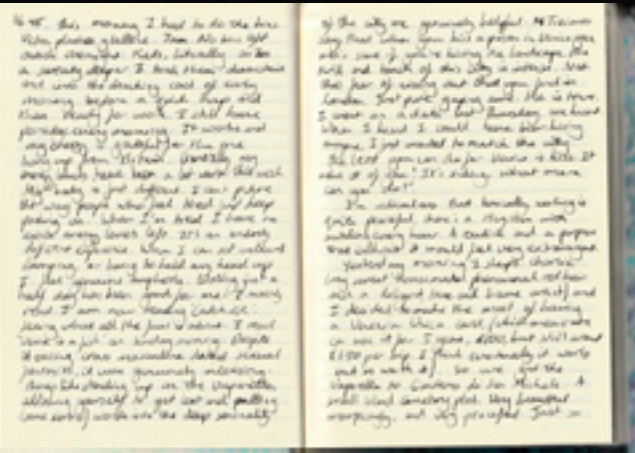


Credit: Megan Willow Hack

I had intentions to write a detailed recount of my time in a notebook that I had paper marbled in Florence, but I soaked the city up like a sponge, and writing seemed to be impractical. When I wrote, I wrote grumpily. I wrote about



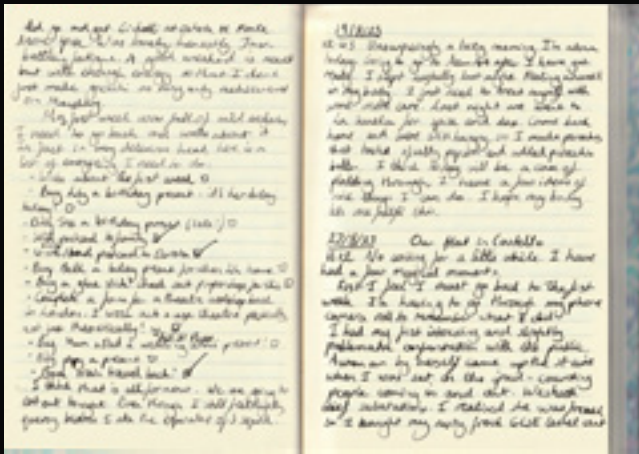
my body not meeting me where I wanted it to be (the constant moan of someone with a long-term illness), but how remarkable that there I was - utterly transported. I also wrote silly. Hysterically overwhelmed by the city, angry sun, and consistently having to open my heart up to meet new people. I allowed myself to write about silly dates, reminders to send postcards, and Lemonsoda in the same paragraph as the troubling encounter with a member of the public on the first day. I felt that was important to be included because my time in Venice often felt utopic, but occasionally, there were cracks, and you were reminded that we still live in a very divided world.







So, here are some of my memories. There are boundless aspects of my 6 weeks that I could focus on (I travelled there by train, I went to a seemingly infinite number of galleries, I ate my gosh, I ate, I felt more attuned to the climate crisis than ever before, I watched the full moon and films on a floating platform in the middle of the lagoon...) but this is the start of some recollecting.



I read that everything about Venice has already been written, and that has probably been written before, too. Thank you for allowing me to be candid; sorry to Alex (if they allowed those bits to be printed).

Beginnings, ruminations on Bardo  
8/8/23 12.40

I am sitting behind Bardo by Madhav Kidao. It looks like the craters of the moon to me. Made

from an old aluminium sculpture first displayed at the V&A, then melted down. I feel very comfortable at the V&A, with the familiar library and memories of being there as a child with my grandma, so I figured I would feel comfortable in this room as a starting place, with the traces of that historic building meeting the behemoth sculpture. I do. Bardo is aluminium. Square in shape. I want to guess 5m in width. It's thin, and the angle I am looking at it presents as circular nipples or burst bubbles, some huge, half a metre wide, and some smaller dots dancing around the piece. Welded pieces joined thick, and it's supported by two metal structures attached to the rafters. I like it. A Bell Hooks quote sits proudly above the entrance to the next room: 'Memories offer us a world where there is no death, where we are sustained by rituals of regard and recollection'. I hope I see my time here as exactly this. Regarding. Recollecting. Bringing it forward.



# WAYS OF KNOWING





# WAYS OF KNOWING

Text by Eberé Anosike

There isn't one form of knowledge. We can know through our bodies, our memory, through reason and logic, through cultural knowledge, life experience and education. The amalgamation of minds represented in the diversity of our Fellowship is a microcosm that reflects these different ways of knowing.

Our own experiences are always drawing from many dimensions of knowledge in our everyday lives. We know that how we perceive our ways of knowing and how we access knowledge itself can be challenged depending on where we are and what we are doing in the world (and indeed with whom we have by our sides).

And so in our change of location - from the United Kingdom to Venice and back again - our ways of knowing have changed. In Venice, our language was taken away from us, we were immersed in a different culture, a different space. Maybe we tapped into our bodies differently, into music, into our cerebral self.

Here we offer you a glimpse into our pluriverse. Eberé Anosike invites us to dance in the precarious space between seeing and knowing, while Megan Willow Hack's tests our 'official' knowledge about rising water levels and invites us to relish in wordless, sensory knowledge. Ammani Hassan Hollands weaves familial knowledge, offering stories that flow between us and

through time, and yet anchor us. Sahara Patel juxtaposes national histories with individual memories, complementing Omkar Salvi's piece about the historical truths we choose to put on a pedestal. Michael Thomas's history of masks urges us to unveil truths, and Eleanor Lionel takes us from Venice to Sharjah, questioning what we know about art's place within a wider economic ecosystem. We conclude this section with Amy Young demonstrating one truth - Venice can help us question everything we thought we knew.

“Knowledge rooted in experience shapes what we value and as a consequence how we know what we know as well as how we use what we know.”

BELL HOOKS



# Ebere Anosike

SOAS University of London, School of Arts

## Glass - Reflections, Perceptions & Connection: Finding Meaning Through The Senses

My project was born out of the concept of “decolonisation” and thinking about the different ways it could be considered in spatial dimension. I thought about the idea of public space and shared spaces in general as a site of multiple perspectives existing all at once but only not all perspectives get to be visible.

The concept of visibility and what it means to find meaning through vision is an area of interest and a topic that I have been exploring deeply and critically for the past year.

Sight and vision in Western cultures is typically deemed as the most important of the senses and therefore the interpretation of meaning/ ability to understand is usually determined by the degree one can “see”. But just how reliable and how far beyond materiality is sight? What are its limitation, dangers and blind spots? What are the positives? Opportunities to connect the dots or reimagine?

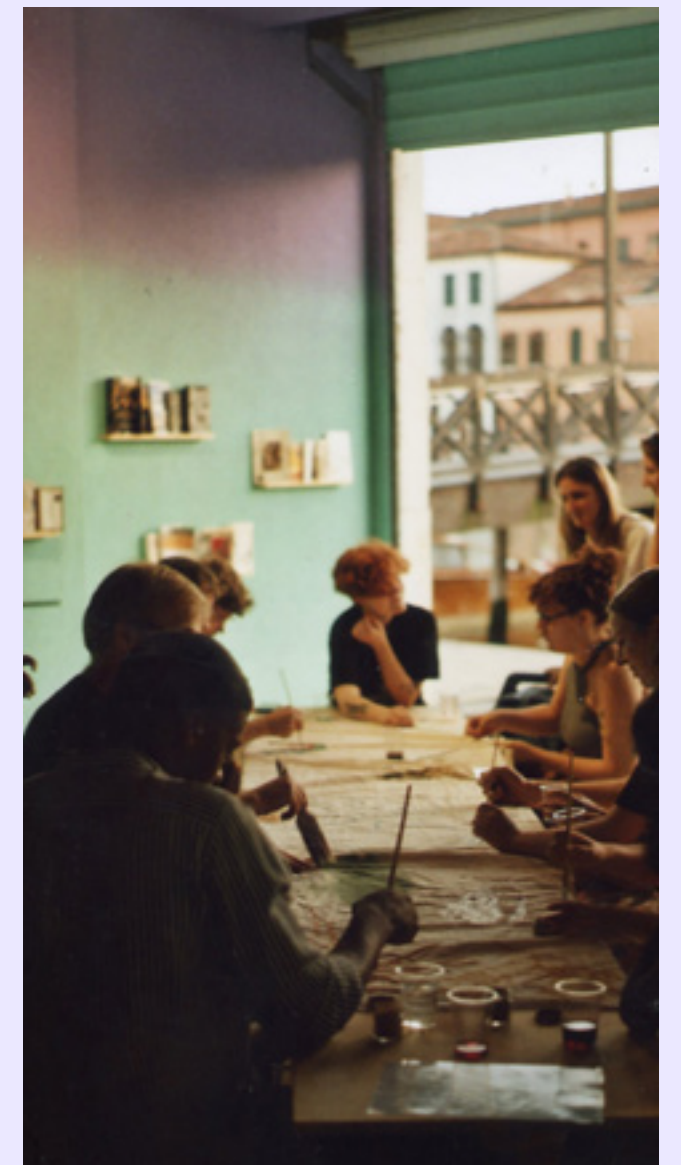
My time in Venice is characterised by a multisensory experience that transgressed space, time and identity.



# Megan Willow Hack

Crafts Council

The location of Venice itself was really significant to me, as my practice involves looking at the relationships between people and the land. The basis for my research proposal was the system MOSE. MOSE was put in place to prevent the rising waters (Acqua Alta) caused by global warming, which cuts off Venice’s lagoon from the sea. Predicted to be used 5 times a year, it has already been activated over 49 times, and raises interesting questions about how we navigate a changing world.



Having graduated from a painting degree, I am really interested in traditional methods of making paint and dyes from natural sources. Venetian red for example, is originally from a quarry in Veneto which produced this red earth pigment.

Throughout my time there I collected three types of my own versions of Venetian colour. The first was sourced directly from an artisan who used traditional methods to create ‘pigmenti’.



As Venice historically was a port which introduced material to the rest of Europe, colours and textiles came through its waters often. The second was from collecting the residue of pigment I found on my walks from walls crumbling with water damage. And the last was naturally sourced from the Giardini, in pine leaves and branches, where the Venice Biennale is situated. As there was such a heatwave I used my windowsill and solar dyed the wool with the plant material.

In the last week of my time in Venice, Matteo and I put on a sensory workshop to bring people

together at the Scottish Pavilion. We worked on a large piece of central canvas, playing with the physicality of the colours and threads to make a sensory map. Connecting, weaving, threading together people across the land both metaphorically and materially. Since returning to the UK I have exhibited one of my Venice drawings at Phoenix Art Space, Brighton, funded by the Cass Art Award; and have hosted a follow up workshop at the Crafts Council Gallery, sharing my Venetian experiences and demonstrating the natural dye processes you can use in the UK.



# Amanni Hassan Hollands

London Metropolitan University, School of Art, Architecture and Design

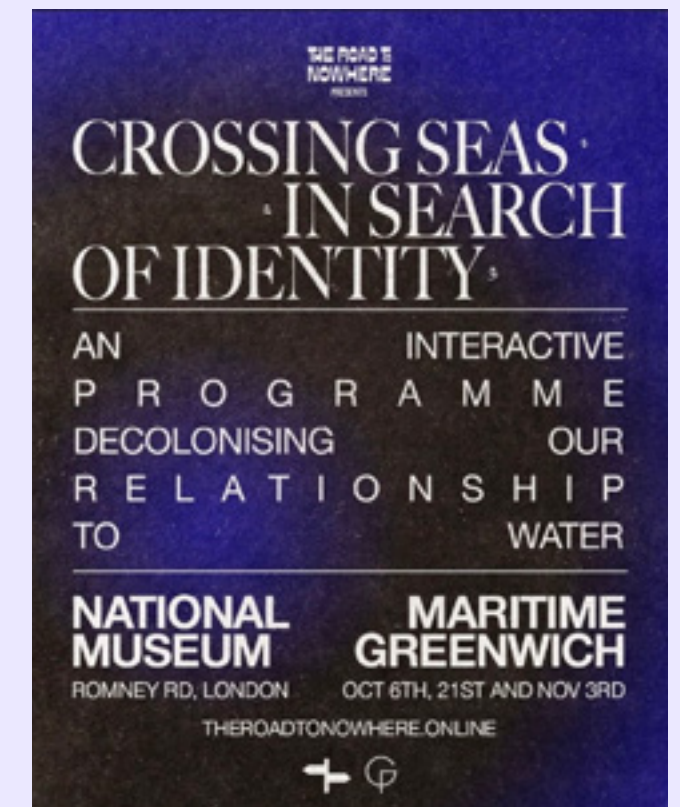
**‘Every Journey Leaves Traces’ Workshop. Part of the series ‘Crossing Seas In Search of Identity’ curated by The Road To Nowhere for The National Maritime Museum, London**

Artist Amanni Hassan Hollands leads a craft workshop exploring various prompts on land-dwelling and seafaring communities from the United Arab Emirates. Through the act of palm leaf weaving, participants will begin to uncover aspects of cultural exchange along the ancient sea-trading routes. From India to Venice, the journey involves silks, spices and pearls; songs, stories and poetry.

**21st October 2023**

“Today we are going to be weaving with palm leaves in a coil method, which is a really accessible way into weaving if you haven’t done any previously. Before we begin making, I want to offer up a few prompts that you might consider while we are weaving. I’m hoping these will situate our activity in ideas of cultural exchange. The action of weaving works particularly well in allowing us to bring seemingly disparate elements together to find connection.

“So, let’s think about the materials we are going to be using. Firstly we have the palm leaves (you may know these as raffia). I’m incorporating this in relation to the date palms significant to the United



Arab Emirates. My father is Emirati and the basis of so many of his oral histories revolve around this tree. As Iraqi-American artist, Michael Rakowitz says ‘...it is about all the elements of the palm: the dates, the shade the tree provides, the fallen leaves for woven furniture, and finally, the wood that can be used to expand the house as the family grows.’ Bedouin communities have long made functional items from the leaves that also offer aesthetic qualities to make the home or dwelling a welcoming space. Many of these traditional weaving techniques are now protected by Unesco, and are experiencing resurgence thanks to organisations such as The Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council in Sharjah, who provide economic support to craftspeople working across South



West Asia and North Africa, whilst helping connect makers of various communities and safeguarding traditional practices for the next generation.

“We’re starting to think about the land-based traditions of the Emirates, and now I want to bring in some seafaring traditions, so we are going to incorporate sari silks from India. This relates to a centuries old relationship between India and the region now named the UAE, both sharing in the trading of resources. Emirati merchant seaman, of which my paternal grandfather was one, made the treacherous journey to India by dhow boat to exchange dates and pearls for silks and spices. It wasn’t just fabrics and foodstuffs that were being traded, but stories too. Ports have often been places steeped in oral traditions, and since the original versions of some of the tales contained in the ‘Arabian

Nights’ or ‘One Thousand and One Nights’ have been traced back to India, we can start to appreciate the scope of this assimilation of stories from one culture to another.

“Returning to the pearls I mentioned. Long before the UAE discovered oil, pearl diving was an essential part of the Emirati economy, from the 19th century until the early to mid 20th, when Japan began its booming trade of cultured pearls. We can see from archival photography that palm leaf baskets were used on board to store oysters and keep the pearls safe once these had been shucked. Pearl diving was a dangerous undertaking, and we find expressions of the divers’ sadness and homesickness through poetry and music, some of which we will hear later.

“The United Arab Emirates weren’t just taking their pearls to India, they



were also travelling to Europe’s epicentre of international trade, Venice. This was another place for not just the exchange of goods, but the exchange of ideas. Merchants communicated via a version of lingua franca, or auxiliary language, which incorporated Italian, Arabic and Greek and was utilised across the spice or silk routes. Venice has been shaped quite literally by visual identities from Arab cultures, its architecture influenced by Islamic design and even its labyrinthine streets, reminiscent of the souks found in SWANA. It is quite possible those tales once uttered in India, which later formed early versions of the ‘One Thousand and One Nights’, made their way into the vernacular of Western Europe via ports such as Venice and eventually into the first full-scale translation designed for a European readership by French scholar, Antoine Galland in the 18th Century.

“So that’s a bit of a whistle-stop tour and probably a lot to take in, but what I really wanted to get across is just how far ideas can travel, and to emphasise the culmination of cultures we are bringing together as we weave today.

“Finally, I have prepared a playlist of both traditional and modern music from the UAE and wider Gulf region to accompany our weaving. The traditional songs are taken from Simon Jargy’s Anthology of ‘Music from the Arabian Peninsula’ which includes performances from men, women and children broken into four volumes: bedouin poetry set to music; music of the pearl divers; music of the city; music of women. You will hear the types of call and response signature to performance practices of the people of the Gulf, which exemplifies the close knit communities found there and the





common themes of expressing daily life through music.

“In both the modern and traditional songs you can pick up on the elements of cultural exchange. Whilst being a protected tradition of the Gulf, the pearl diving songs are undoubtedly an assimilation of those cultures present on the boats and along trade routes. Professor of Applied Ethnomusicology at NYU Abu Dhabi, Ghazi Al Mulaifi explains: ‘The music was born of trade...influences were picked up along the trade routes of the Indian Ocean. We have African imprints, Indian imprints and Iraqi as well.’ “In the modern songs, you can pick up on the types of syncopation found in reggae music, in fact this music from Jamaica became incredibly popular in countries from the SWANA region, particularly in Libya from the 1970s. For anyone interested, Berlin based label Habibi Funk reissued an album by Libyan artist Ahmed Bin Ali which is the perfect example of this wonderful exchange of musical ideas.

“Now let’s start weaving!”



**Credits:**  
Images: ‘Crossing Seas In Search Of Identity’ artwork, 2023, Daoud @da.o.ud. ‘Crew of Abu Dhabi pearling ship’, 1971, Alain Saint-Hilaire. ‘Pearls, Ports and Poetry: Mapping the Arab influence in Venice’, 2023, Amanni Hassan Hollands. ‘Every Journey Leaves Traces Workshop’, 2023, Tom Hollands.

All text by Amanni Hassan Hollands, except for the titles ‘Every Journey Leaves Traces’ and ‘Crossing Seas in Search of Identity’ by Dalia Al-Dujaili.

Playlist curated by Amanni Hassan Hollands (accessible via QR code)

Special thanks to Dalia Al-Dujaili, co-founder of The Road To Nowhere magazine and curator of ‘Crossing Seas In Search Of Identity’, and Elma Curran of The National Maritime Museum, London.



# Sahara Patel

Manchester Metropolitan University

While in Venice, I became invested in learning about the past and current social (in)justices within Italy from the first-hand perspectives of an Italian. Given both Italy’s and the UK’s involvement in imperialism, colonisation, and current right-wing political agendas, I was interested in drawing any similarities and differences between the Italian and British narratives. To gather this information, I put together a questionnaire (translated into Italian) to obtain honest responses

when asking individuals in public. Since returning home, and reflecting upon my time interacting with local Venetians, I began to recognise the distinction of our identities deriving from our accents and the languages we speak. Having done this questionnaire and being a visual artist, where experimenting is a vital process in my practice, I am keen to investigate creating immersive soundscapes and sculptural work in response to this experience.

What does social injustice mean to you?

What are the most relevant topics within social injustice to you? e.g. racism, sexism, immigration  
Could you explain why?

What topics in social injustice were most relevant in the past?

Do you believe there has been a positive change within social injustice?

If yes, what specific topics? And why do you think this?

If no, please state why you believe this?

Are there any organisations you know of who support forms of social (in)justice?  
If so, could you give an example?

What topics of social injustice are broadcasted on the news?

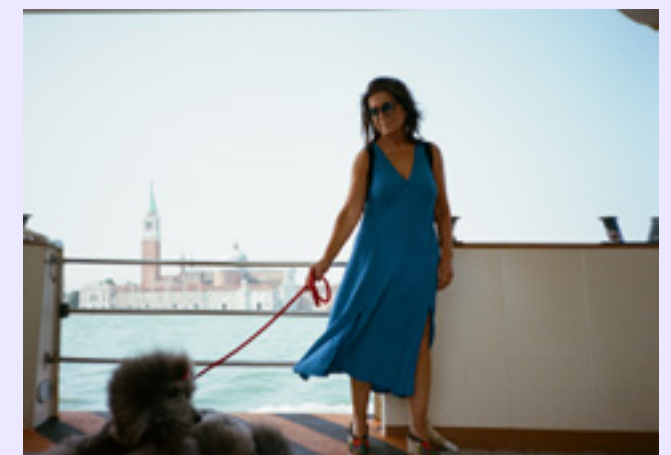
What are your views on the current government?



Boats are buses, buses are boats,  
DHL, Ambulance, Carabinieri.  
Islands Water, Pizza Pasta.  
Lit up Virgin Mary's,  
Spritzers with Olives, of course.  
The Sun, Air conditioning.  
Bridges,  
My morning walk along the lagoon  
to the Biennale.  
Loofers on metal poles.  
Blue Soap, Metal Steel Drums,  
Bulbous Glazed Ceramics,  
Symmetrical Cut-outs,  
Shadows,  
Aluminium,  
The Moon?  
Kids leaping into black sand, people  
popping their heads through holes.  
Is the domino an animated  
character?  
'No White God...',  
Rituals,  
James Baldwin,  
Orange Walls,  
Sagra's,  
Three Euro Bottles of Refillable  
Wine,  
Water Fountains dotted at every  
corner.  
Albino Michael.  
Flooding,  
Wellies, White Suits, String  
Instruments,  
Rylan Clark.  
(Lit up in) Green for Grenfell!  
Unica card,  
San Zaccaria to Lido,  
Communist Bar.  
Venezia Pride followed by Argo16,  
Glassblowing,  
Giardini, Arsenal,  
The most beautiful garden on Isola  
San Giorgio.  
Doggies and Kitty Cats,  
Masks,  
Morning and Midnight Swims,  
Scottish Pavilion,



Our neighbours, from the Canadian  
Pavilion, warming smiles.  
Italian Balamory,  
Gondolas, and very expensive ones  
to say the least,  
Seafood,  
Pistachio filled Croissants,  
Cicchetti,  
Cicada,  
Francesco, Marta, Benedetta and  
Anna  
Lake Garda, ducklings, makeshift  
crisp sandwiches  
Clothes Lines  
Passionfruit Flowers,  
The horrifyingly busy Rialto Bridge,  
Seagulls snatching scrum,  
People watching from my bedroom  
window,  
Santa Maria Formosa,  
The squiggly, giggly shapes  
reflected in the water,  
The sun shining through the linen  
curtain.  
Lighting glowing up the square,  
A sweet man playing 'What a  
Wonderful World' on the saxophone  
religiously,  
Constantly hearing 'this is where  
Spiderman was filmed',  
It's Spider-Man: Far from Home,  
don't worry I gotchu.  
And an undoubtedly overwhelming  
amount of amazing art and  
architecture.  
A place I will most definitely be  
returning to.

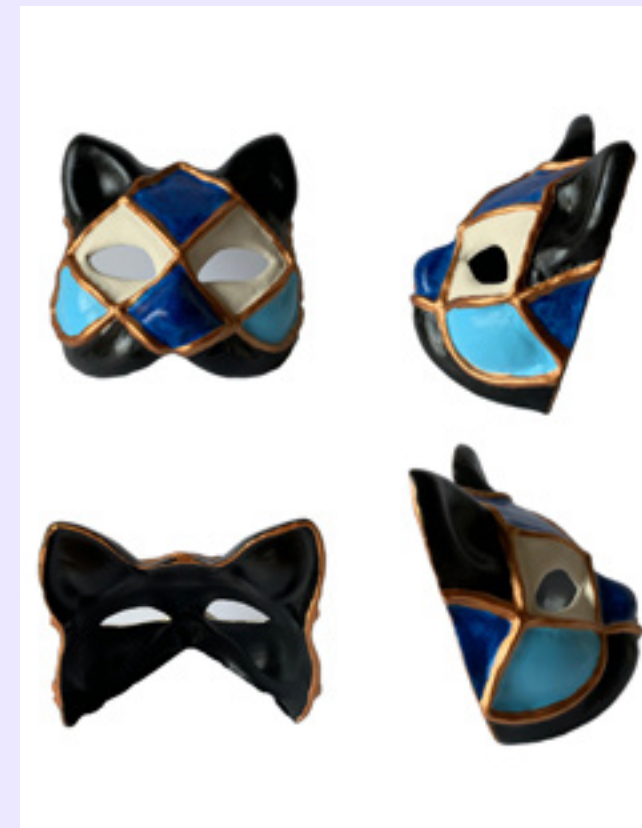




# Michael Thomas

Manchester School of Architecture

Interested in the themes proposed by both Lesley Lokko and the British pavilion curatorial team, I began to research the political climate of Italy and its impact on marginalised groups. The 'Zan' bill was proposed to protect LGBTQ+ groups and people with disabilities by allowing the prosecution of an individual for the persecution of said groups. However, on the 27th October 2021, the Italian Senate rejected the bill and proceeded to cheer at its blocking. This was a huge loss for the community and highlights the disparity between the ruling party and younger generations..Having the opportunity to witness the first Venice Pride this year, I was exposed to how much of a presence the queer community has within parts of Italy.



After delving into the political climate nationally, I began to research the history of queer culture specifically in Venice. Venetian masks are a feature that attracts many tourists to Venice but their history is far wider than just their use in Stanley Kubrick's 1999 movie 'Eyes Wide Shut'. As same sex intercourse was illegal in the past, men avoided prosecution by wearing the 'gnaga' or 'cat' masks along with makeup and wigs by posing as the opposite gender. Historically, it was illegal to be prosecuted for a crime while wearing a mask in Venice so it provided a loophole for homosexual activity. 'Ponte delle tette' or the 'prostitute bridge' was a historic location where men wearing the gnaga masks would hang about

for someone to approach them, resulting in the potential for unsafe sex or violent situations due to their anonymity.

## Concept:

'Hidden Profiles' is a series of 'gnaga' masks showing the progressive degradation of a decorative front façade while increasing the number and size of spikes protruding from the interior. The intention is to produce artefacts that display how each time the 'mask' is used or rather, each time someone 'masc's' themselves, the façade breaks down from the personal effect of posing as something you are not, while causing an increasing amount of pain to the user. The intended audience is the Italian Senate to help them understand the

damage they're causing to queer communities by forcing people to remain in the 'closet' for fear of persecution, while also highlighting the frequently traumatic experience of hiding yourself/ coming out for many queer people.

Materiality was important for me as the Venetian masks are traditionally made from a technique involving papier mâché and the application of it to a pre cast mould. Using a similar idea, I cast slabs of clay onto a plain 'gnaga' mask to replicate the process and followed by adding details. However, I wanted to use clay as the material in its modelling, because it is fluid in nature - resembling the community- while after firing in a kiln, it becomes hard and strong, like the community has been in response to various negative views.





## Towards a new architecture

Flying in over the lagoon, Venice revealed itself slowly. The boat weaved through the islands, the articulation of towers, roofs and grand facades emerged on the horizon. Stepping onto the cobbled canal-side streets, there was an immediate closeness and intimacy as I wandered the back-streets, meandering through clusters and blockages of tourists. The city fell into a rhythm of expansion and contraction; narrow streets opening into generous squares, then closing in again to smaller courtyards.



Moving southwards, the Giardini in Venice hosts the Biennale; the location I would spend most of my time across my month's residency. Filled with towering trees and dappled light, different pavilions were placed throughout the garden, each with their own architectural language, a snapshot of both the time and context in which they were built. Walking along the central street, poking a head into each building, it became clear very quickly that the Biennale is like a mini world situated in an idyllic garden. Each country's response to the Biennale's theme of 'Laboratory of the Future' reflected a sort of political, social, environmental and economical stance a nation had on the world; demonstrated through both the content presented and content absent.

Exploring the artists' work and the organisation of the Pavilion, the other Fellows and I began to get to know the sculptures, uncovering histories and stories with which we were previously unfamiliar. Mac Collins' piece revealed the culture of playing dominoes in communities not too far from my home in London and Sandra Poulson's blue soapy sculpture highlighted the complex history of Portuguese colonisation in Angola; a history I was mostly unfamiliar with before. The art chosen by the curators tells a rich story of how different people, who are frequently under-represented, are agents in the spaces they occupy and the power they hold to write their futures accordingly.

Standing outside on the portico of the pavilion, I would often ask the visitors if they had any questions and whether they had enjoyed the British Pavilion. Of course, there was a range of answers, but the most common response was "But this isn't architecture?".

It was a response that frankly I was unprepared to answer at the beginning of my time in Venice, but as each shift went by I spent more time reading and looking at the artworks, my position became more clear.

I began telling people: What is architecture in the context we live within? Is it still just beautiful bricks and mortar? Is it still exuberant buildings for the wealthy? Is it still reserved for a professional elite? Is it still arbitrary sculpture at the expense of the climate?

As we head towards both a climate catastrophe and a humanitarian crisis, our definition of architecture must shift, and that is exactly what the curators of the British Pavilion have attempted to do. They are saying; the built environment is for everybody, and we should all feel a sense of ownership over our surroundings. The sculptures by the five artists are demonstrating just how non-architects perceive and respond to the space they occupy, emphasising that under-represented groups, like the UK's diaspora, have as much of a right to architecture as anyone else.

If we are to do what is necessary and reduce the number of buildings we build to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis, the way we interrogate the everyday life of our existing buildings is paramount, and understanding the rituals that take place within them is an essential key to realising the opportunities and failings of different spaces. The British pavilion calls for a seismic shift in how we perceive the built environment, that doesn't rely on exploitative and extractive processes driven by capitalism and colonialism, but instead advocates for something new that engages with community, indulges in a slowness of observation and gives people agency in the space that they occupy.

Whilst I was in Venice, I took this train of thoughts and walked the city in aim of finding rituals and the mundane activities of life that were taking place in hidden corners away from the swathes of tourists. It took me to gardens in monasteries, dock yards, washing-lined streets,

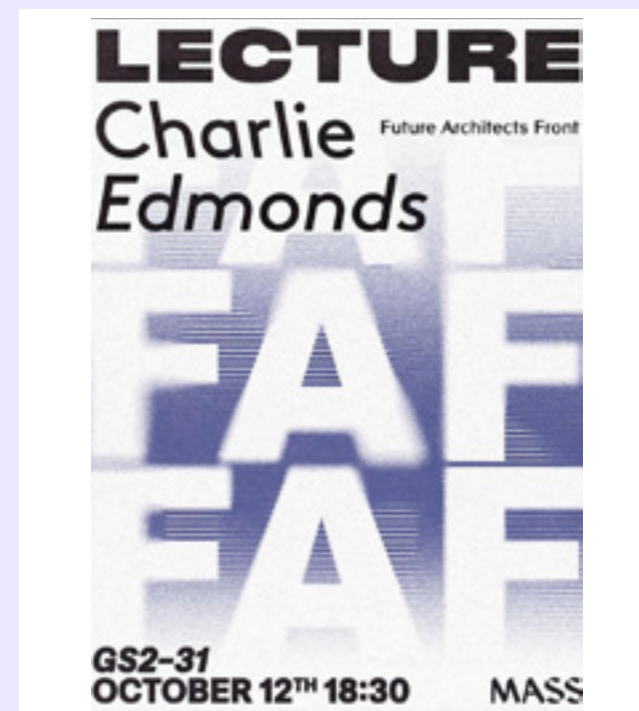


Sagra festivals, church choirs, communist bars, train stations and bus stops. I observed the everyday and the way in which people actually use the city, opposed to the grand palazzos and monumental landmarks usually associated with Venice. It revealed, like the pavilion, the value in the parts of the city that think about people and the planet; opposed to historically important but increasingly irrelevant conversations about style, form, ornament, and décor. Moving through this process of redefining what architecture could be was one I had already been grappling with; but being in Venice and working at the British pavilion contextualised it, provided solutions and offered alternative ways of thinking. As a result of this process, the task of researching whilst in the city became a very broad task, since I was reflecting on an entire discipline opposed to a niche topic. The project kept changing, appearing, and disappearing, taking routes down many dead-ended streets.

Coming back to London and starting my master's again, the ideas from Venice were still looming in the background and I joined a student collective, MASS, which runs a lecture series each year. In an almost accidental fashion, the lecture series became the outcome of my time in Venice. Alongside six other students, Emma, Emily, Hannah, Martha, Ollie and Matt, we are going to host a series of lectures themed around the idea of 'Anti-Apathetic Architecture'. The theme was a direct link to the British Pavilion

as it aims to challenge how we think about architecture both socially, economically, environmentally, and politically. We have speakers including Charlie Edmonds (FAF), Jeremy Till (MOULD), Calvin Po (Dark Matter Labs), Resolve, UVW-SAW, Biba Dow (Dow Jones), Ruth Lang (RCA and LSA), Tony Fretton, Stephen Taylor, Han Wang and Takero Shimazaki. We aimed to bring a diversity of voices into the institution and provide a range of perspectives for students to learn from. The programming of the lecture series was heavily influenced by the way the British pavilion was organised and framed this year.

Having the opportunity to live and work in Venice was a truly life-altering experience; having the luxury of time and money to reflect and question what the practice of architecture is today fundamentally changed the direction of my future and hopefully through the influence of the lecture series, the direction of others too.



# Omkar Salvi

Manchester School of Architecture

## Problematic Heritage: The Venetian Context

On 7th June 2020, a mob of protestors walked up to the public park in Bristol and toppled a Grade II listed statue and dumped it into the Bristol harbour. This event was a result of the repercussions from the Black Lives Matter movement started in the United States after the murder of George Floyd. So what does a 125 year old statue of a British 'philanthropist' of Bristol have to do with the BLM movement which originated in the United States? The statue was of Edward Colston, a 17th century Trans-Atlantic Slave Trader, Member of Parliament born in Bristol. The statue itself is a Grade II Heritage Structure listed by Historic England. Such heritage structures that connect the present to the past can instantaneously turn problematic with ongoing events. With Heritage structures gaining more importance and focus in our urban environment, it is significant that such heritage structures and sites are screened to ensure that they are innocuous, unobjectionable and fit well with society's ever evolving views. Similar research was conducted to uncover the links of slave trade with the Heritage structures in Venice, Italy. This research focuses on the city of Venice, the life of the famous Venetian traveller Marco

Polo, and the city's links to the slave trade and present day references through heritage buildings and infrastructure. The research attempts to shed light on the Heritage structures and sites that may turn problematic with time and discusses ways to prevent this through similar case studies. The toppling of Edward Colston's statue started a domino effect in the UK and resulted in a series of protests and objections to buildings, roads and other infrastructure linked to the slave trader. This quickly escalated to an unprecedented situation, causing disorder in everyday governance and posing a threat to the Heritage structures in question. The Edward Colston statue was vandalised and thrown into the Bristol harbour. This raises the question of what would happen to similar significant structures that are currently occupied as public buildings, roads, parks etc. Vandalization seemed to be the immediate reaction of the enraged demographic, which under UK law could account to offence under section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 with a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. In order to avoid such circumstances in the near future, there is a strong necessity to screen the Heritage entities in our urban environment to ensure they fit well within the modern views of our ever evolving society.



When extended to the city of Venice, this research brought to light some interesting stories of the city and its links to the slave trade during the mid-1400s. Venice's links to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade were first depicted from the Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio – *Miracle of the relic of the Holy Cross at Rialto* (1494 – 1496) and *Hunting on the Lagoon* (1490 – 1495). Both these paintings depict African gondoliers suggesting the presence of Africans in Venice at that time. According to Brycchan Carey, professor of English at the Northumbria University, slavery was introduced into Italy well before the discovery of the New World in 1492 through trade across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic seaboard. Many sources suggest classical-style slavery remained a normal part of society in southern and eastern Europe well before

1300s (Carey, 2020). However, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade started in the late 15th Century from Nigeria when Portuguese navigators first reconnoitred the West African coast. According to Harvard University data, by 1490, around 3000 slaves were transported to Portugal and Spain from Africa. There is a possibility that the African gondoliers seen in Vittore's paintings from 1450s – 1490s could be part of this trans-Atlantic slave trade. Another reference to Venice's links to the slave trade can be found in Peter Ackroyd's book – *'Venice: Pure City'*. Ackroyd writes that by the 12th Century Venice had surpassed other cities and countries in slave trade, with the markets of Rialto and S. Giorgio as centres of slavery. According to previously presented data, by this time the slavery was limited to Russians and Greeks and

had not involved anyone from the African continent. This evidence suggests that these same markets were used in the next century for the trans-atlantic slave trade. Ackroyd further explains how Venetian households were not complete without a retinue or slave, especially in patrician families. Venetian convents often possessed slaves for domestic service. (Ackroyd, 2010)

While uncovering Venice's slave trade links, the city's only commercial airport comes to mind, named after the famous venetian traveller Marco Polo. Polo, born in a family of traders, travelled to China to the Yuan Dynasty and served as a civil servant to the Yuan Court. He returned to Venice in 1295, which was believed to have been the peak time for slave-trading in Venice. In 1300 after getting married, Polo continued to trade as a Merchant in Venice (Barker, 2019). His will, dated 9th January 1324, as translated from *'Marco Polo e il suo'* by Hannah Barker, clearly lists his possessions. Marco Polo, who is stating the dispositions and bequests in his testament, mentions the last disposition as "Also I absolve Peter the Tartar, my slave, from every bond of servitude, so that God may absolve my soul from every fault and sin." The term "Tartar" is used to refer to Mongols or their subjects by medieval authors. This hints towards 'Peter the Tartar' – Marco Polo's slave could have been of a Mongolian descent, likely someone from the Yuan dynasty in China where Marco Polo lived for 17 years before returning to Venice in 1295.

Much like Edward Colston's fate,

Marco Polo – a famous Venetian traveller and trader could one day be known as a slave owner. Whether its Edwards Colston's statue being vandalised, Colston Girl's Highschool being renamed, the Mosque in Birmingham named after the then President Saddam Hussein being renamed, any Heritage entity, with time and certain circumstances can turn problematic. Places like the Marco Polo Airport and numerous others could one day turn problematic. And this could lead to a chaos, disorder, and disruption beginning with vandalism and possibly leading to much more.

After looking at thousands of years of human history that includes bloodshed, war, colonization, invasions, loot, forced religious conversions and other brutalities, it almost seems impossible to erase the memories of these events. If history has taught us anything, it is to not forget history itself, certainly not deny or erase it by renaming, vandalising or damaging buildings, statues, places and objects. In the last 190 years since the Slavery Abolishment Act 1833 was passed in the UK, people all over the world have developed a more inclusive and open mentality toward not just race but even other aspects of discrimination. But even after centuries of modernisation, there are still hints of the dark history all over the world. The question is, do we continue to deny history by toppling more statues and buildings; or are we ready to accept it as a trivial part of our evolution as humans; or do we reinvent the way we deal with our existing heritage?

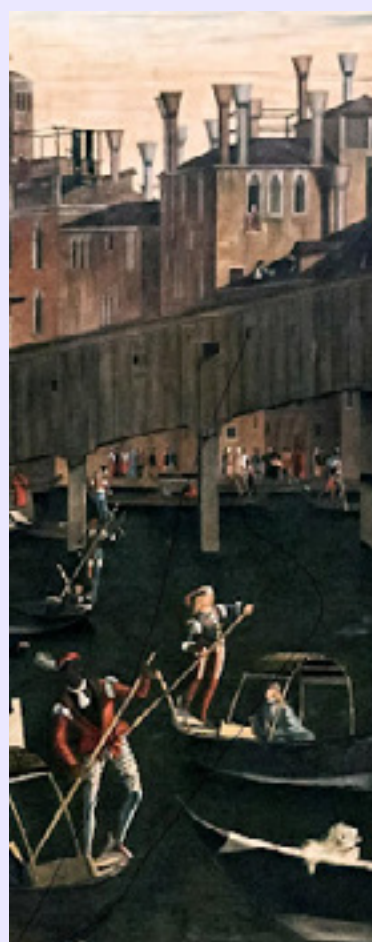


Image 1/3 – Hunting on the Lagoon | Image 2 – Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross at Rialto



## Conversations with Creatives

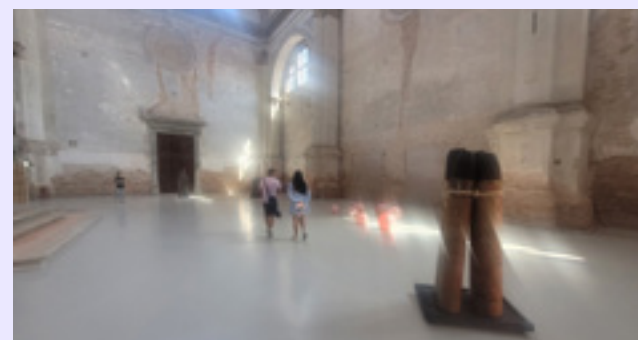
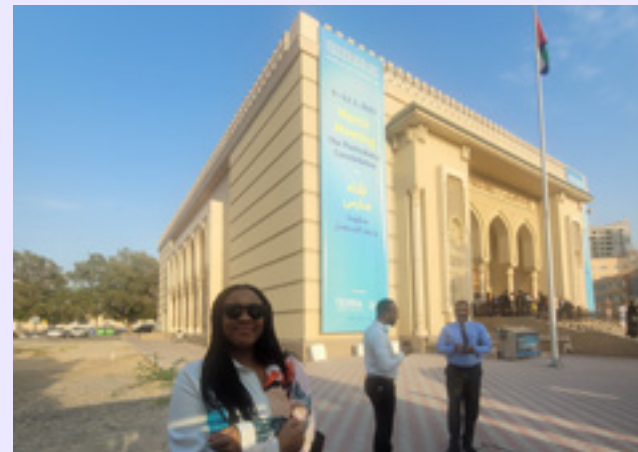
Initially intending to research how Muslims in Venice create communal spaces in a city intent on conserving its architecture, my project evolved to focus on a different community, that of creatives.

I spent my time in the city visiting exhibitions where I met people who told me about the creative economy of Venice; its pros and cons and the central place the Biennale holds in it. I was struck by the things I did not know.

Earlier this year I was in Sharjah where I got to meet Eddie Chambers, Akeim Toussaint Buk (a performance artist) and Zoe Whitely, I also curated a solo exhibition for my MA and for this I interviewed the artist.

At the centre of these conversations I noticed a tension between institutions wanting to engage as wide a public as possible whilst maintaining the integrity of the work. It was clear that art was a great tool for attracting tourists and boosting the local economy, but that it negatively affected the people already living there when their homes are overrun by tourists, eventually pricing them out. In turn I observed how the art world relies on interns (sometimes unpaid) and temporary workers and how this makes the industry impenetrable.

I want to take these conversations- and the ones in Venice- and create a series of interviews with creatives; artists, curators, producers etc. at different stages in their careers and create an anthology of interviews exploring these tensions with a view to how, or if, they can ever be reconciled.



RITUAL



# RITUAL

Text by Salma Magzoub Abdelrahman

Ritual is an echo of an unconscious living. To perform a ritual is to tread lightly over the personal and the collective, decisively, for Ritual is grounded in the historicity of its inheritance. Sometimes, however, Ritual finds its rhythm in the everyday, pulsating with the mundanity of life. Either way, Ritual is a sequence. Of movement. Of experiences. Of histories. One cannot separate the ritual from the body, for it is the body that moves, it is the body that feels and it is the body that remembers.

In *Make your place at the table, dinner's ready!*, Juliet Huddart-Ouabdesslam invites her colleagues to the intimate and the personal dinner table, recording a clash of diasporic mealtime rituals through orthographic drawings and filming. *Displaced Rituals* tracks the journey of Salma Magzoub where she explores the materialisation of Sudanese rituals through scent and weaving, and proposes a new architecture that references the way the Diaspora experience space. The cultural diversity of the Fellows enriches this theme of the Ritual, showing the potential it holds to reimagine alternative realities through design.

Rosie May Jones in *The Blindfold Parade* performatively walks through the streets of Venice and allows the city to speak to her, sensing the overlooked experiences that sight sometimes overpowers, turning her walk into words of poetry. Charlie Morgan McGee's

and Vera Okodugha's projects uncover the raw human touch through a sequence of intricate movement of embroidery and ceramic making. McGee's process of drawings and embroidery embraces the ritual of laundry hanging through the subtle addition of their embroidered tapestry to the existing materiality of the ropes that criss-cross the streets of Venice. Venice's intense palette of textures and the *Dancing before the Moon* exhibition inspired Okodugha's ceramic pieces. Marwa el Mubark's image captures a private moment, a private ritual, in a setting where the architecture and ritual are in harmony.

The British Pavilion's *Dancing Before the Moon* exhibition that unapologetically reinterprets the post-colonial definition of Britishness using the Ritual presented an ideal hotspot for generating more interpretations at both the personal and the global scale.

“When tea becomes ritual, it takes its place at the heart of our ability to see greatness in small things. Where is beauty to be found? In great things that, like everything else, are doomed to die, or in small things that aspire to nothing, yet know how to set a jewel of infinity in a single moment?”

MURIEL BARBERY



# Juliet Huddart-Ouabdesslam

Loughborough University

## Make your place at the table, dinner's ready!

My project explored how more people can be reflected in the architecture of Britain, embracing pluralism by decolonizing Britain's domestic rituals. Routines must be talked about. They are often overlooked yet are such powerful tools in navigating space. The rituals of eating played out on a table are like the rituals of domestic life and the relationship between people at a table can be compared to interactions between people in a home.

With Venice Fellows as my collaborators, we explored Diasporic cultures through mealtime rituals to discover the traces they leave on architectural elements. Together we laid the table, producing the conventional order. Then we undermined the order by rethinking multicultural eating habits through their respective foods, table settings, etiquette and, most importantly, cooking methods. Finally, we left a trace, to reveal the reality of domestic life.

I hoped to reveal how different cultures' rituals change the way we use space. The project provided a great opportunity to not only explore my Algerian heritage and creative interests, but also to spend time with the fellows and catch up each week.

By the end of my time in Venice, I recorded several mealtime

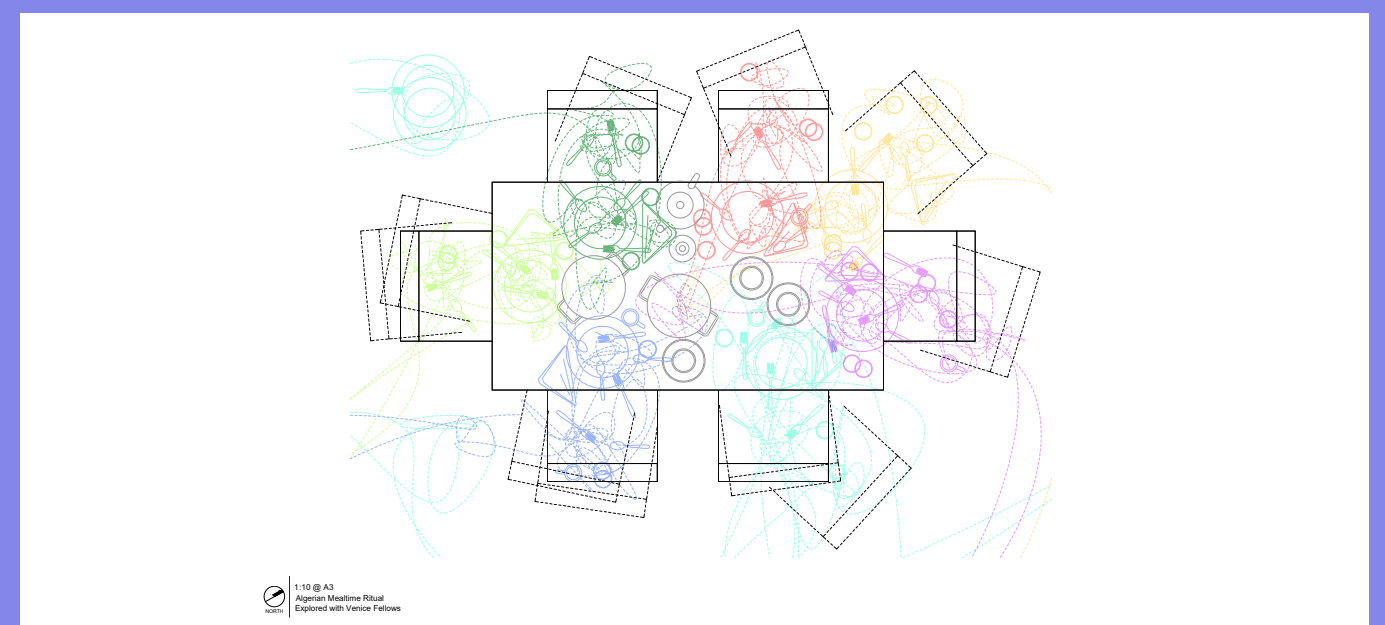
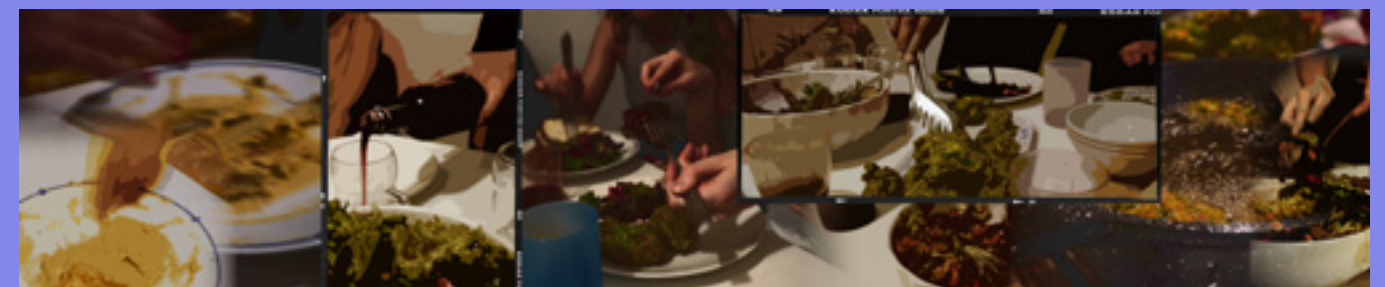
ritual processes through visual ethnographic methods including photography, videography, audio recording, and mapping in CAD. Using creative methods, I produced a set of tablescape/dining room floor plans, to compare how the space was used within each ritual we carried out. This allowed me to rethink multicultural eating habits and to create our own domestic ritual as Venice fellows. I have shared this with a wider audience through social media (Instagram), allowing people to interact and engage with my work.

Following my time in Venice, I returned to University of Loughborough to complete my Final year of the Architecture BArch course. Through my studies, I hope to continue researching phenomenology and how the way people use space should drive architectural design, rather than Architects prescribing it. After graduating in Summer 2024, I hope to join a master's course in Architecture to continue exploring my passion for designing spaces.

As an architecture student, I am so inspired by the curatorial team and artists, pushing the boundaries to imagine a different future for British Architecture, both by design and architectural practice through their exhibition. I am really excited for what the future can hold for me as a student, and the different routes that are possible within the Architectural industry.

The overall experience gave me an amazing opportunity to network with a huge range of international architects and students and I've been able to make friends from around the world. Outside of the Biennale, the fellowship gave me

the freedom to immerse myself in the Venetian lifestyle, culture and cuisine. I was also lucky enough to visit the Italian cities of Verona and Trieste which was an incredible experience as I had never been to Italy before.







Please click on the images to view the short films.



# Rosie May Jones

Dartington School of Arts

Rosie May Jones is a multi-disciplinary artist and poet, specialising in spoken word, with a background in traditional oral storytelling. She creates performances and visual narratives based on folklore, as well as historical and contemporary accounts. Her work explores social and environmental issues, such as: land rights, housing and our connection to the natural world.

During her fellowship Rosie wrote a spoken word poem, *The Sailor's Bride*, based on contemporary and historical accounts of living in Venice; exploring the relationship between public and private spaces in context to: housing, community, tourism and the literary male gaze.

She also conducted: *The Blindfold Parade* - a 45 minute blindfolded walk through the city. Part somatic research and part performance, this was an exploration of physicality within the public space, and an attempt to experience the deep pulse of the city beyond its visual beauty. Moving through the city, seen but not seeing, a public exhibition, a secret sensuality, embodying the duality of this mystic place.





## The Sailor's Bride

Sixteen hundred summers past she  
sprang from the waters,  
Dripping in the silks and jewels of  
the orient, flaunting it,  
She was a sailor's bride. Her opal  
eyes bright and wide,  
Oceanic depths cast up to the skies  
- what a prize,  
The merchant's pride. She held all  
the gold of Christendom.  
And all the world came to see her in  
her shining glory,  
A public woman, sensual and court-  
ly, unruly and gaudy,  
Oh and the things they called her.  
She was angel and witch,  
Virgin and whore. Salacious, loqua-  
cious, corrupt and adored;  
Yet she was always a maiden city,  
she was never conquered.  
Venice stands alone. A surreal uto-  
pian existence, so mystic,  
It's easy to think that she shouldn't  
exist at all. Tell me is it -  
Messing with the natural order  
building a city where there's only  
water? This is the shoreline of un-  
sure time, a provocation of beauty  
Where imagination is fascinated by  
crossroads of contradiction.  
And she takes time to get to know,  
her ways are strange and bold,  
She is ambiguous duality, a matri-  
mony of arabesque and portico,  
Her palaces adorned like courtes-  
ans. Roads of water and alleyways  
so close She is like a protective  
mother. But whether meagre wife  
or happy harlot her most precious  
jewels are hidden, her inner sanc-  
tum, saved only for the faithful to  
see.  
But listen, Venice is drowning. And  
when I'm walking  
It's more like swimming in a river of  
people gawping and gaping,  
A city so full can be isolating. The  
houses are flooded with tourist

rentals, And all of the prices are  
going mental. While empty flats are  
left to rot, Cause no one wants to  
pay the maintenance costs.  
Dificile belleza, it's a high price paid  
to keep her floating,  
Holding up her skirts to keep them  
from soaking in the rising water.  
Patched and buttressed, she costs  
a fortune. This ageing beauty, Sus-  
pended in time between sky and  
sea, tell me what else can she really  
be But a global curiosity? A para-  
dox of complexity the citizens ask  
ceaselessly.  
But is she really lost to the crowds  
and cacophony? Blinded by beauty  
Has she become her own allego-  
ry? Just shipwrecked and living off  
flattery. Or maybe malefica hides  
in this masque of pageantry, and  
this land Of magic and mystery still  
walks along the Fondamente, at  
3am When it is empty, and you are  
alone in Venice.  
Photos: The Blindfold Parade; per-  
formed by Rosie May Jones & Marta  
Magini Photos credits: Christopher  
Apperley-Bennett

## Salma Magzoub

UWE Bristol

### Displaced Rituals

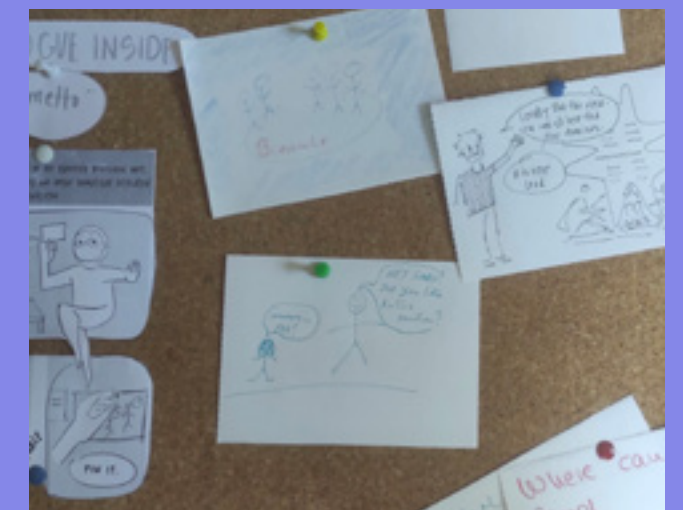
What happens when people are  
taken out of context, literally, as in  
the case of a diaspora? What was  
once deeply tied to the land finds  
itself hovering over foreign places  
trying to claim its space. This takes  
the form of 'Ritual', which can be  
as simple as eating on the floor in  
a spacious living room while an 8  
seat dining table, in proximity, is  
left empty. The ritual is a deeply  
experiential occupation of a space,  
laden with cultural, traditional and  
religious practices.

Displaced Rituals is an opening  
statement on a research exploring  
Diasporic Architecture. It  
challenges the homogeneity of  
architecture against an increasingly  
heterogeneous population by trying  
to materialise the displaced rituals  
of the diaspora into architecture. By  
taking an auto-ethnographic angle,  
it explores the Sudanese rituals  
of Basket weaving and Bakhoor  
making, scented sandalwood,  
among the Sudanese diaspora in  
Bristol and Qatar respectively,

echoing the experiences of its  
author drifting across different  
geographies carrying their identity,  
sometimes in something as simple  
as a scent.

A part of the project was about the  
'Ritual of thought', a simple idea  
that found its place under Jayden  
Ali's Thunder and Simsek that used  
comics as a tool to give room for  
dialogue between visitors and with  
the exhibition.

Inspired by the Dancing Before  
the Moon exhibition, where I  
spent long hours in the presence  
of 'Materialised rituals' of diverse  
people and histories.





# Charlie Morgan McGee

Manchester Metropolitan University



My art project while in Venice focused on using the city's beautiful surroundings as reference for what I created. I went into the project thinking I was going to make something conceptual, but ended up being really interested in the historical wall art, and wildlife around the city. This fellowship allowed me to break out of the art school mentality that everything needs to have meaning and be tied up with a little bow at the end. Focusing on the actual process of making became a ritual. Working on my embroidery, sketches, and notes everyday became the most enjoyable part of each day.

I was taking pictures of everything I saw knowing that I would want to refer back to them- These are the images that inspired my tapestries. I became obsessed with the pigeons whilst in Venice - to me they bring life to the city as they are absolutely everywhere.

My favourite wall statues were these small hedgehogs that I saw every day on my walk to the British Pavilion.

Due to the constraints of not having a studio, I mainly worked in embroidery and drawing. I am deeply inspired by naive art/illustrations which I think seeped into my work.

I spent a lot of time on the Lido. Alberoni Beach was my favourite place to go whilst in Venice.

The hanging of the tapestry is inspired by the hanging laundry around the city.







# Vera Okodugha

Loughborough University — Instagram: @v.o.k.o.d.u



Sound production is inherently dynamic and communal. Architectural production is not. Sound felt important in Venice. It somehow mirrored the assemblages of moments, emotions and processes I encountered there and became a way for me to observe the city. I spent some time every week following, sitting with, walking through, and thinking about the soundscapes Venetians navigate in their everyday life. I would call these explorations 'Sound Walks'. I even began observing how the hours I spent in the British pavilion were engulfed in their own unique 'Dancing Before the Moon' soundscape. To me this included the objects, images, people and conversations I encountered in the exhibition spaces and I attempted to document these moments in daily sketches.

It was through these regular meditations that I became interested in clock towers, Venice is full of them! And despite their prevalence, they are often offered a set of unique spatial opportunities that lie in stark contrast with the conditions under which surrounding buildings have been forced to contend. I wanted to reflect on these hierarchies through a tangible form and made a series of clay vessels that I see as a reflection of the pedestrian journey through the spacious piazzas and narrow commercial and residential streets of Venice. This uneven distribution of space says a lot about how the urban Venice and displays

architecture, it is an example of how architecture makes space for sound and thus amplifies it. As the open void alongside the clock tower invites inhabitants of the space to exist fully in the intentions of that place. The vessels also respond to the material conditions of Venetian buildings. This project is ongoing and will continue to be grounded in the methodology of seeking to understand architecture through sound and subsequently understanding sound through making.





# Marwa el Mubark

Saqqra Ltd. (previous Afterparti Ltd)

Chiesa di Sant 'Eufemia'





# Dhelia Snoussi

Beyond The Box Consultants CIC

The 14th June 2023 marked the 6th year anniversary of the Grenfell Tower Fire. I grew up nearby the Tower, but I was in Venice for 6th anniversary and wanted to do something in Venice in remembrance and solidarity with what was being organised in London. In London, we illuminate buildings in green on the anniversaries (the colour has become somewhat of a symbol). For that reason, I worked with Green for Grenfell to host a lighting installation that saw the British

Pavilion building and its galleries illuminated in green light. Inside the pavilion in the main hall (a space designed for congregation and sharing), a programme of short films, archival material, animation and photography was screened, showcasing work from local artists connected to Grenfell and West London. We used the day to speak with visitors and architects about the fire and its causes, but also to remember our 72 neighbours who were killed that night.







# CARING FOR VENICE

## CARING FOR VENICE

Text by Amanni Hassan Hollands

Experiencing a city whose tangible aesthetic and intangible spirit has been more or less unaltered and unadulterated, allows those of us fortunate enough to reside or visit the ability to travel back in time. This is perhaps what perpetuates the distinct and almost immediate confrontation of emotion and sense of obligation to care for Venice, having at once been situated in it. It is no wonder then, that many of this year's fellows were compelled to make work in response to this quickening attachment to the city and what author Javier Marías describes as the 'viewpoint of eternity'.

In *An Inquisition Case*, Olivia Garro offers glimpses of Venice's past through her translation of archival trial text, inviting us to look beyond sensations of Stendhal syndrome and towards the intellectual foundations of this floating collection of histories. Toby Barlow presents new ways of thinking with vernacular and non-vernacular building substances - through personal walking routes and documentary photographs, he makes a map of materials with which to consider the architectural medium of Venice's future. Keisha Pearce responds to her own walking routes via the investigation of instances of graffiti which act as palimpsest to the city's world renowned and hypervalued campos, palazzos, and basilicas. Reflecting further the particular vantage

of being on foot, Chiara Garcia Melchiorri's *Nella Calle* identifies the space created by an absence of cars which affords the city a certain dichotomy of freedom and restriction. Both Rebecca Hearle and Órlaith Rice decipher reactions to Venice's lattice of lagoons and canals in individual and collective terms. Hearle's drawings and linocuts unlock the proposal of *A Window for Venice* generated by her reciprocal relationship to the island's underwater landscape, whilst Rice develops a visual response to the realities of flooding, charting the multiplicity of human reactions to the *acqua alta* experienced in Piazza San Marco. Finally, Christopher Apperley-Bennett puts forth extracts from his study on art activism in community arts organisations, which questions the efficacy of climate change education in these spaces, specifically the impact of the Biennale as a platform to engage the public on environmental issues.

Thinking with the specific context of *La Biennale Architettura*, and more widely with dwelling in the city opposed to stopping by on tour, *Caring for Venice* addresses the seemingly Sisyphean task of protecting this constellation of island jewels, its sparse greenery and its jade inscription of waterways.



## Background

Museums are considered some of the most trusted public institutions within the UK to provide accurate, and more importantly, reliable information on global issues without the involvement of politics, according to a survey conducted by The Museums Association. They have the ability to connect, educate and provide the groundwork of community cohesion through both local and global problems. They are able to leverage their public trust as a way to create opportunities for new discussions on climate change, by framing the global problem through local and relevant contexts. These local museums and art galleries act as community spaces, and are uniquely placed to become testing grounds for radical new ideas and projects. Many educators have find it difficult to engage the public within the topic of climate change due to the huge scale, negativity and daunting prospects faced. The use of art has been found to be an effective tool for communicating the complex topic of climate change to a broad audience, however this can sometimes be limited within smaller organisations due to a multitude of barriers.

## Overview

The study explored how community art organisations can use art activism as a tool to bridge the gap where creative solutions for creating conversations around

the theme of climate change is needed. The research and case studies illustrate how architectural space, community culture, visitor experience and art activism are all essential aspects for enabling community change on a think global, act local basis. During the Venice Biennale, the research explored how a multifaceted space can the conditions for visitors to engage within the topic of climate change, seeking to provide an alternative solution where many educators agree is difficult to effectively communicate.

## Conclusion of the research:

Collaborations between community organisations offer positive solutions for limited finances, increased visitor experiences and local community cohesion.

Multifaceted spaces are cost effective methods for creating the opportunity for questions and ideas, turning the museum space into testing grounds for radical new ideas.

Community organisations cannot simply enable change due to art-based projects alone. This research highlights that only once an organisation has clearly identified entryways into their community, can an effective art activist programme be developed for community change on a think global, act local basis. Visitors interests are peaked within a space which includes objects of

“Venice is the only city in the world whose past you do not have to glimpse or intuit or guess at, it’s there before you, at least its past appearance is, which is also its present appearance.”

JAVIER MARÍAS



learning. Case study one looked at how this was demonstrated at the Nordic Pavilion, items were handled with curiosity, creating physical and thoughtful experiences. The background research

identified, and had proven within the case studies that communities generally appreciate a community concern and local culture to be placed within a particular programme.



# Toby Barlow

University of Liverpool, School of Architecture

Venice's palette of vernacular materials is one of its most interesting and prominent features. In contrast, non-vernacular materials cropping up over the city present problems to Venice's identity and to the embodied carbon associated with using these.

This project visually represents Venice's vernacular and non-vernacular material palettes through an exercise of walking indiscriminately through the streets of Venice, mapping the routes taken and photographing materials of interest. The vernacular materials consist of render, bricks and stone. They look

rugged, as if crumbling away under the duress of flooding in Venice. Non-vernacular materials like glass and metal starkly stand out in the context of their surroundings.

In a city that is predicted to flood this study raises many questions about the future of Venice. Should Venice stick with brick, render and stone that are built to last yet are crumbling away or embrace new non-vernacular materials? Would natural materials work in a city so prone to flooding? What materials would you choose to build a new building in Venice?





Arriving in Sestrier San Polo, you are immediately so taken aback by the façade of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari that you might miss, on its side, the more modest entrance of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Ma l'apparenza inganna - looks are deceiving: among other invaluable treasures, this state archive also holds the entirety of the Venetian Inquisition's proceedings, of immense importance because it is one of the very few records of an Italian Inquisition's tribunal to survive intact.

Most regional dispatches, for various reasons (foreign invasions, internal conflicts, and so on) have long been lost or dispersed, but because of Venice's particular history, the archival fund of 'Tre Savi All'Eresia' – loosely translated to 'three wise men against heresy', the government's body working with the Catholic Holy Office - is completely and easily accessible in Campo dei Frari.

Ever since 1249 three special magistrates, the Savi, have been specifically chosen and designated to fight heresy, and they will maintain their control over the legal proceedings even after Rome officially established the Catholic Inquisition in 1289. Officials of the Serenissima Repubblica, their independence from the Vatican guaranteed an atypical degree of separation from the directives of the Roman Holy Office, and remained one of the main factors

of restrain and civic moderation throughout the centuries, until the suppression of both the Savi's judicial body and the Venetian dispatch of the Inquisition, in 1797.

In 1870, the archivists Pasini and Giorno completed and signed off the monumental work of cataloguing and indexing the whole fund. While scholars are still faced with many methodological problems when using these sources (i.e., many buste -folders- are not organised and many trials are missing the final stages of sentencing), their work has made this enormous collection substantially easier to navigate. These records fill up 164 folders of varying dimensions, which occupy over 18 metres of shelves in the State Archive.

Among this incredible amount of trials, I have chosen to transcribe and translate the unedited case of 1620 against a friar of the same Frari monastery, Fra' Bonaventura Capridonio. Among the 18 trials initiated that year by the tribunal and held in the folders 74 and 75, this one stands out as not only the Inquisition investigated a Catholic clerk, but it also suspected him of heresy because of 'scandalous acts during confession'. Misuse of sacraments was considered heretical behaviour, and concern of the tribunal.

The manuscript is in overall good condition, the first page with a

detailed testimony and the final appeal of the friar to the Tribunal read easily. However, the third page is sadly missing and the ink of quite a few words has spread, making some lines in the third and beginning of the fourth page almost impossible to read.

-Archivio Di Stato di Santa Maria de' Frari  
-Fondo 0975; 303 - Sant'Uffizio (Tre Savi all'Eresia)  
-Busta 75, nr pezza 29  
-Heresy: 'scandals during confession'

[front page]  
1620  
Friar Bonaventura Capridonio  
Guardian of the monastery  
of friars.

[p.1]  
[lines 11 to 19 are highlighted by two lines on the side]

Day 10. Month of September, 1620

i. m. Lugera, wife of s. Roberto Veccherini, wool merchant, [who] lives in Santa Maria Maggiore, in a house which will be left [in inheritance] to the Nuns, appeared in front of the Illustrious and Revered sir, the Patriarch of Venice, and testified as it follows: For the past year I have used to confess myself to the Father friar Bonaventura, Guardian of the Monastery of the friars, and to him I confessed four or five times, but the last I went [wanting to] confess myself to him, it was three months ago and it was

a Sunday after dinner, [when] he received my confession next to the bell tower in a confessional [in which] he often receives confessions, and this time he 'went to accident' [early modern Venetian expression: he deliberately bothered her, probably meaning he touched her] three times one after the other [so that] I was scandalised [by his behaviour] and suspected he was ill-intentioned to [illegible] to some evil as other times, [while] receiving my confession he wanted to persuade me to give him a kiss but I did not want to, [so] he asked if I cared about him and I said I cared about him as [I am] a good Christian woman, and and he added 'give me a kiss', and I said I didn't want to, and he answered 'bless you, I will not bother you anymore', and this time he tried

[p.2]  
persuading me to put my hands inside his trousers and find his embarrassment, telling me [illegible] a bit the hands and touched and [illegible] said things, telling him this he will [illegible] and I have to, in confession [illegible] well, and those I have [illegible] I do not know I should be grateful [illegible] [illegible] the time I resolved to [receive his] kiss was Sunday five months ago in my usual



confessional, and that time he wanted me to [illegible, possibly 'raise'] the [illegible, probably 'skirts'] and it was the same time he tried to [make me] kiss him, and it was the hour the Vespers had finished. From [illegible, possibly another witness] I do not know if said friar is in the habit of [these] humble [ : low] temptations with other people [illegible] said to give me money and then, after I allowed him to receive my confession, he demanded more [illegible] in Saint Mark's square and [illegible] from him, and I replied that my [illegible, probably 'husband'] did not want [so] [illegible, possibly addressing the 'Revered and Illustrious'] here said with [illegible, possibly something referring to being under oath] inside and I do not wish bad upon him.

[Page 3 is not found inside the folder, but some traces of ink imprinted on the following page suggest that the calligraphy and the type of ink changed from page 2. The same ones are found on page 4.]

[p.4]  
[illegible, probably a title in Latin]  
[illegible, probably Latin] Church  
[illegible] quality of the friar  
[illegible] I have know  
the reverend Father Bonaventura  
of the friars, occasionally  
I served in his room, [but] he has not  
told me nor [he has] made me say I  
was going to be examined.  
[illegible] bed, tried [illegible] be

satisfied with  
[illegible] I know it is said Brother  
Barthes wishes bad  
upon Father Bonaventura, and this I  
heard being said in the  
convent by the friars, but I do not  
know anything else.  
To clarify [illegible] negligent of  
[illegible].  
Above [illegible] rightfully.

Day Thursday 9, month of  
September 1621.  
[assisting the] Illustrious d. Vitale  
Lando.

In the presence of the Illustrious d.  
Patriarch of Venice, and Father  
[illegible], and the Illustrious d.  
[illegible]  
Bonaventura is summoned and  
sworn in, and he said. I do not  
intend [to ask for] other witnesses  
to be examined, and I renounce  
of any defence I might attempt,  
deferring myself  
to the benevolence of this tribunal.

Like the records of many other  
trials, Bonaventura's one is  
incomplete. The third page, where  
we would have likely found more  
testimonies, is lost. We can deduce  
that this other friar, Brother  
Barthes, testified against him -  
and we can imagine that either  
there were personal grievances  
between them, which led Barthes  
to falsely accuse Bonaventura, or  
that he knew of other 'scandalous  
behaviours' of Bonaventura, who  
then summoned other witnesses to  
discredit Barthes' accusations. We  
will also never know the outcome  
of the trial: did the Inquisition and  
the Savi rule benevolently towards  
Bonaventura, as he had hoped, or  
did they read an admission of guilt  
in his final deference?

Either way, his trial is relatively  
short. After starting the  
proceedings in September 1620,  
the court summoned him again  
for the final appeal almost exactly  
a year after. And while we do  
not have a certain date for their  
sentencing, most similar cases are  
wrapped up in the space of a few  
weeks. The records concerning  
Bonaventura are some of the  
shortest in the Archivio di Stato,  
with many counting up to dozens  
and dozens of pages, hearing from  
great numbers of witnesses and  
often summoning them again and  
again. Still, this trial is worthy of  
further analysis as it demonstrates  
that, as recent scholarship has  
been discussing, the Venetian  
dispatch of the Inquisition did not  
turn a blind eye to the accusations  
towards clergymen and rather  
took them as seriously as to  
investigate the claims, instigate the  
legal proceedings, and summon  
witnesses.

Despite the fact that these histories  
were written up by the powerful  
administrative and religious élites,  
there are occasions to recover  
the voices of common people and  
women like Lugera, after all.





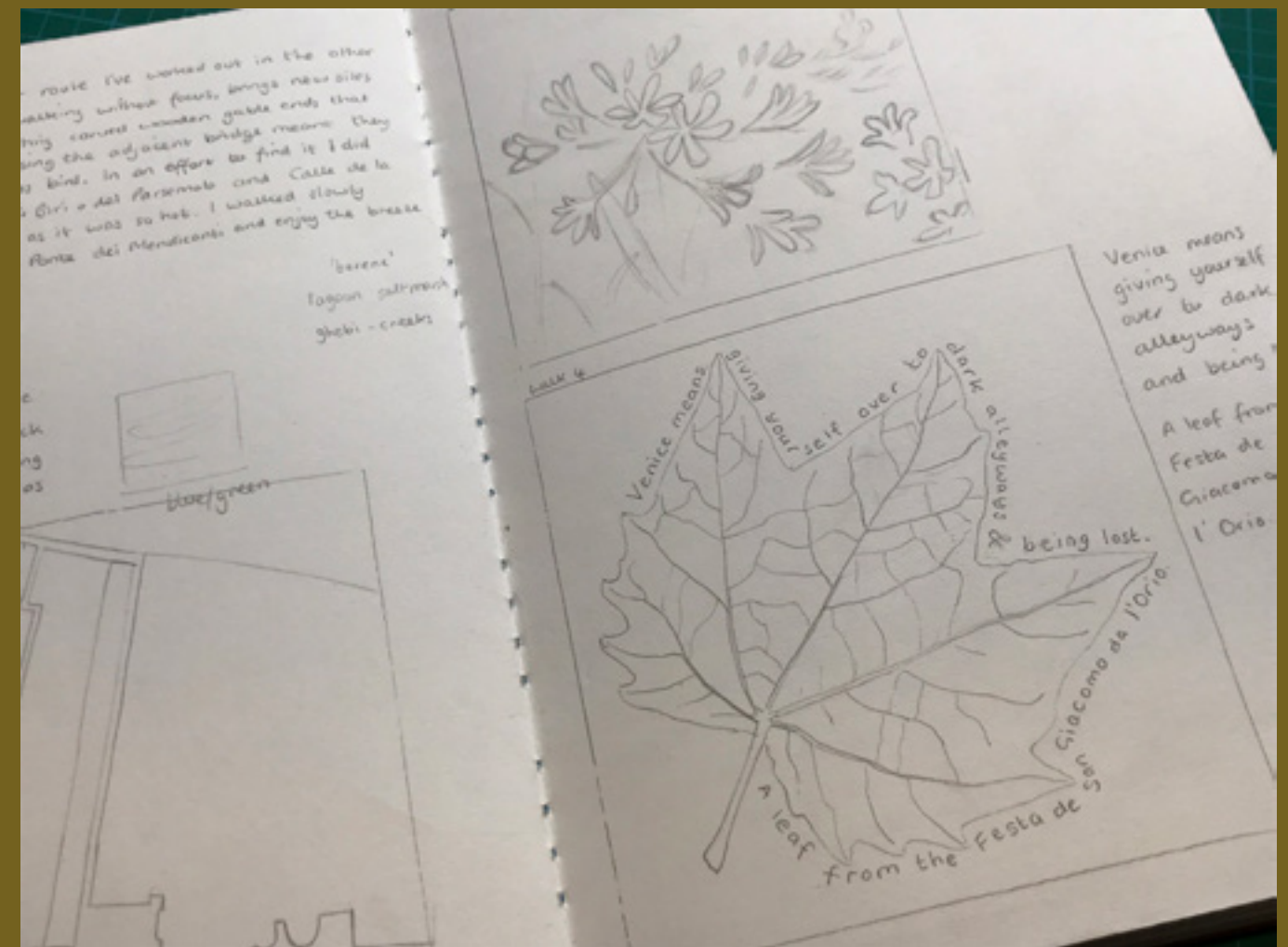
# Rebecca Hearle

Anglia Ruskin University

My Venice project began with the thought that Venice could not be more different from the landscape—the salt marsh of the Wash in East Anglia, the focus of my research. I wondered if I could use my method of investigating that flat, open and wild landscape and transpose it to the calles and canals of Venice. I learn places through movement and observation and being conscious of the sensuous interaction of body and place. To learn Venice, I took a walk every day; I threaded my way through the crowds, walking slowly in the heat, sensing my surroundings. I took photographs and recorded the details I memorised to help me navigate the city, and I reflected on my experiences through writing. The outcome of all that gathering was to make a linocut image that recorded an element or experience from each walk. Looking back on the prints I produced, it is interesting to see how frequently the natural world is the focus of a walk, even in a city as built up as Venice—I spent so much time looking at and into the water!

The other hoped-for outcome from my time in Venice was a 'reciprocal' artwork. The works I make in relation to the Wash are just that, pieces made with the landscape. I hoped that through coming to know Venice, an idea for a reciprocal artwork would emerge. Three days before leaving the city I visited Ca' Rezzonico, a seventeenth century palazzo with an impressive entrance on the Grand Canal. However, the palazzo has a second, more

modest water door opening on to Rio de San Barnaba. When I arrived, I noticed this doorway had a protective glass barrier but thought nothing more of it. After a few hours viewing the artworks on the upper floors, I returned to the ground floor and saw that the tide had risen—it was unusually high that day—now, through the glass panel that was keeping the canal out of Ca' Rezzonico I could see the glint of small fish and the waving seaweed; it was a window onto a different world. It came to me that what I wanted to make was 'a window for Venice'. My reciprocal artwork would be a glass windowed doorway, permanently partially submerged, giving people a view into this magical but overlooked treasure. This artwork currently only exists as an idea, but I hope to make it real, if only through making a drawing or telling a story.





# Chiara Garcia Melchiorri

London Middlesex University

Venice possesses a distinct, unmistakable charm. Being introduced to the architecture discipline for the first time through the Biennale drew me to be more conscious of my surroundings, and to observe the city from a different perspective. Venice's urban architecture has a particular consequence which sparked the creation of 'Nella Calle': the absence of cars. An absence that leaves a space. I couldn't help but wonder, How is this space replaced? How do the people of Venice take advantage of this vehicular freedom? Do the streets of this city take on particular forms and functions due to this distinctive feature? Is this car-free environment conducive to the growth of green spaces, and how are the streets valued and maintained? These questions were the seeds of inspiration for my research project, 'Nella Calle,' which translates to 'In the Street' in english.

'Nella Calle' is an editorial piece that aims to explore the streets of Venice through the above-mentioned questions. A mixture of interviews to local organizations, poetry, short essays, extracts from books, photographs and personal observations make up its different fascicles: 'Verde' (Green), 'Disarica' (Dump) and 'Acqua' (Water).

[chiaramentechiara.cargo.site](http://chiaramentechiara.cargo.site)





# Keisha Pearce

University of Liverpool

Venice is a city of architectural interest, consisting of timeless buildings that would be heavily valued in any other place. Despite this, there is an overwhelming amount of graffiti on these buildings. I decided to map the graffiti throughout the city, identifying where it most commonly appeared and the type of graffiti seen in particular areas. I categorised my research through the neighbourhoods of the city, investigating correlations between the types of graffiti and the areas in which they were found.

I found that there seemed to be little consideration, from the artist's perspective, of the style or history of the architecture and how this placement of graffiti may affect the building's integrity or heritage.

Despite this, there were notable correlations in the material of a building and the placement of graffiti, with smoother surfaces such as stone and metal post boxes more preferable.

I combined my findings in a book and an abstract artwork. The artwork illustrates my walk to the British Pavilion from San Marco to Giardini della Biennale and the architecture and graffiti I saw on this route. The book documents my findings, showing a selection of my images from my time there, drawings of the graffiti I found, and my observations.

Hard copies of the book will be released in 2024, contact [keishapearce2000@gmail.com](mailto:keishapearce2000@gmail.com) for further information.



# Órlaith Rice

University of Ulster

My project was initially focusing on the flooding in Venice, how it is affecting residents and how architecture might be able to help through the design of Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS). This project adapted through my stay in Venice, as I was able to experience some of the milder flooding from Acqua Alta first hand. This was interesting to observe everyone's reaction to the water encroaching upon their space. Some completely shocked left and tried to find an alternative route through the city, while others celebrated and danced in the water. This project slowly took an interest in monitoring these reactions through photographs, videos and sketches.

St Mark's square is usually the first place to flood in Venice as it's the lowest point in the city. I really enjoyed this as it's the largest square in Venice and a great place for events and concerts and the first-place excess water from the grand canal enters. It's easy to understand why it is considered the heart of Venice. These are some of the reasons I chose to record the flooding here and more importantly people's reactions to it. From this I found that there are 5 main reactions to encountering the water.

There are some who immediately take their shoes off and begin to play and dance in the water, this sometimes encourages others to join them.





There are people who stop and turn to find an alternative route completely avoiding the water out of fear of the cleanliness of it.

There are people whose instinct is to record the event in some way, through photography, sketching or video. By doing this they are also allowing themselves to get wet in the rain. Similar to those who chose to dance or play.

There are those who simply plough through the flood to try and get to better shelter faster, or else they are already inside as they knew the flood was coming in advance. There are also tourists who chose to buy temporary single use wellboots, ponchos and rain jackets so they can continue exploring the

city without getting wet.

My sketch of St Mark's Square shows a photographer, an umbrella and a dancer. I really like this sketch as it shows everyone's different response, attitude and an insight into their personalities.

With my sketches of the flood, I chose to use the same reference image so I could take away the context of the background to show the clear difference between those who stayed sheltered and those who chose not to.

I also noticed when it begins to rain a lot of locals immediately seek shelter. I was able to photograph some streets in the rain and it's an interesting contrast to see them

empty when they are usually filled with tourists and street vendors.

While witnessing parts of the Acqua Alta it helped bring light to the extent of the impact these floods have on locals of Venice. The floods disrupt their daily life by blocking off roads and walkways cutting off transport for people who rely on walking around Venice, and they also damage property creating mold and eroding foundations and wall structure in people's homes and businesses often resulting in a significant financial loss. The floods also have a negative impact towards Venice's historical sites and cultural buildings which it is known for, the decline in these inevitably will have an effect on

tourism which impacts the city's economy as it relies heavily on tourism bringing income to local businesses, restaurants and hotels.

The water that often floods Venice comes from the lagoon and canals which can mix with sewage when flooded. Contact with contaminated water like this can lead to serious health problems.

Although its great to experience this unique aspect of nature on this floating island it's important to remember the negative impacts which come with these unique floods and that they will inevitably get worse if action is not taken against them





# In Closing: From the mundane to the majestic

Words by Sumitra Upham

“We chart our lives by everything we remember from the mundane moment to the majestic. We know ourselves through the art and act of remembering. Memories offer us a world where there is no death, where we are sustained by rituals of regard and recollection” Bell Hooks

The genesis of *Dancing Before the Moon* stemmed from a very simple question: How can we ensure more people are reflected in Britain’s built environment? In order to answer this, it seemed critical to acknowledge everyday practices (from the mundane to the majestic) of diasporic communities whose cultures and customs have been overlooked in the planning of the built environment in Britain. We wanted to grasp how their understanding of architecture - driven by memories and experience of migration, global exchange, and colonialism - differs from what we perceive to be “architectural” or of “spatial merit”. Moreover, we were curious to find out what the value of an exhibition devoted to architectural thinking in Venice could be for these communities.

As a group of curators, we became fascinated with diasporic rituals in Britain: from craft and vernacular building techniques, masquerade performances, and spiritual ceremonies; to cultivating seeds, playing dominoes and washing in the

streets. We observed their unique ability to carve out space for certain cultures and help foster a sense of belonging. These rituals are both tangible and intangible and often manifest through materials, making, objects, and performance. They are always brought to life through acts of collectivization. Whether newly formed or extensions of ancestral practices, they exist as powerful spatial statements of human values and as forms of resistance and resilience against oppressive spatial systems. In uncovering such rituals, it became clear to us that our role as curators was to shift the gaze on which behaviours and traditions are prioritised in the built environment and to celebrate how diasporic communities design and occupy space. If we achieve this, perhaps this architecture exhibition could benefit the communities whose practices we set out to uphold.

To me, the power of *Dancing Before the Moon* is its ability to take you on an exploration of time and space, envisioning realms that move between shared memories, histories and speculative futures. On the one hand, it can be seen as archeological through unearthing material knowledge and spatial ingenuity of generations past, reflecting how societies were organised and how their customs transformed land. On the other, it offers a window into alternative future worlds that

have been constructed through the imaginations of a group of artists. Their work poses the question: “If we were all given space and resources to imagine, what kind of worlds would we build?” This exhibition, in many ways, sought to provide that resource, offering space for both artists and visitors to imagine.

This publication by the 2023 Venice Fellows is an expansion of this question. Their research projects are a constellation of imaginative interventions, shaped by personal encounters with the built environment of Venice, with communities (including the collective itself) that they have encountered, and with wider geographies, topographies, bodies and objects. Informed by the fellows’ firsthand experiences as custodians of the British Pavilion and as a group of collaborators, they have defined a new type of common practice - one that is undeniably spatial and collective both in its organisation and its knowledge. Navigating a built environment unfamiliar to them, they found opportunity and solace in working together, in sharing tools and knowledge, and in reflecting on spatial histories and rituals of their own.

The Fellows’ reflections and observations are crucial in understanding the impact of this exhibition and its lasting legacy. We learn from them that for many visitors, *Dancing Before the Moon* provided a refreshing definition of architecture driven by pluralistic and polyphonic principles. Yet others saw its alliance with other creative disciplines and immaterial culture as unorthodox and nonsensical. As curators, this difference of opinion

was exactly what we set out to achieve. It was not our intention to create a new manifesto for architecture, but rather to ask questions, to provoke debate, and to provide space for critical reflection. Through such a speculative and open-ended approach we hoped to create an environment where the views and imaginations of people from different walks of life could co-exist.

In many ways, this publication mirrors this approach. It provides space for memories, reflections, and imaginations. It underlines our declaration that architecture can take many forms: a piece of writing, a crafted object, a photograph, or even a conversation. It explores rituals as memories, both mundane and majestic, that can be understood in relation to the hand, the body, and its senses. It questions what it means to belong, in a space, in a city, and in a world. And it reminds us of what can be achieved when we work together. Above all, it assures us that architecture can be many things, to many people and that a pavilion can create a sense of togetherness, despite our differences.



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This publication and the accompanying Fellows' event, Dancers Before the Moon: Reflections & Projects (December 2023), were orchestrated by 2023 Fellow Advisory Board members Eberé Anosike, Grace Higgins Brown, Olivia Hamblett, Amanni Hassan Hollands, Salma Magzoub Abdelrahman, Vera Okodugha, and Joshua Smith.

“The British Council Venice Fellowship programme offers a unique opportunity for emerging creative professionals to develop their thinking, make new connections and enhance their careers. However what is mentioned less but no less important is how the presence of the Fellows enriches the British Pavilion and the Biennale itself and seeks to further support a broad representation of the UK on the international stage. It is so inspirational to read about the 2023 Fellows' experiences not only in Venice but also their sustained connections to each other and the city and the positive legacy they continue to create.”

SEVRA DAVIS, COMMISSIONER OF THE BRITISH PAVILION,  
THE VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE AND DIRECTOR OF  
ARCHITECTURE DESIGN AND FASHION, BRITISH COUNCIL



“Liverpool School of Architecture have been pleased to continue to partner and support British Council in its Venice Fellowship programme . The Fellowship provides a fantastic opportunity to be immersed in and around critical conversation, environment and artistic endeavour of the highest quality as part of the international platform of the Venice Biennale. The impact of the residency experience has stayed with our LSA Fellows long beyond their time in Venice - opening doors , widening perspectives, developing skills and beginning friendships . It has been a total pleasure to be involved.”

SANDY BRITTON RIBA, LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

“The Venice Fellowship has been a magical and transformative moment in my academic journey. I feel incredibly lucky to have shared this space with such an inspiring group of artists, thinkers, and visionaries and will greatly treasure the ideas, relationships, and memories I carry with me from my time in the programme.”

VERA OKODUGHA, 2023 FELLOW