

Acronym – MISERABILIA

Title - Spaces and Specters of Misery. Epicenter of Studies, Research, Theories and Projects for the Development of an Image and a Reality for the Contemporary Italian City

Scientific coordinator – Sara Marini

Department – Department of Architecture and Arts

ERC sector – SH5

Iuav role – lead partner

Other partners – “Roma Tre” University of Rome, University of Genoa

Duration – 24 months

Start – 17/10/2023

Closure – 16/10/2025

Project budget – € 248 484.00

Iuav budget – € 98 201.00

Funding to Iuav – € 80 389.00

Source of funding – MUR (Ministry of University and Research) - Call PRIN 2022

Description – Misery in Western societies is today unthinkable and unrepresentable, unspeakable and invisible, exiled to a historical, geographical, cultural elsewhere. Yet, in the past, misery took majestic forms in Italy, from the Great Schools of Venice to the almshouses for the poor. Monuments gave way to the anonymous architecture of service centres or temporary structures responding to emergency situations. If the monumentality of misery expressed an aesthetics, the architecture of poverty rejects it in the name of functionality: today the space of misery is emptied of phenomenology, evidence, quality, quantity, scale, extension, discourse.

Two assumptions underlie the research: the removal of the space of existence of misery in the concrete and immaterial context of the West in favour of ‘measurable conditions of poverty’; the presence of buildings in cities as evidence of a past in which poverty was a ‘matter’ of governance and planning. The first assumption establishes the urgency and reasons for the research; the second represents an initial set of ‘memorabilia’ that the project aims to detect and collect to shed light on a theme and a presence that is now spectral, latent.

Objectives - MISERABILIA aims to study spaces and spectres of misery in the collective imagination and in the contemporary Italian urban context. The main objectives are the definition of tools to recognize and investigate the tangible and intangible manifestations of misery and the establishment of methods and languages in order to then be able to talk about it and make plans. There are therefore two implications: an increase in knowledge, awareness, and competence in relation to a problem that is as increasingly relevant today as it is neglected or hidden; definition of notions and guidance useful for the management of imbalances that arise due to the physical and cultural marginalization of a part of society.

Website – www.iuav.it/prin-miserabilia