Léa-Catherine Szacka
Crowd

Abstract

Crowd

On July 15, 1989, the city of Venice was stormed by a large crowd that had reached the city in order to assist to a free and open-air concert of the English rock band Pink Floyd. United by music, the crowd occupied the city and became the symbol of a 'continuous opposition between past and present' and a clash between two ideas of the city. Looking at the signification of the term 'crowd' in its interaction with historic city centres, this text recalls the infamous night of the Venetian concert and raises questions related to the rise of mass tourism and the ever-increasing spectacularization of cities.

Crowd

Il 15 luglio 1989 Venezia è stata presa d'assalto da una folla imponente che ha raggiunto la città per partecipare al concerto, gratuito e all'aperto, della rock band inglese Pink Floyd. Unita dalla musica, la folla ha occupato la città ed è divenuta simbolo di una "opposizione continua tra passato e presente", di uno scontro tra due idee di città. Guardando al significato del termine "folla" in rapporto alle sue interazioni fisiche con i centri storici della città, il testo richiama la famigerata notte del concerto veneziano e solleva questioni legate alla crescita del turismo di massa e alla sempre maggiore spettacolarizzazione delle città.

VESPER No. 1

VESPER No. 1

SUPERVENICE

SUPERVENICE

VESPER No. 1

SUPERVENICE

SUPERVENICE

Quodlibet

Vesper è una rivista scientifica semestrale, multidisciplinare e bilingue, si occupa delle relazioni tra forme e processi del progetto e del pensiero. Ponendo lo sguardo al crepuscolo, quando la luce si confonde con il buio e l'oggetto illuminante non è più visibile, *Vesper* intende leggere l'atto progettuale seguendo e rendendo evidente il moto della trasformazione. Pitagora identificò nel pianeta Venere sia la stella della sera (*Hesperos*) che quella del mattino (*Phosphoros*), i due nomi si riferiscono allo stesso astro ma posto in condizioni temporali differenti. *Vesper* dichiara quindi una posizione più che un oggetto e privilegia il situarsi che ne profila lo statuto. Non è qui accesa la luce tagliente dell'alba, che promette giorni completamente nuovi e alti sol dell'avvenire, ma quella che fa intravedere nella penombra una possibilità nell'esistente.

Richiamando e rinnovando la tradizione delle riviste cartacee italiane, *Vesper* ospita un paesaggio articolato di modalità narrative, accoglie forme di scrittura e stili differenti, privilegia l'intelligenza visiva del progetto, dell'espressione grafica, dell'immagine e delle contaminazioni tra linguaggi. La rivista è pensata nella sua successione di numeri tematici come discorso sulla contemporaneità, nello spazio di ogni singolo numero è articolata in un insieme di rubriche che gettano luci differenti sul tema. Nel procedere delle diverse sezioni – editoriale, citazione, progetto, racconto, lezione, saggio, inserto, traduzione, archivio, viaggio, ring, tutorial, dizionario – mutano i riverberi tra idee e realtà, si accende l'intreccio tra evidenze concrete e loro potenzialità, potenziali trasformativi, immaginari. Le rubriche sono pensate non per aggiornare istantaneamente ma per indagare condizioni progettuali e per fornire strumenti e materiali dall'*ombra lunga*.

Vesper is a six-monthly, multidisciplinary and bilingual scientific journal which deals with the relationships between forms and processes of thought and of design. Gazing into the dusk, when light slowly merges with darkness and the illuminating object is no longer visible, *Vesper* aims to interpret the act of designing through tracing and revealing the movement of transformation. Pythagoras identified in the planet Venus both the evening star (*Hesperos*) and the morning star (*Phosphoros*), assigning the two names to the same star observed in different temporal conditions. *Vesper* thus states a perspective rather than an object, privileging the condition that defines its status. Rather than the sharp light of dawn, heralding a brand-new day and promising a brighter future, it is the twilight that allows you to have a glimpse at the potential of what is already there.

Following the tradition of Italian paper journals, *Vesper* revives it by hosting a wide spectrum of narratives, welcoming different writings and styles, privileging the visual intelligence of design, of graphic expression, of images and contaminations between different languages. The journal is conceived as a series of thematic issues that build a discourse on the contemporary. Each issue is divided into sections that offer a range of diverse perspectives on the theme analysed: editorial, quote, project, tale, lecture, essay, extra, translation, archive, journey, ring, tutorial, dictionary. Throughout the different sections, reverberations between ideas and reality change, connections emerge between tangible facts and their potentials, transformative prospects, collective perception. The principal aim of these sections is not to provide instant news, but to offer an in-depth investigation of different instances of design and to provide tools and materials that have a long-lasting effect.

VESPER   No. 1   SUPERVENICE

Armin Linke, *Lagunari Regiment, excercise*, Venezia, 2007.

Breve estratto da un testo critico che definisce la rotta o le coordinate di attraversamento del tema. | Brief excerpt from a critical text concerning different perspectives on the topic.

Contributi che indagano le ragioni, le *mise-en-scène*, le risultanti di progetti realizzati attraverso le voci degli autori e/o di critici. | Contributions that investigate the reasons, the *mise-en-scènes*, and the results of an accomplished project throughout the voices of the authors and/or the critics.

Narrazioni testuali o per immagini attraverso realtà note o ipotetiche. | Textual or visual narratives exploring actual or hypothetical worlds.

Saggi critici articolati in citazioni, note, iconografie e una bibliografia. | Essays including quotes, notes, iconography and bibliography.

Forma e modo d'espressione di questa rubrica sono a discrezione dell'autore. | The section consists in the original contribution of an author.

Traduzione inedita di un documento anticipata da un commento critico che ne evidenzia l'attuale rilevanza e attualità. | Unreleased translation of a document introduced by a critical comment highlighting its relevance.

Resoconto di un viaggio fisico o immaginario e delle sue evoluzioni temporali e spaziali. | A physical or imaginary journey in its temporal and spatial development.

Fronteggiamento tra posizioni differenti poste sullo stesso "campo di gioco". | Different points of view facing each other on the same 'playing field'.

Manuale d'uso per l'esecuzione di pratiche e/o operazioni. | Instructions to carry out practices and/or operations.

Definizioni critiche di tre lemmi in italiano e tre lemmi in inglese contribuiscono alla precisazione del tema. Il dizionario prosegue con l'evolvere di "Vesper", si compone in itinere. | Critical definitions of three headwords in Italian and three headwords in English that contribute to point out the issue's topic. The definitions through the issues of "Vesper" will compose an ongoing dictionary.

crowd (kraʊd) noun | 1. a large number of people gathered together in a disorganized or unruly way. | 1.1 an audience, especially one at a sporting event. | 1.2 a group of people who are linked by a common interest or activity. | 1.3 (the crowd) the mass or multitude of ordinary people. | 1.4 a large number of things regarded collectively. English Oxford Dictionary, www.lexico.com, accessed 14/06/2019.
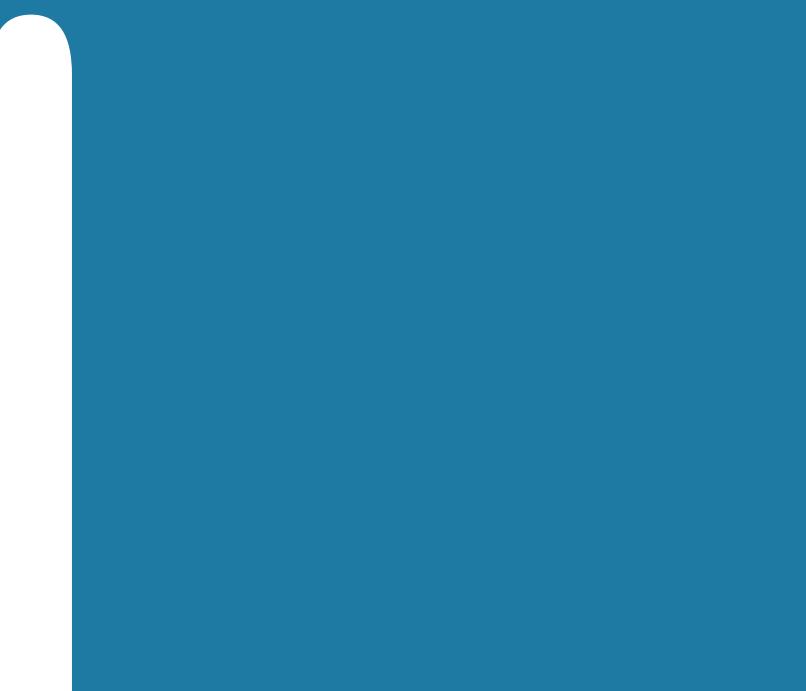
The Pink Floyd's concert during the traditional feast of the SS. Redentore. Public waiting on the Sansovino's loggia under the Campanile of Saint Mark, Venice, July 15, 1989. Ph. Marco Sabadin/Vision, 1989.

The term 'crowd' refers to a large group of people, a mass or multitude, gathered together in a disorganized way, either for political or ideological reasons or for festivities, sports or cultural events. In his 1960 book *Crowd and Power*, Elias Canetti explains that: 'The most important occurrence within the crowd is the *discharge*. Before this the crowd does not actually exist; it is the discharge, which creates it. This is the moment when all who belong to the crowd get rid of their differences and feel equal' (Canetti 1962, p. 17). On July 15, 1989, the city of Venice was stormed by a large crowd that had reached the city in order to assist to a free and open-air concert of the English rock band Pink Floyd. United by music, the crowd occupied the city and became the symbol of a 'continuous opposition between past and present' and a clash between two ideas of the city. The concert given by Pink Floyd on the evening of July 15, 1989 forever remains in the collective memories as a static image: that of a crowd that far surpasses the capabilities of an island city like Venice. However, the backstage and the story of this event are complex and extend well beyond the ninety minutes of the concert.

Crowds are a constant of rock concerts: The Beatles New York's Shea Stadium concert on August 15, 1965, attracting more than 55,600 fans, marked a paradigm shift and is considered by specialists as the first mass rock concert. Rock invasions often use abandoned, open sites, stadiums or squares, and more rarely theatres. They create a landscape always constituted by the crowd, a formless magma surrounded by sound and crossed by beams of light which concentrate on the stage to enlighten the star or the musicians.

During *A Momentary Lapse of Reason's* world tour (that lasted from September 9, 1987 to June 30, 1990), members of Pink Floyd decide to perform in some unusual places – such as the Château of Versailles or the Olympic Stadium in Moscow (respectively on June 21, 1988 and on June 3, 1989) – thus marking a publicity stunt while offering a unique moment and extraordinary to their fans. Following this, Francesco Tomasi, promoter for the tour's Italian part, had the idea of organizing a free concert in the lagoon, on the occasion of the Festa del Redentore, the most popular of all Venetian celebrations. According to the tradition, the concert had to be seen and heard as much from the boats gathered in San Marco's basin as from Piazzetta San Marco. The concert was to take place on a floating stage of 97 × 24 × 24 m, thus putting under the spotlight, in San Marco's basin, one of the most popular rock bands of all time with, as background, the fabulous scenography of Venice.

The idea of playing in the open-air, in an historical site and in front of a large crowd, was both closely linked and diametrically opposed to another of Pink Floyd's extraordinary performance. In 1971, the young Scottish director Adrian Maben had the idea of a film in which Pink Floyd would play in an empty Pompei amphitheatre, at the foot of Monte Vesuvio, a space with remarkable acoustics. A sort of anti-Woodstock, *Live at Pompeii*'s mission was to focus solely on music in its relationship to the place, to its spirit, its genius, its memory. Released in 1972, the musical film *Live at Pompeii* constitute an original and paradoxical example of the marriage between rock music and historical places.

Pink Floyd's 1989 concert in Venice also reached a virtual crowd with repercussions that went far beyond the lagoon. Filmed by fifteen cameras and broadcasted live it was watched by more than one hundred million viewers from twenty-three countries, it marked history, as much for its media reach than for the real physical experience it provided to its participants and the inhabitants of Venice. Thanks to Mondovision, a technology first used in the late Nineteen-Sixties and which implies the simultaneous broadcast of a television program in as many countries of the world as possible, the concert was retransmitted in England, Spain,

the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Turkey, France, Greece, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Soviet Union and both Germanys.

On the evening of July 15, the audience well exceeds the 50,000 expected spectators, causing a panic in the lagoon city. A few hours before the concert, the Ponte della Libertà, which connects Venice to the mainland, was closed to cars, limiting access to the city that only then became accessible by train, boat or on foot. On Piazza San Marco, fans climb on the Palazzo delle Prigioni Vecchie and on the façade of the Biblioteca Marciana entrance – and up to the roof of the *vaporetto* pier located opposite the Ponte della Paglia, not far from the Ponte dei Sospiri. The number of policeman was quickly insufficient and reinforcements were sent from Mestre and Padua. Eventually, the police had to charge the uncontrollable crowd near Ponte della Paglia and Torre dell'Orologio, but without any success.

Pink Floyd's Venice concert lasted exactly one hour and a half and concluding with the song *Run Like Hell*, followed by the traditional fireworks of the Redentore. Once the party ended, the debacle began: streets were blocked by the crowd that was heading towards the bus station of Piazzale Roma. The flow of people leaving Piazza San Marco met with that of the people who were camped at Campo Santo Stefano, watching the concert on a giant screen. The journey from San Marco to Piazzale Roma took around 1.5 hours. And, in Piazzale Roma, another surprise awaits the fans: the public transport company has launched a strike and no buses were running that day. No taxis either. Someone tries, in vain, to put pressure on a truck driver. Finally, out of desperation, the crowd decided to cross the Ponte della Libertà on foot to reach the mainland. Widely disseminated by the media, images of the concert – and mostly apocalyptic photographs and films shot after the passage of the crowd – travelled the world.

The real protagonists of this story were not the Pink Floyd but the crowd that, on July 15, 1989, invaded every possible corner of Venice's land and water. Yet the crowd of Pink Floyd's concert was also announcing a more pervasive and impactful one. To come back to Canetti's words, it is evident that a form of discharge happens when the unified magma of mass tourists enters Venice everyday, as if it was an attraction park.

Bibliography:
Associazione Culturale Floydseum (ed.), *The Night of Wonders. Pink Floyd a Venezia - 15 luglio 1989. Luci, suoni e memorie*, Antorami, Trieste 2014 | Bozzato F., *Pink Floyd, 25 anni fa lo storico concerto*, in "Corriere del Veneto", 15/07/2014 | Canetti E., *Crowds and Power*, Viking Press, New York 1962 | Chelo C., *Naufragio in Laguna dei Pink Floyd*, in "l'Unità", 13/07/1989, p. 10 | Gastaldi T., *Lo show del secolo: i Pink Floyd a Venezia*, Free Media, Milano 2006 | Giallo R., *Rock e Cotillons*, in "l'Unità", 15/07/1989, p. 16 | Hassall B., *Pink Floyd: Backstage*, Mind Head Publishing, Hemel Hempstead 2011 | Lorrain S., Marini S., Szacka L.-C., *Le concert. Pink Floyd à Venise*, Éditions B2, Paris 2017 | Mason N., *Inside Out: A personal history of Pink Floyd*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco 2004 | *Pink Floyd Live in Venice 1989 Full concert*, www.youtube.com, accessed 05/07/2019 | Szacka L.-C., *Pink Floyd and the Imago Urbis*, in "AA Files", no. 69, 2014.

Autori | Authors
Fabrizio Antonelli, *professore associato in Georisorse Minerarie e Applicazioni
Mineralogico-petrografiche per l'Ambiente e i Beni Culturali*, Università
Iuav di Venezia.
Lorenzo Calvelli, *professore associato in Storia Antica*, Università
Ca' Foscari Venezia.
Paolo Ceccon, *architetto*, Venezia.
Agostino De Rosa, *professore ordinario in Disegno*, Università Iuav
di Venezia.
Nicola Emery, *docente-ricercatore in Filosofia e Estetica*, Accademia
di Architettura di Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.
Milovan Farronato, *direttore e curatore di Fiorucci Art Trust*, London.
Curatore del Padiglione Italia della 58. *Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte
- Biennale di Venezia 2019*.
Daniela Ferretti, *direttrice del Museo Fortuny*, Venezia.
Manuele Fior, *Cartoonist, Illustrator and Architect*, Paris.
Luigi Guzzardi, *architetto*, Venezia.
Robert Henke, *Composer, Artist and Software Developer*, Berlin.
Serenella Iovino, *Professor in Italian Studies and Environmental
Humanities*, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Armin Linke, *Photographer*, Berlin.
Giovanni Marras, *professore associato in Composizione Architettonica
e Urbana*, Università Iuav di Venezia.
Riccardo Miotto, *architetto e illustratore*, Treviso.
Gabriele Monti, *ricercatore in Disegno Industriale*, Università Iuav
di Venezia.
Alessandra Pagliano, *professore associato in Disegno*, Università Federico
II di Napoli.
Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Professor in History and Theory of Architecture*,
McGill University, Montréal.
Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, *Professor in Law & Theory*,
University of Westminster, London.
Mario Piana, *professore ordinario in Restauro*, Università Iuav di Venezia.
Fernando Quesada, *Professor in Architecture*, Universidad de Alcalá.
Paul O Robinson, *Artist and Professor in Design and Theory*, Univerza
v Ljubljani.
Annalisa Sacchi, *professore associato in Discipline dello Spettacolo*,
Università Iuav di Venezia.
Massimo Santanicchia, *Professor in Architecture*, Iceland University
of the Arts.
Supervoid (Benjamin Gallegos Gabilondo, Marco Provinciali), *studio
di architettura*, Roma. + Anna Livia Friel, *dottoranda in Urbanistica*,
Università Iuav di Venezia.
Léa-Catherine Szacka, *Professor in Architectural Studies*, University
of Manchester.
Luca Trevisani, *Artist*, Berlin.
Angela Vettese, *professore associato in Museologia e Critica Artistica
e del Restauro*, Università Iuav di Venezia.

Università Iuav di Venezia

dcp
dipartimento di Culture del Progetto

Quodlibet