

Emilio Vedova De America

Magazzino del Sale and
Spazio Vedova
18 June – 26 November 2017

The Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova presents the Emilio Vedova *De America* exhibition, which will be open in the Magazzino del Sale (Zattere 266) and in the nearby Spazio Vedova (Zattere 50) from 18 June to 26 November 2017.

The *De America* cycle by Emilio Vedova, presented in the Magazzino del Sale – where it will be put in motion by the robotic machine designed by Renzo Piano -- consists of 14 paintings on canvas and was produced by the artist between 1976 and 1977. They are all works in black and white and of a large format, which after decades of dialogue with figures on the American scene, travel and collaborations with universities from Washington to Philadelphia, reflect the expressive link between the artist and American art. From the 1940s, Vedova was in constant contact with the language of the artists promoted by Peggy Guggenheim in Venice, from Jackson Pollock to Franz Kline, and often accompanied their research. Through the Venice Biennali, which attracted collectors and directors of overseas museums, his contribution was acknowledged and led to his being awarded the Grand Prix for Painting in 1960 by an international commission chaired by the historian Herbert Read. After the various one-man shows at the Catherine Viviano Gallery in New York, in 1956 he was awarded the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Award for Italy, with the consequent acquisition of a work by the Museum of Modern Art. During the 1960s, he was present in North America with the imposing *Percorso/Plurimo/Luce* installation in the Italian pavilion of Expo '67 in Montreal, talking to new generations at campuses like Berkeley, and swapping notes and opinions in New York with poets and intellectuals from Allen Ginsberg to Dore Ashton. Thus, having acquired a fundamental role in the history of modernity, with *De America* in the 1970s, Vedova seems to pay tribute to his American experiences and North American art, seeking a connection with the history of Italian art, of which he was a protagonist. The paintings reflect an affinity between the language of the past, the connection with the dynamic and energetic intensity of futurism, and the contemporary affinity with the gestures of sign of an Eastern origin, which established itself through action painting and abstract expressionism. The connection between these two attitudes is made clear by the speed with which the artist's action is represented in the canvas. It is a projection of free and fluid coordinates and structures, constituting a vision in which the city of history, Venice, grafts with the city of the future, New York. The large canvases are a *carmen*

to the dimension of the transition between polarities that simultaneously attract and repel, ensuring a circulation between alternative energies. Vedova made the subjective experience of his making art co-exist with the linguistic body of a trans-oceanic vision. He saw himself as a ferryman going to and from one side to the other of the waters that bathe history and current affairs. He acquired and incorporated the informative aggression of the space and signs coming from the new world but mediated it through the luminous transparency of the lagoon.

Emilio Vedova De America

Magazzino del Sale, Zattere 266

Spazio Vedova, Zattere 50

Venice

18 June - 26 November, 2017

From Wednesday to Sunday,

10.30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

For Expo Milano in 2015, in its Magazzino del Sale in Venice, the Fondazione Vedova evoked Emilio Vedova's experience at the Expo 1967 in Montreal, where he was coordinator of the Italian Pavilion and produced the still famous "*plurimo luce*", accompanied by the electronic music of Marino Zuccheri. At the same time, with an exhibition of Rota in the Spazio Vedova, the Fondazione recalled the intervention of Calder, who had also participated in the Canadian Expo of 1967. With the Montreal experience over, and accompanied by his wife, Annabianca, Emilio Vedova travelled to the United States. This was the first time he set foot in the "New World", but in fact his works had preceded him in number. Since 1951 (at the age of 32) he had started in New York with a personal show at the Catherine Viviano Gallery, enjoying a remarkable success, which was noted in Italy by Rodolfo Pallucchini, among others. On that occasion, he displayed admirable works from the so-called geometric period: *uomo e macchina*, *esplosione*, *campo di concentramento*, to name a few.

The first destination was New York; it was from there that began a long journey to the Haight-Ashbury neighbourhood of San Francisco, and to the cities of Oakland and Sausalito, California. In parallel, he held a cycle of readings in "progressive" universities, Berkeley first of all: these were the years when thousands of people in the United States were demonstrating against the war in Vietnam.

For Vedova, the experience was almost traumatic because, one could say, "he discovered America" and a great democracy (albeit with considerable limits: just consider the racial confrontation). An America that marked him deeply and obliged him to revise – on an ideological level too – his political experience. Above all, it began to stimulate an artistic development that began with a strong graphic production: etchings, aquatints, lithographs, waxprints, drypoints, serigraphs which, in the alchemy of acids and lines, reflected the "*direct encounter – clash with matter*" (as he put it), the tensions of the explosive, young, contradictory and fascinating American context (in the coming years, the Fondazione will be displaying his graphic cycles which will be an unforgettable experience for everyone).

In the autumn of 1973, Emilio and Annabianca returned to the United States, first staying in New York and starting a long car tour (the tireless Annabianca at the wheel) through the States to reach the various venues for his *Lectures*, among others: the University of Wisconsin in Madison, the Wayne University in Detroit, the Cleveland Institute of Art in Ohio, the Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the Corning Museum of Glass in New England.

Emilio and Annabianca then travelled by car across Connecticut, New England, Vermont, Wisconsin and finally returned to New York, where Emilio held a lesson at Cooper University.

This second American experience slowly matured in the soul of Vedova and exploded in 1976 -77. In his syncopated writing and syntax, like in a series of

brief notes, Vedova recorded in his diaries '... *how much Europe in these American painters... blossoming nuclei of the American impulse: from historical expressionism, dada, surrealism... the scenic debate, taken for granted, within my space implies references, choices, targets, in contrast, no... implies conflicting and simultaneous situations.*'

We are now showing a significant part of the American cycle of those years at the Magazzino del Sale. There are fourteen works, of which five are in "*machina*" and nine on the walls, reflecting and suggesting in a stark and dramatically expressive black-and-white scenario, the metropolitan spaces, suburban slums and vertiginous architectural structures of the American urban dynamics.

We are also at the eve of publishing and presenting the *De America* volume: a complex work, the result of a fruitful collaboration, co-production and co-production between Massimo Di Carlo's Galleria dello Scudo in Verona and the Fondazione Vedova. The publication contains approximately 650 pages, and is to be published by Skira. Intended as an overview of Vedova's American period, it has ended up by drawing in the protagonists of this project into a study of the whole of Vedova's working life, in a fascinating journey between 1935 and 2006: it is a survey that illustrates an important period of European and American art, focusing on the most important artistic expressions of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, with a skilled and precise positioning within the historical and political context of the last century.

A sort of common thread links *De America* with the works exhibited in the Spazio Vedova: *Tondo (Golfo, Mappa di Guerra)* of 1991, *Chi Brucia un Libro Brucia un Uomo* of 1993, *Senza titolo (...als ob...)* '96-'97, *Compresenze – anni '90* of 1997. Vedova's "American" years are marked by the drama of Vietnam, and his "Lectures" at Berkeley testify to the tensions felt by the new generations in the United States. In the 1990s, Vedova saw and relived those tragic situations again in the Gulf War and Balkan conflict. Among other works, he produced a disc called *Chi Brucia un Libro Brucia un Uomo*, destined for the Sarajevo Library, which as we remember, was deliberately burned down.

The *Senza titolo (...als ob...)* '96-'97 (made of paint, cords, charcoal, sand, rags, combustion on wood, crossed by two unsettling poles) expresses the devastation and violence of a wounded society that ends up denying the most elementary forms of human civilisation.

And similar in scope are the *Compresenze*, made of paint, charcoal, collage, papers, graffiti and burnt wood: *compresenze* ('co-presences') of evils and *compresenze* of materials. And *Tondo (Golfo, Mappa di Guerra)* is a sort of map of universal evils: hunger, violence, war, subjugation, death, all expressed in an assemblage of mixed media on nylon and wood.

Two recurring themes of Vedova's life and art, in which life and art were totally intermingled, are the *scontro di situazioni* ('clash of situations') and *immagini del tempo* ('images of time') that end up being the "title" of many of his works. Works that it is almost difficult to consider under these titles because they actually go beyond the title to be the expression *tout court* of his way of seeing and dealing with and – ultimately – living life.

For him, life was above all, essentially, a perpetual 'clash of situations'. A clash that is never resolved, and is perhaps unresolvable, between good and evil. The 'clash of situations' is visible and expressed, among other things, in a gigantic work of 1959 (2.75 x 4.44 metres), which, thanks to a highly fruitful collaboration between the Gallerie dell'Accademia of Venice and the Fondazione Vedova will go on display in the rooms of the Gallerie.

The other existential theme for Vedova was that of the *immagine del tempo* ('image of time'). It is not known whether Vedova was inspired by that philosophical approach whereby man is made of time, by which is meant of his century, of the individual phases of his life, of his physical and psychological changes linked to the temporal phases of human life. It is not known whether Vedova was inspired by the ancient classical conception of time, expressed by the Greek world, that distinguished between time as notion of infinity and time as a perception of the past, present and the future: all moments that actually unite incessantly when the future becomes present and, immediately, past.

Whatever his intellectual inspiration, in these works (the *immagini del tempo*) Vedova perceived time as an essential factor making up human life. And now, as part of the collaboration between the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Fondazione Vedova, a famous work – *Immagine del tempo 1957 – T.* – is to be placed in the classroom-studio where Vedova taught from the riotous year of 1968 onwards.

Alfredo Bianchini

President, Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova

**Works on display in the Magazzino
del Sale**

De America '76 – 7

1976

206.7x202.3

Water paint, charcoal, pastel
and solvent-based paint
on canvas-backed paper
Galleria dello Scudo, Verona

De America '76 – 6

1976

207.5x203

Water paint, charcoal, paper and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 8

1976

206.9x202.5

Water paint, charcoal and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 16

1976

207.2x200.5

Water paint, charcoal, paper and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 10

1976

206.8x199.9

Water paint, charcoal, paper and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 9

1976

207x204.5

Water paint, charcoal, paper,
pastel and solvent-based paint
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 12

1976

207.6x203

Water paint, charcoal, paper and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 13

1976

208x204

Water paint, charcoal, paper,
pastel and solvent-based paint
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 15

1976

207x203.8

Water paint, paper and pastel
on canvas-backed paper
Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca
Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 3

1976

206x198

Water paint, charcoal and pastel
on canvas
Mart – Museo di arte moderna
and contemporanea di Trento
and Rovereto, Rovereto

De America '76 – 5

1976

206.8x199.9

Water paint, charcoal, paper, pastel
and sand on canvas

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca

Vedova, Venice

De America '76 – 11

1976

208x202.3

Water paint, charcoal, paper,
pastel and solvent-based paint
on canvas-backed paper

Private collection

De America '76 – 14

1976

208x203.2

Water paint and pastel
on canvas-backed paper

Private collection

De America '76 – 4

1976

206x196

Water paint, solvent-based paint,
charcoal, pastel, paper and sand
on canvas

Anna Majani collection, Bologna

**Works on display in the Spazio
Vedova**

Tondo (Golfo, Mappa di Guerra)

1991

280 Ø

Nylon, ink, paper, solvent-based paint,
pastel, metal and metal panel on wood

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca

Vedova, Venice

Chi brucia un libro brucia un uomo

1993

280 Ø

Water paint, solvent-based paint,
combustion, paper on wood
and metal, complex metal structure
and metal base

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca

Vedova, Venice

Senza titolo (...als ob...) '96-'97

1996-1997

280Øx400

Water paint, solvent-based paint,
pastel, canvas, paper, wood, cord,
sand, combustion and chalk on wood

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca

Vedova, Venice

Compresenze - anni '90

1997

210x600x30

Water paint, solvent-based paint,
combustion, pastel, charcoal, chalk
and paper on wood

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca

Vedova, Venice

Emilio Vedova (1919 – 2006)

Born in Venice into a family of workers and artisans, from the 1930s onwards Vedova began an intense activity as a self-taught artist. In 1942 he joined the anti-Novecento movement known as "Corrente". An anti-Fascist, he participated to the Resistance from 1944 to 1945 and in 1946, he was one of the co-signers of the "Beyond Guernica" manifesto in Milan. In the same year he was one of the founders of the "Nuova Secessione Italiana" followed by the "Fronte Nuovo delle Arti".

In 1948 he made his debut in the Venice Biennale, the first of many appearances in this event: in 1952 an entire room was devoted to his work, in 1960 he was awarded the Grand Prize for Painting and in 1997 the prestigious Golden Lion award for Lifetime Achievement. In the early 1950s he created his celebrated cycles of works: *Scontro di situazioni*, *Ciclo della Protesta*, *Cicli della Natura*. In 1954, at the São Paulo Art Biennial he won a prize that would allow him to spend three months in Brazil, where he encountered a hard reality that would leave its mark on him. In 1961 he designed the sets and costumes for Luigi Nono's *Intolleranza '60*; in 1984 he would work with the composer again on *Prometeo*. From 1961 onwards he worked on his *Plurimi*, creating an initial Venetian series followed by works made from 1963 to 1964 in Berlin including the seven pieces forming the *Absurdes Berliner Tagebuch '64* presented at the 1964 Kassel Documenta, where he showed in many occasions. From 1965 to 1967 he worked on *Percorso/Plurimo/Luce* for the Montreal Expo.

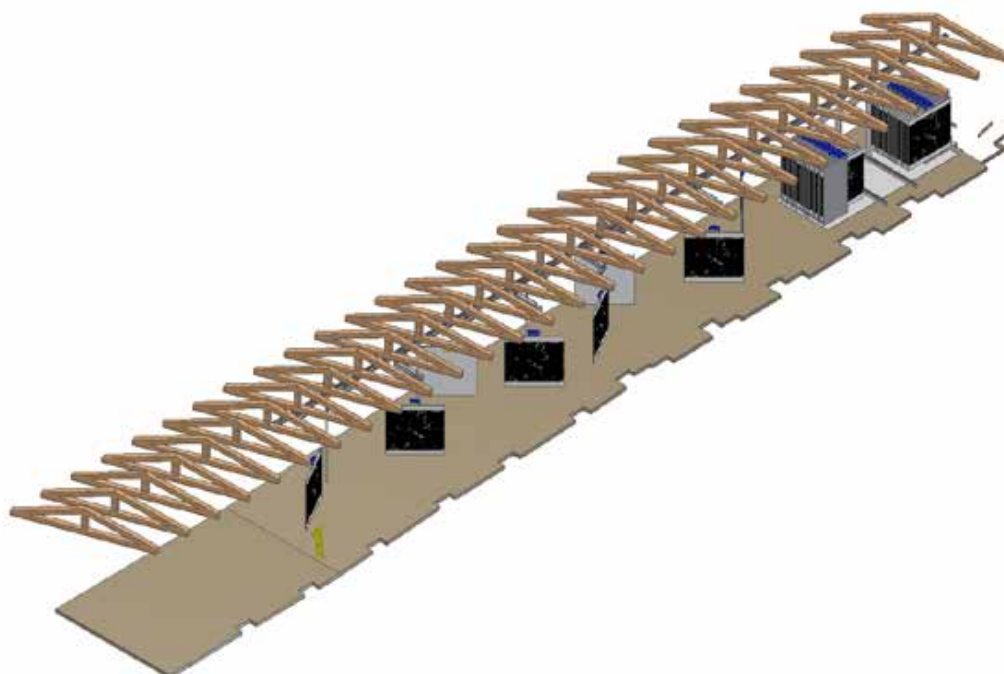
He carried out intense teaching activities in various American universities followed by the Sommerakademie in Salzburg and the Academy of Venice. His artistic career was characterized by a constant desire to explore and innovate. In the '70s he created the *Plurimi Binari* in the *Lacerazione* and *Carnevali* cycles followed by the vast cycles of *teleri* (big canvases) and his *Dischi*, *Tondi*, *Oltre* and *...in continuum* works. His last important solo exhibitions included the major retrospective held at Castello di Rivoli (1998) and, after his death in 2006, the shows at Rome's Galleria Nazionale and Berlinische Galerie.

Automated handling and storage of works of art

Foreword

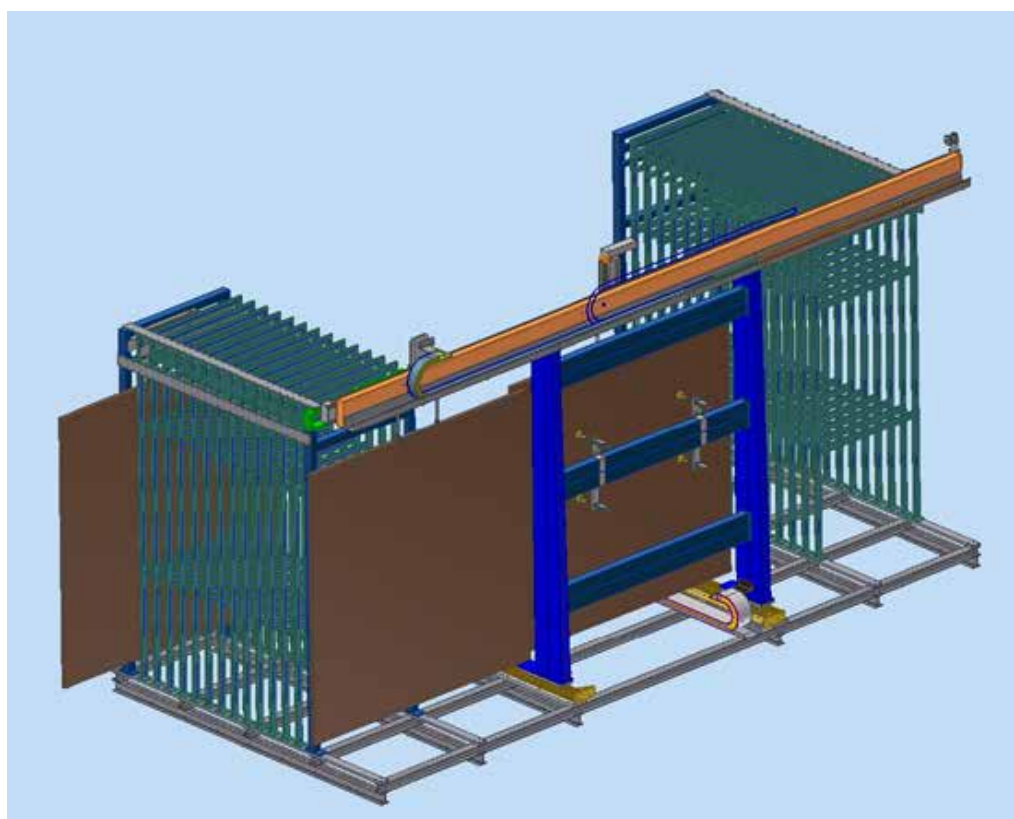
The device installed in the Magazzino del Sale is a world first and makes it possible to organised dynamic art displays in which the arrangement of works can be changed at will, repositioning the art-works without constraints and all totally automatically by machine.

The space is equipped with a robotic storage device and 10 automated shuttles able to position the art works anywhere around the exhibition space (figure 1). A software has been specifically created to enable the curator to decide where, how, and in which sequence the art works will be exhibited, creating an almost infinite sequence of display scenarios that can be memorised; these form and alternate automatically, bringing the works to life in an ever changing sequence of art.



Art-work storage racks

The storage facility is erected using a rack system (figure 2) with a total capacity of 30 works of art, and with a special storage and retrieval machine used to deposit and retrieve the works of art. The automation is managed by microprocessor controlled electrical motors designed to provide the necessary smooth function with soft and precise motion. The storage warehouse is totally automatic and takes the place of a warehouseman: the device can be asked to collect or deliver items to a specific location and consigned to the shuttle modules that take the items to the display venue.

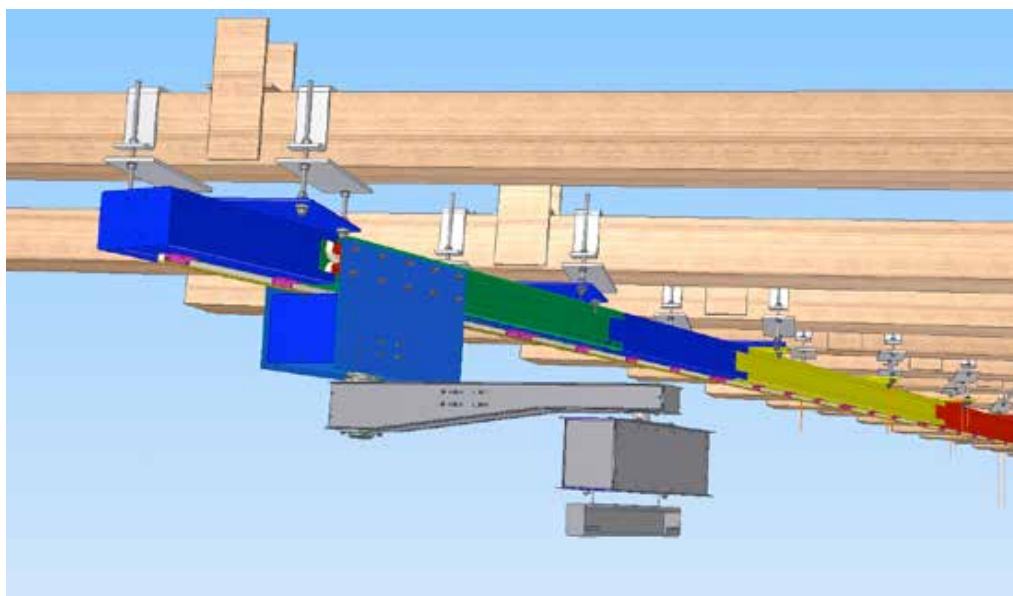


Shuttles

10 rotating, positioning and display shuttles have been custom-built to place the works of art on display. These shuttles run along rails anchored to the ceiling set along the length of the exhibition space (figure 3) starting from the storage area and terminating at the exhibition location selected by the curator. The cycle is completed by reversing the movement thus returning the work of art to storage.

The shuttles can move the works of art in 4 positions: longitudinal, transverse, rotate and height from ground.

As with the storage rack, the electric shuttles are fully automated and governed by remote control.



Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova

The main aim of the Fondazione, created by Emilio Vedova and his wife Annabianca, is to promote the art and work of Vedova and to highlight his importance in the history of 20th century art through a series of initiatives, such as studies, research projects, analyses, exhibitions, itineraries and teaching spaces, conferences, scholarships and prizes.

The activities of the Fondazione, chaired by Alfredo Bianchini, faithfully reflect the will of the great Venetian artist, who, when thinking together with his wife about the nascent Fondazione, stressed how the safekeeping and conservation of his works should not be separated from initiatives to promote knowledge about his art, also in collaboration with major international museums and cultural institutions. Moreover, he wished these initiatives should constantly be directed at exploring the themes of "painting – space – time – history", which are in fact the fundamental elements of his art and his commitment.

Near its headquarters at the Zattere, is the Fondazione's permanent exhibition space for the works of Emilio Vedova in the Magazzini del Sale. The exhibition space was designed and installed by Renzo Piano with Alessandro Traldi and Maurizio Milan. The space is equipped with the latest technology for conserving and showing works of art to the public and will also host works by artists from all over the world to create a dialectical dialogue with Vedova's works under the supervision of Germano Celant, chief curator, and Fabrizio Gazzarri, director of the Collection and Archive.

From June 2010, the restoration of the artist's studio – again effected under the supervision of Renzo Piano – enabled the Fondazione to have available a new multifunctional space able to host events as well as exhibitions.

The Fondazione is governed by a Board of Directors with six members, including the President.

FONDAZIONE EMILIO E ANNABIANCA VEDOVA

Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova

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Emilio Vedova De America

June 18th - November 26th, 2017

Ticket office and Bookshop

Spazio Vedova, Dorsoduro 50
10.30-18 - closed on Mondays and Tuesday
last entrance at 5.30pm

Tickets: € **8**

Discounted admission: € **6**

Students: € **4** (with current student ID)

Family (Two adults with children underage): € **16**

Children up to 10: **free**

Discounted admission € 6

Clients of Garage San Marco (presenting the parking ticket)

FAI members

TCl members

Senior visitors over 65 yrs

Rinascentecard

AreArte Card

Turistic guide without group, with current ID

Disabled visitors escort included

Journalists (upon presentation of a valid press card for the current year)

Military and city police officers (in uniform or with an identification document)

Students € 4

Young visitors from 11 to 18 yrs.

Students unders 26 yrs (with current student ID)

Free Admission

Children up to 10 yrs

Journalists (upon accreditation via mail)

Group escort (15 people minimum)

Disabled escort

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On Wednesday residents in Venice