

## Vesper. Rivista di architettura, arti e teoria | Journal of Architecture, Arts & Theory

### Vesper No. 8 Vesper (Date of publication June 2022)

Call for abstracts and Call for papers

Its atmosphere was twilit and dangerous, its topography aggravated with mirrors; the main events were taking place on the other side of the amalgam, within some abandoned palazzo.

[...]

there is no other outcome thinkable against the background of this Penelope of a city, weaving her patterns by day and undoing them by night, without no Ulysses in sight. Only the sea.

Joseph Brodsky, *Watermark*

The eighth issue of “Vesper” is dedicated to the theme Vesper, and therefore calls for a double mirror: one inherent in the figure of the number eight and the other found in the contents and the name of the volume that contains them. Vespers and the design of time, twilight, the duality of West and East, the double as a condition and as a strategy, Venus and Venice, the sunset as a propitious direction, the drawing of shadows, camouflage, Vesper Lynd and the Vesper cocktail (both inventions from the pen of Ian Fleming) are the constellation points that propagate from the term Vesper and that “Vesper” 8 plans to illuminate.

Time and its measurement as project material was confirmed by Cedric Price in the *Mean Time* exhibition, presented in 1999 at the CCA in Montreal, where architectural situations were associated with 14 temporal categories: *Self-Destruction, Refabrication, Prediction, Anticipating the Impossible, Chronicle, Synchronization, Interval, Simultaneousness, Uncertainty, The Pleasure of Frustration, Suspending Time, Distorting Time, Gravity, Pacing*. But the project of time can also be resumed in the shape of a construction: the Swiss artist Not Vital conceives and realises today towers scattered around the world, designed only to become estranged and focussed on the appearance and fading of the sunset.

Twilight is associated both with the glow of the sky in the East before sunrise, and with the dim light that reverberates in the West after sunset. West and East are clear and confusing positions as already testified by Venice, or as Wright endeavors to demonstrate through his research, following the ideas of Georges Ivanovič Gurdjieff, bringing together *twins who would never get along* (again, West and East). The lagoon city is often associated with Venus due to them both being born from the waters (waters in which Venice is reflected and doubled). Pythagoras identified in the planet Venus both the evening star (Hesperus) and the morning star (Phosphorus); the two names refer to the same star but placed in different temporal conditions. The double is therefore both a situation and a strategy as recalled by the twin churches in Piazza del Popolo in Rome (1665-1678), the two apparently identical but different churches of Santa Maria in Montesanto (1662-1679), by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and Santa Maria dei Miracoli (1675-1679), by Carlo Rainaldi, again

in Rome. The Naturhistorisches Museum and the Kunsthistorisches Museum by Gottfried Semper and Karl von Hasenauer built in Vienna between 1872 and 1891 are mirror images of one another. MVRDV's Double House, built in Utrecht in 1997, proposes two interlocking housing units to become conjoined twins.

The sunset as a propitious direction has been demonstrated over the years in the work of some long-lived thinkers and architects; it is a real space in which architecture can choose to exist, even to defend itself. In 1998 Bernard Khoury built the B 018 nightclub in Beirut in the Quarantine district, a site that had witnessed bloody clashes during the Lebanese civil war. The club, sunk into the ground like an air-raid shelter, takes advantage of its concealed surface to live in the dark: by opening its moveable roof it transforms into an *en plein air* disco. Jean Nouvel conceived Onix (1988), in Saint-Herblain in France, to respond to the dichotomy between the urban direction prescribed by a large parking lot and the echo of a primeval Eden evoked by the presence of a large lake in the area. The architect opted for a third position between the two existing situations, suspending the building within the brilliance and density of darkness: 'It is black, but bright and sharp. The thickness of the building is conveyed through the thickness of its darkness, and appears as a monochrome block'.

In his book *Le soglie dell'ombra. Riflessioni sul mistero* Franco Rella crosses ancient and modern cultural contexts in search of the boundary between light and its opposite and the meanings it preserves and constructs; but shadow is also substance to be considered and manipulated by architects and artists through the presence of concrete elements and the control of black forms to sculpt faces and bodies. In the axonometry of his project for Ca' Venier dei Leoni (1985), Costantino Dardi fills the found and existing void with a forest of pillars, a void inhabited only by the erect columns and their shadows. His earlier facade project presented as part of the 1980 Strada Novissima in Venice was modelled to define inclined depths in the minimal usable thickness and featured thin overhanging frames: these are two movements aimed at obtaining cast shadows and dark thresholds. Many cities are also marked by sundials that transform light into dark signs, again designing *forms of time*.

The cocktail (that usually marks the end of the day) 'Vesper' is an invention of Ian Fleming, mentioned in *Casino Royale* (1953). The name of the drink reflects that of one of the protagonists of the story: the spy Vesper Lynd (a character inspired by the life of the Polish secret agent Christine Granville/Krystyna Skarbek in the service of the British MI6). Today it is not possible to reproduce the original recipe as Kina Lillet, a fundamental ingredient together with gin, vodka, and lemon zest, is no longer in production. The relationship between alcohol, the city and architecture has perhaps been little considered in urban studies, while certainly observed in literature and the visual arts in the way it creates common spaces in the evening, exalting the passage between day and night. Yet it would be useful to unravel the 'mystery', citing Rella, of venues such as the Harry's Bar in Venice: experienced as a busy port of call, extremely packed and cosy, conceived as an intimate but not alienating place.

Vesper Lynd, with her double game, her being a fictional character and a real spy, brings camouflage to the field, a condition naturally experienced by some animals and plants, a declination of the double as strategy

that is always based on ambiguity and on the inhabited border. In the text *Architecture in Uniform: Designing and Building for the Second World War* (2011) Jean-Louis Cohen stresses: ‘During the Second World War, architects almost completely supplanted painters in the field of camouflage. Studies into the technique had continued uninterrupted since 1918, and camouflage departments now occupied an important place in all the armed forces. [...] Physicists were added to strengthen the scientific component of the projects; advanced experiments were conducted in an ingenious “vision chamber”, making it possible to study the various proposals under different lighting conditions, as well as in a “moonlight vision chamber” for nocturnal views’. The art of masking is redundant in the city of Venice, consider for example the Serenissima’s laws on architectural embellishments that relegated luxury to the interior of buildings only, hidden from the urban setting. Again, camouflage finds its foundation in the changing worlds of water, in the mirrors, in the Wilde-like dissociations which then coincide with the multiple – and multiverse – substance of the reality.

“Vesper” enhances *the fall into time* because, as Cioran writes, ‘we are truly ourselves only when, facing ourselves, we coincide with nothing, not even with our own singularity’. Looking into the twilight is equivalent to dissolving obvious differences and distances, it confuses the boundaries of objects and tests the certainties of the gaze, immersing the latter in the darkening of the ‘contemporary’. Blindness is a necessary condition for understanding reality, as Saramago has already suggested; Agamben states that in order to live within one’s time it is necessary to construct a displacement, an anachronism: not to see the lights but to be able to detect the obscurities; Eco reminds us that considering the darkness it is possible to reconcile an *affectionate sense of the concrete and a dance of sublime abstractions*.

## **Vesper No. 8 Vesper**

### **Call for abstracts by August 25, 2022**

**Project.** A contribution that establishes a close relationship between a set of images/drawings and a critical text investigating the underlying reasons for a realised project.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 3 images.

Final contribution: maximum 3000 words, maximum 10 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

**Essay.** A scientific essay with footnotes, bibliography and iconography.

Call for abstracts: maximum 700 words, maximum 2 images, selected bibliography.

Final contribution: maximum 4500 word (text, bibliography and footnotes), maximum 7 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

**Journey.** A written or visual report describing a real or imaginary journey and its development through time and/or space.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words or maximum 3 images with captions.

Final contribution: text of maximum 1500 words and maximum 3 images or a visual storyboard with up to 10 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings). The images submitted must be produced by the author or used with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

**Archive.** A selection of archival materials presented along with their sources and a comment.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 4 images.

Final contribution: maximum 1500 words, maximum 10 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

**Tutorial.** A sequence of images and texts intended as a brief manual for performing practices and/or operations.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 4 images.

Final contribution: maximum 15 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings) with a text of maximum 1200 words. The images submitted must be produced by the author who must be the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

**Translation.** Unpublished translation of a document in any language, to be published in Italian and English along with a critical review.

Call for abstracts: Text proposed for translation, critical review (maximum 400 words), 1 image.

Final contribution: Text proposed for translation: maximum of 1500 words, critical review: maximum 1200 words, 3 images with written permission of the copyright holder and preferably scans of the original document with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline August 25, 2022).

## **Vesper No. 8 Vesper**

### **Call for papers by August 25, 2022**

**Tale.** A narrative text (without footnotes or bibliography) or a visual narrative.

Call for papers: maximum 1500 words or a selection of 10 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings). The images submitted must be produced by the author who must be the copyright holder.

**Dictionary.** Each issue of the journal hosts three entries in Italian and three entries in English to compile an ongoing dictionary. Each text deals critically with the definition of a term strictly related to the theme of issue. The dictionary in “Vesper” No. 8 includes letters: **V, W, X, Y, Z** for English. The initial letter of the term must correspond to one of these letters and must be written in its own belonging language.

Call for papers: an opening image (with caption and written permission of the copyright holder), the text and a short bibliography, for a total of 1000 words.

## **Timeline**

### **Sections: Project, Essay, Journey, Archive, Tutorial, Translation**

Abstracts must be submitted by August 25, 2022

Abstracts acceptance notification by September 10, 2022

Papers submission by November 1, 2022

Papers acceptance notification by November 20, 2022

### **Sections: Tale, Dictionary**

Papers submission by August 25, 2022

Papers acceptance notification by September 10, 2022

## **Publication of Vesper No. 8, May 2023**

### **Guidelines for the submission of abstracts by August 25, 2022**

#### **Sections: Project, Essay, Journey, Archive, Tutorial, Translation**

Abstracts must contain: title; name of author(s), affiliation, e-mail address and a short bio-bibliographical profile; selected section; five keywords; text according to the guidelines for each different type of contribution and/or images with captions. File name: Vesper8\_abstract\_Last Name. Abstracts can be submitted either in Italian or in English. Abstracts must be submitted as .pdf via e-mail to: pard.iride@iuav.it. E-mail subject: Vesper 8 Call for abstract / Last name.

### **Guidelines for the submission of papers by November 1, 2022**

#### **Sections: Project, Essay, Journey, Archive, Tutorial, Translation**

Papers must contain: title; name of author(s), affiliation, e-mail address and a short bio-bibliographical profile; selected section; five keywords; summary of 150 words (for on-line publication); text according to the guidelines for each different type of contribution and/or images with captions. File name: Vesper8\_paper\_Last Name. Papers can be submitted either in Italian or in English and must follow the

journal's editorial guidelines, which can be downloaded at the following link: [Download link](#). Papers must be submitted as .pdf and .docx via e-mail to: [pard.iride@iuav.it](mailto:pard.iride@iuav.it). E-mail subject: Call for paper Vesper 9 / Last name.

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