



# THE ACT OF LIVING

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TOURISM  
AND LIVEABILITY

THE CASE OF VENICE

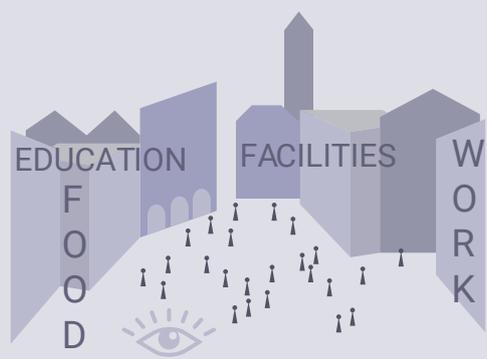
## THE ACT OF LIVING

act:

take action; do something

living:

the pursuit of a lifestyle of the specified type





## ABSTRACT

This graduation project is a research by design project that provides a comprehensive investigation into the decline of the liveability of the UNESCO World Heritage city: Venice. It sheds light on the dichotomy between liveability and (over)tourism, and proposes a new perspective for Venice, which in the last 20 years has undergone a massive transformation from a liveable city for locals to a scenography for tourists.

The perspective has to change, tourism as we practiced it before the pandemic - and now that tourism has restarted - is no longer appropriate to our times. It is not sustainable to use tourism only as an economic resource. It comes at the cost of the liveable places on earth.

This graduation project looked in detail at the relation between tourism and liveability. The overall strategy stems from a thorough examination of the past, the present and the future. Which led to the conclusion that Venice is caught between an ideal past and an objective reality. And in order for Venice to move away from scenography for tourists to liveable city, a story for liveability needs to be written.

Therefore the aim of the project is to improve the liveability. It proposes a new way of living for the city: **The Act Of Living**.

The strategy implies a shift from the perspective of tourism towards cultural production. To achieve this shift, first of all the *centro storico* is seen as part of a larger whole: the entire municipality. Secondly, the existing elements that are already there are examined and strengthened. Thirdly, a layered proposal is made consisting of storylines through the city that are connected by acts, each with its own actor and design proposal. Nevertheless, they are connected and together they increase the quality of life.

In general it opts for reconciliation of:

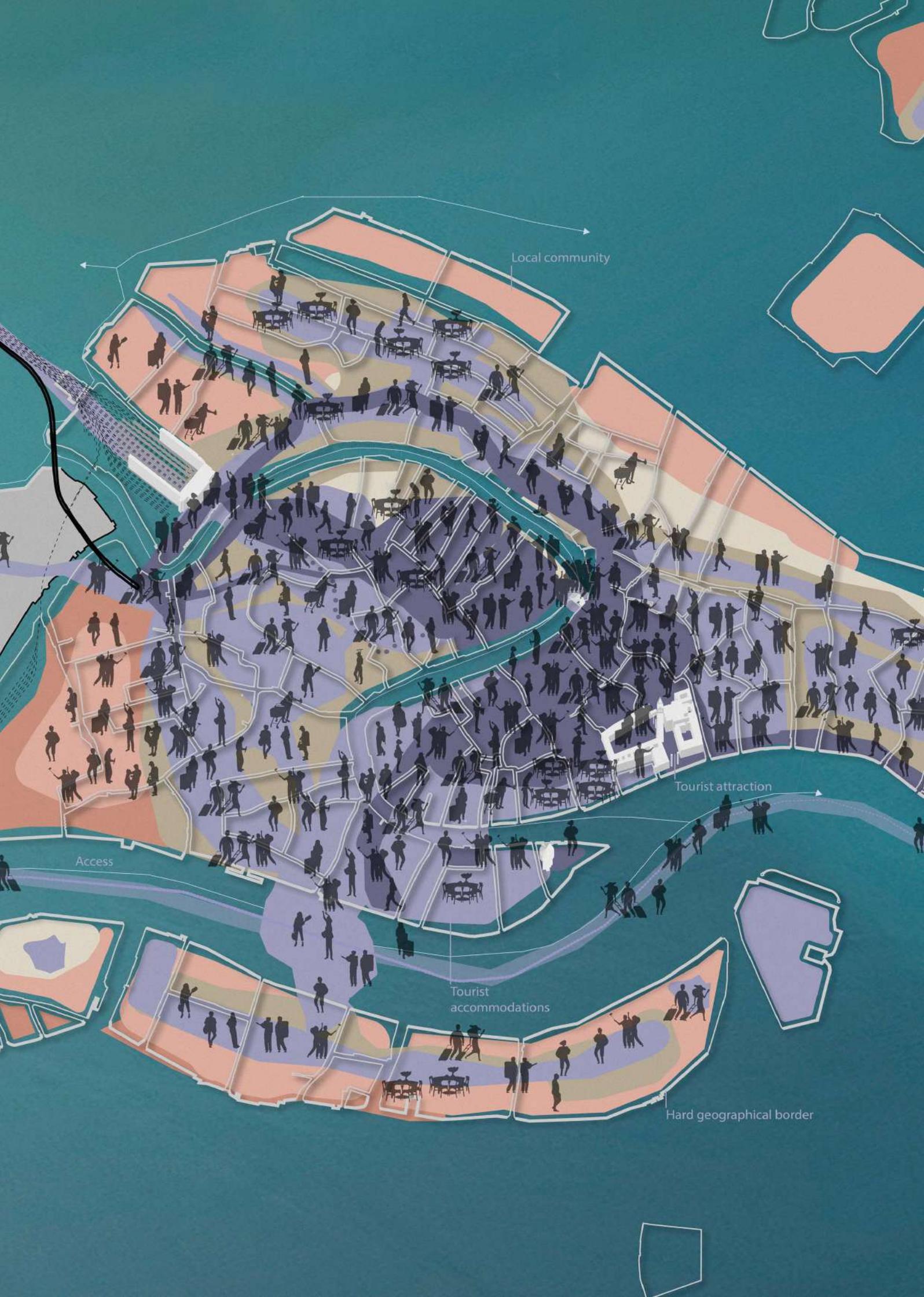
- Shifting the focus from tourism to cultural production
- Regulating the masses
- Designing places for locals
- And creating new destinations for a new kind of - sustainable - tourism

It is clear that overtourism is the consequence of the current policy. And I believe that as urban designers, human beings, politicians, citizens: we have to take the threat of tourism on the liveability of cities seriously. That is why in **The Act Of Living** each actor has its own role to play and responsibility. As a tourist, a local or new traveller: in this new story we are able to show a different perspective that makes us believe in the future of Venice!

Grazie mille,  
e ci vediamo a Venezia,

Kinke Nijland  
September 2021

Master in Urban Design  
Academie van Bouwkunst, Amsterdam



Local community

Tourist attraction

Access

Tourist accommodations

Hard geographical border

## Committee

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### Special thanks to:

Roberto Falcone

Jacopo Grilli

Rob Nijland

Loes van Lier

Karla Jelić-Balta

and all the people

I have been able to talk to





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## I. INTRODUCTION

*'The right time to change perspective'*

Almost everyone in the world knows Venice: the famous Venice has a rich history and is loved by many.

The beautiful architecture and urban space - that is pretty much exactly as it was hundreds of years ago - makes it an unique city in the world. The quality of the design of the city is so high that it fits nearly all the liveable elements.

But this magic description is slightly tainted by the hordes of tourists walking down the tiny streets, or the jungle of selfie sticks you have to fight through when trying to cross a bridge.

As a result of Covid-related travel restrictions, Venice was briefly deserted in 2020. It was the first time since approx. 1950s that Venice, for a moment, existed separate from tourism.

It showed that of the expense of the city, the free market and tourism have flourished. And that overtourism is the consequence of the current policy and governmental direction of the municipality of Venice. Venice has been busy with an ad hoc approach, which has resulted in an unsustainable environment.

This graduation project addresses the dichotomy between liveability and overtourism. Through extensive research, it tries to give a perspective in the light of liveability. It focuses on regulating tourism, providing new jobs and affordable housing for the locals and a future perspective on sustainable tourism.

With in the end, the goal to change the current perspective. Since this must be done to break the dichotomy.





## I.I. fascination

### *'Avoid Tourism'*

In 2018 I visited Venice for the first time. I admit that I was biased. But I was surprised: I love Venice.

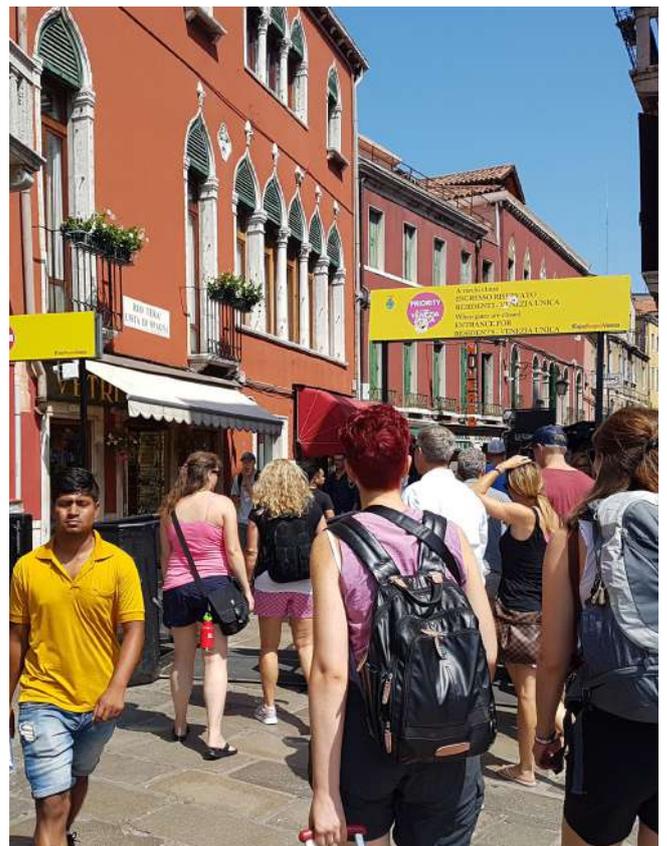
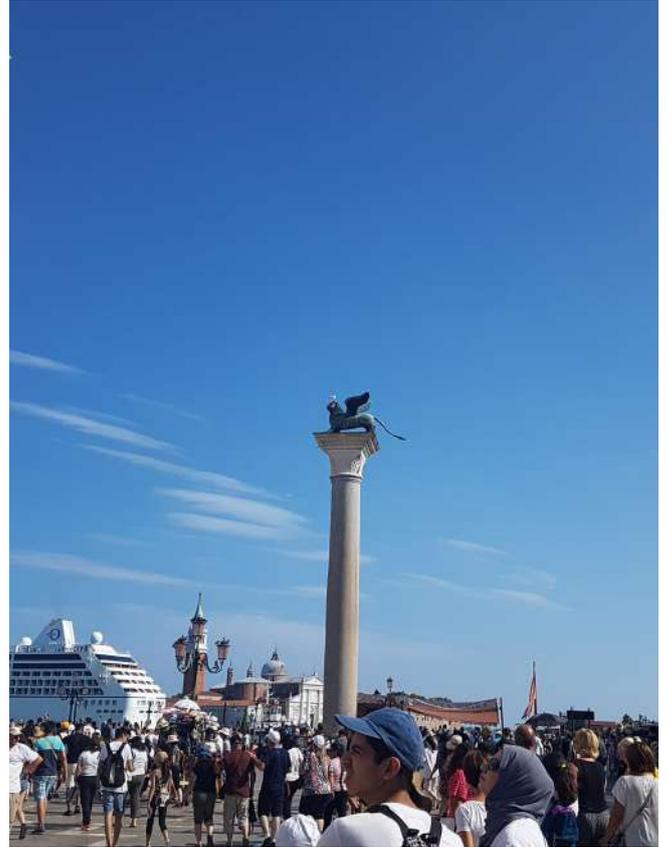
However after a few days I started to wonder what the future holds for this city. The crowds, the water, the craft that disappears, I wondered when this dream would end.

These thoughts took me further, reflecting on its status as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. This status ensures the preservation of the city and the value of its heritage. But on the other hand, it certainly also hinders development and progress.

The liveability of Venice and its Lagoon are threatened by tourism. During this same holiday I wrote a report with a fellow student about tourism in Northern Italy. We looked at different strategies used by the city.

And it seems that Venice, due to mass tourism, struggles the most with regulating tourism. Compared to the other cities we have visited it is definitely a problematic place. It has a lack of infrastructural policy and a strong regulation of visitors.

And this has always stuck with me. And that is why I have chosen to delve deeper into this subject of tourism and liveability, with the hope of creating an urban vision for it and binding solutions to it.





**AVOID**

**TOURISM**



Avoid Tourism - report on different approaches towards tourism in Northern Italy (own source 2018)

## I.II. overtourism

*'overtourism = too many people in one place or lack of control over visitor flow and regulation reflected in the physical as well as the psychological perception by residents'*

Tourism has existed in Venice since the 12th century. First it was a city of merchant travellers, and later of aristocratic individuals who took part in the Grand Tour. They brought life to the city. But whereas tourism first served to enrich the city, today it brings a decline in liveability. Venice, has undergone a massive transformation from a liveable city for locals to a scenography for tourists.

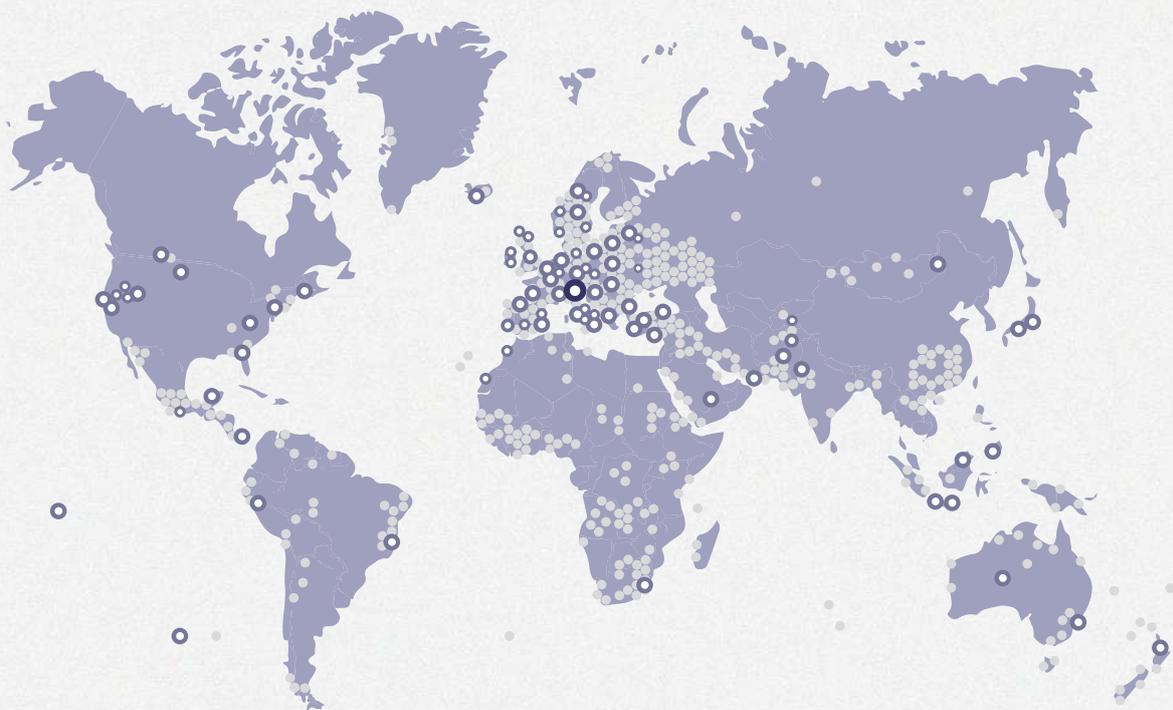
Venice is an exemplary case of urbanity under the control of globalization. Overtourism is both a result of globalization and its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list. It is also a consequence of the current policy. Overcrowding, tourism stress, an overheated housing market, no jobs, no facilities, vacancy rates, and the decline of the population are consequences of the laissez-faire approach which currently exists in Venice. In which tourism is used as an economic extract.

The city currently has 51.000 inhabitants, which gives a number of 588 tourists per resident. We can state that overtourism is a real problem. And that the city is **becoming a victim of its own success.**

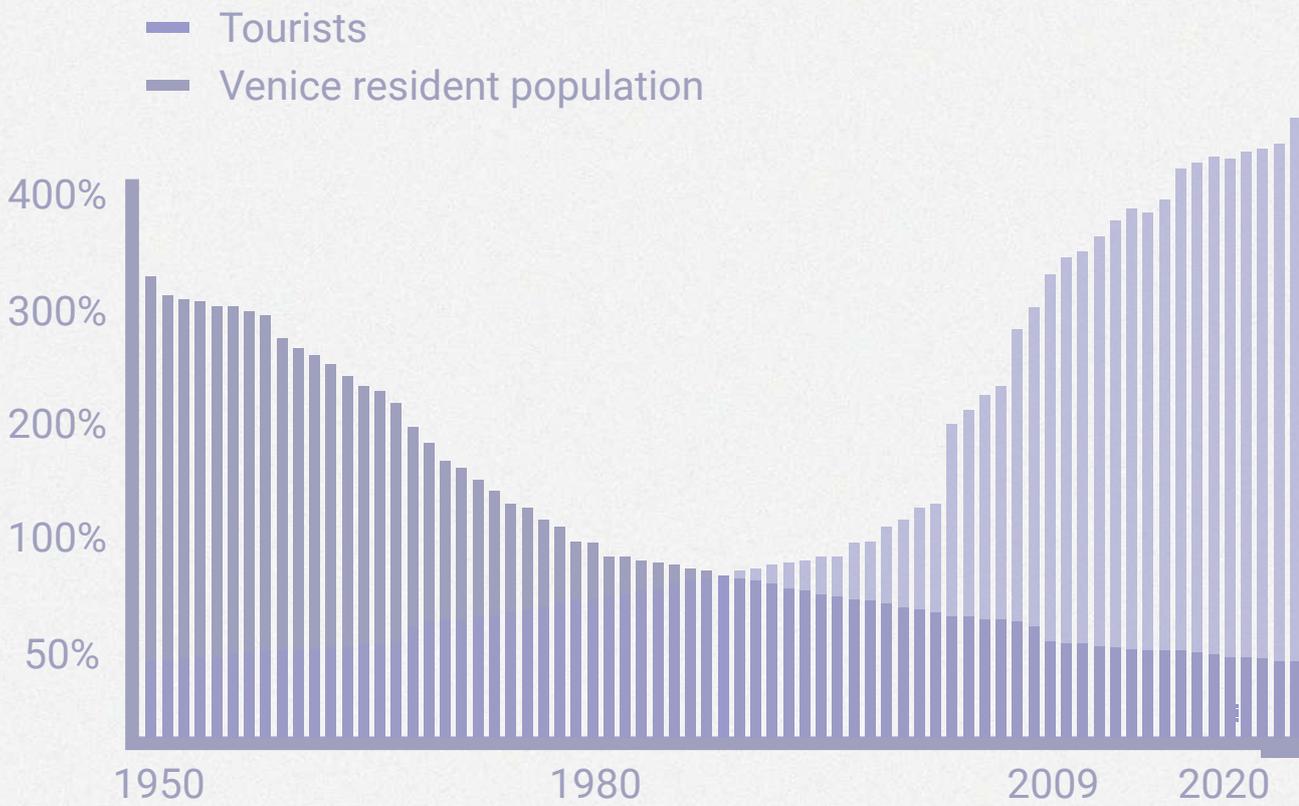
# Deserted Venice contemplates a future without tourist hordes after Covid-19

Barbie Latza Nadeau, CNN • Updated 19th June 2020





Enlisted cultural heritage sites in the world (50 % of them in Europe) combined with *overtourism*)



Decline of the population: the amount of tourists exceed the amount of residents

## II. CONTEXT

*'Venice: an unique place'*

Venice is located in the middle of a lagoon. On a group of small islands already known as *Venezia* in the days of the Roman Empire. Due to this unique location, Venice and its lagoon have been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1987.

*The value of Venice consists of an historical, archaeological, urban, artistic heritage and exceptional cultural traditions, integrated into an extraordinary and outstanding environmental, natural and landscape context<sup>1</sup>.*

The Italian city is often nicknamed *the city of the water* and *the city of the bridges*. However the city owes the name: *La Serenissima* to the fact that Venice was able to survive three centuries of political, military and commercial decline. Therefore, the urban pattern of Venice is in great extent untouched<sup>2</sup>, which makes Venice and its lagoon a well known and respected visible 'piece' of history.

Besides that, Venice is an interesting place because of the limited geographical space in relation to tourism. In Venice the entire urban community is affected by tourism. As a result, Venice is an intriguing case regarding the quality of life related to the impacts of tourism.

However, this chapter focuses on the characteristics of the geographical location, and how the municipality is structured.

Then the methodology is explained, and a brief summary of the research is given. For the entire study see the research book: **Research Of Liveability**.

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1 UNESCO World Heritage (2020). Retrieved from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/394/>  
2 Howard, D., Quill, S., & Moretti, L. (2002). The architectural history of Venice. Yale University Press.

**Venice**

is a

**victim**

of its

**own success**

## II.I. location

Venice is a city in North-Eastern Italy sited on a group of 118 small islands. Located on the Venetian Lagoon in the Adriatic Sea, in the region of Veneto. The Venetian Lagoon is an enclosed bay of the Adriatic Sea. It is the biggest Lagoon of Italy (550 km<sup>2</sup>) and has been inhabited from ancient times.

The city's location was originally a marshy area with many sandbanks. The islands, nowadays separated by canals and linked by bridges, were formed on these sandbanks.

Venice has experienced a unique urban development. The theory: Venice as an organism, applies to this<sup>1</sup>:

- **01 delimit**: construction of the islands
- **02 define**: mark the structure of the urban blocks and the *campi*
- **03 connect**: link the islands with each other via bridges

The theory describes Venice as an organism, with Venice having grown naturally as the steps above.



01



02



03

City as Organism. New Vision for Urban Life - 'Venice as organism' - construction of the islands, blocks and canals



Santa Lucia Train station

Dockplace cruise ships



Arsenale

Piazza San Marco

Giardini

It is thought by many that the municipality of Venice consists only of the historical centre. But this is not true, the municipality of Venice consists of three different districts:

- **01 Centro storico approx. 50.000 inhabitants**

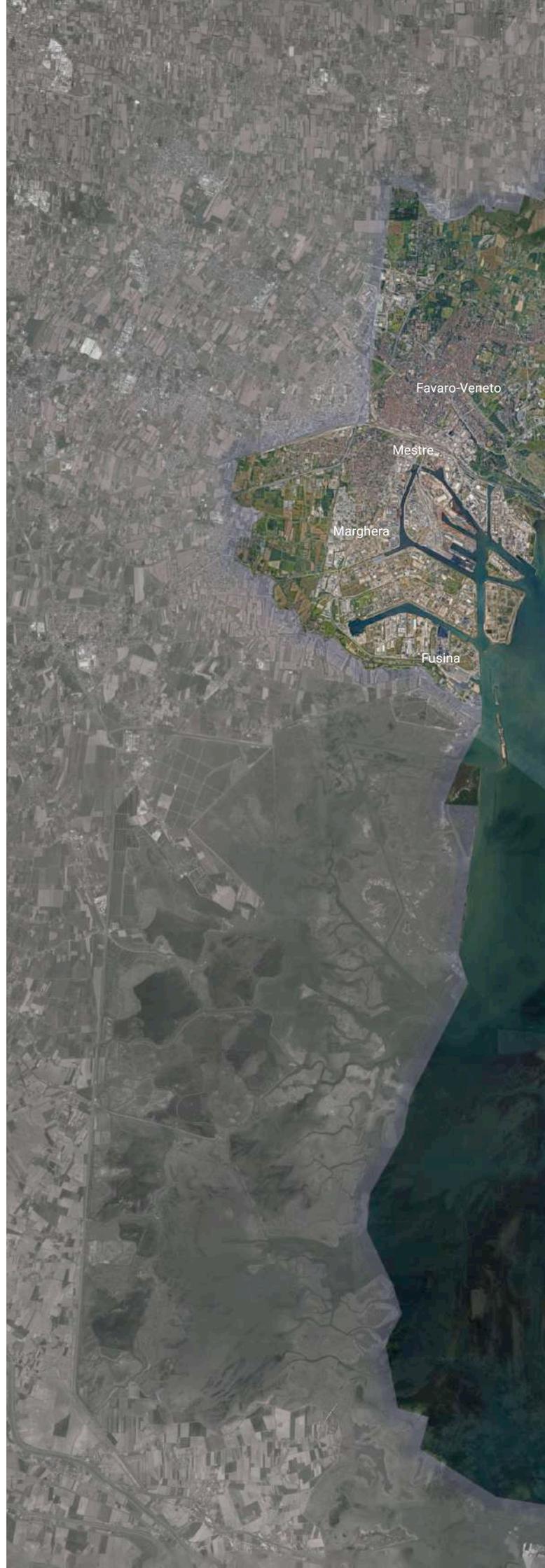
The *centro storico* is the general known image of Venice. It is divided into six areas or *sestiere* and the government of the city is divided into 6 boroughs of which each one is composed of all six *sestiere*: Santa Croce, Dorsoduro, San Polo, Cannaregio, San Marco and Castello.

- **02 Estuario approx. 30.000 inhabitants**

By *estuario* is meant the other settlements in the lagoon, such as Lido and Murano.

- **03 Terraferma approx. 180.000 inhabitants**

*Terraferma* is the mainland of the municipality. It is composed of communities around the edge of the lagoon, such as the city Mestre and its port Marghera. Nowadays, most part of the inhabitants of Venice, as well as its economic core, its airport and its harbor, stand on the *terraferma*.





Tessera

Torcello

02

Burano

03

01

Murano

Sant'Erasmus

Centro Storico

Lido

Santa Maria Del Mare

## II.II. methodology

*'We have to look back before going forward'*

The research book extensively explored the history and identity of Venice. Studying the timeline provides the basis for a strong narrative for the future. The conclusions about Venice's values and identity are applied and reinforced in the design approach.

The chapters that follow give a brief summary of the research<sup>1</sup>. On the following page is a timeline that visually represents the research.

In short the research of the past shows that Venice went from a city for merchants to a city for travelers; Venice had a time of decline after the fall of the republic, in regard to economy and power. But in 1950 Venice rose again for the main reason: increasing tourism.

---

1 (see research book for more information)

Roman Empire 7th century



12th century



15th century



17th century



19th century - now



What is the past and where are we going?

Europe

Asia

### THE IDEAL PAST

What is the past?

18th CENTURY START GRAND TOUR

Tourist resort for Roman noblemen

TOURISM



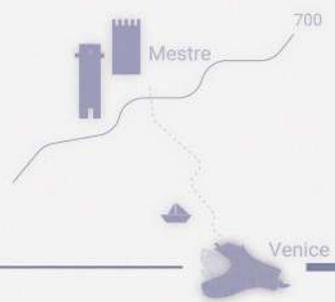
Venetian Doge appointed by merchant families

Byzantine empire

Maritime power

La Serenissima: a merchant city - increasing importance in the world

1797 FALL OF THE REPUBLIC



700

Byzantine empire

Commercial centre

Link to ASIA

ARSENALE

ART AND CRAFT

1527: Renaissance



1850

SOCIAL ECONOMIC

1450 population city area 180,000

1563 population city area 168,000

1950 POPULATION D

Roman Empire

7th century

12th century

15th century  
renaissance design  
expansion to north and west

17th century  
classicism design  
expansion guidecca

19th

URBAN GROWTH

URBAN GROWTH

City of refugees from undefended countryside and fisherman



ALTINUM



delimit construction of the islands



define mark the structure of the urban blocks and the campi



connect link the islands with each other via bridges

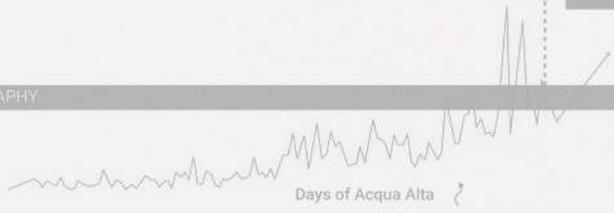
Venice as organism

1797 Fall of the Republic. End of good water management



CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

Acqua Alta



Days of Acqua Alta

7th

12th

15th

16th

17th

18th

19th

# THE OBJECTIVE PRESENT

And where are we going to?

## OVERTOURISM • 2020 CORONA PANDEMIC



The reasons for overtourism in Venice



### TOURISM STRESS



DECLINE OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION  
LACK OF JOBS

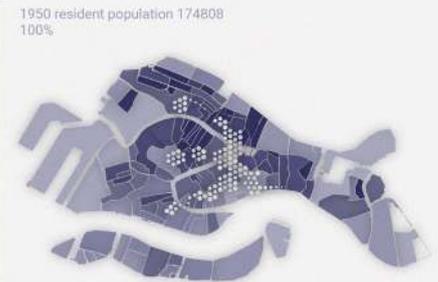
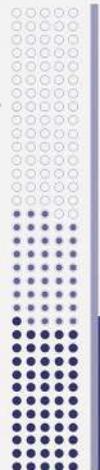
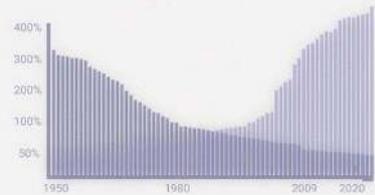
SOCIAL ECONOMIC

### DECLINE



2020 population  
city area 51,298  
region area 637,204

Tourists exceed residents



November 12th, 2019

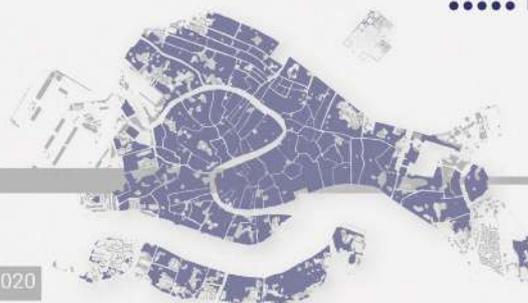
November 4th, 1966  
'ACQUA GRANDE'

CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY

REUSE PROJECT

2020

October 3rd, 2020



What happens in 50 years?  
Sea level rise  
+ Rainfall  
Heat stress

+1,4 METER = 57,3% OF VENICE FLOODED 12,9km<sup>2</sup>

PRESENT 2020-2021

## II.III. an ideal past

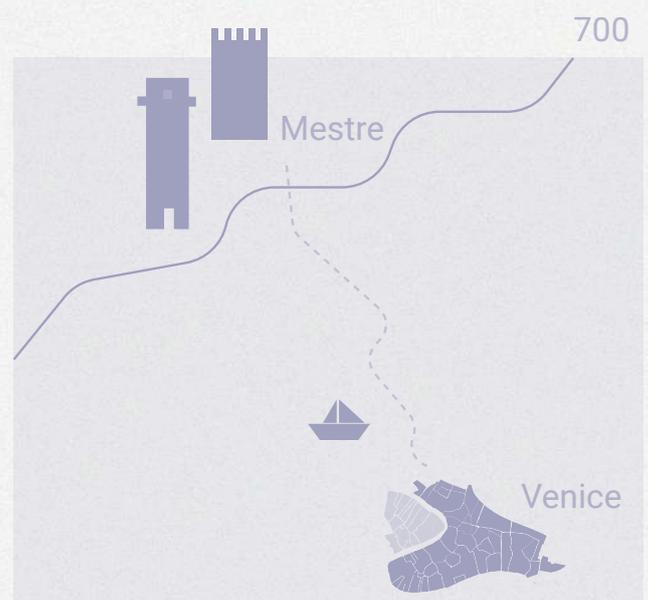
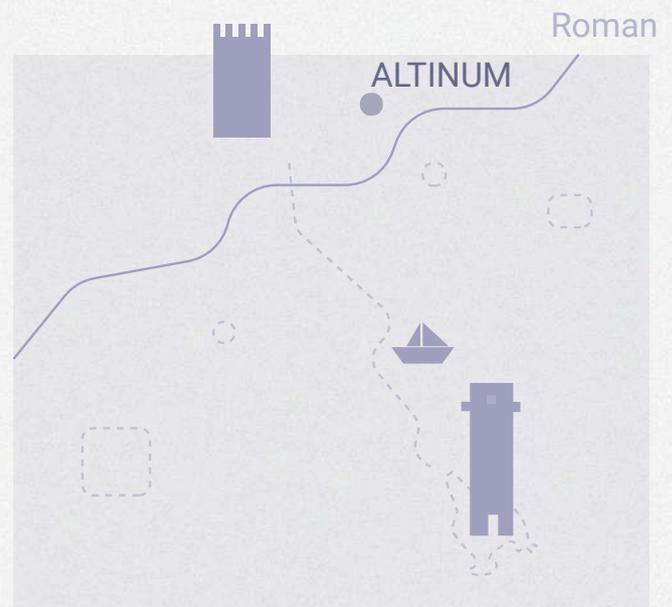
*'La Serenissima: the powerful and tolerant city'*

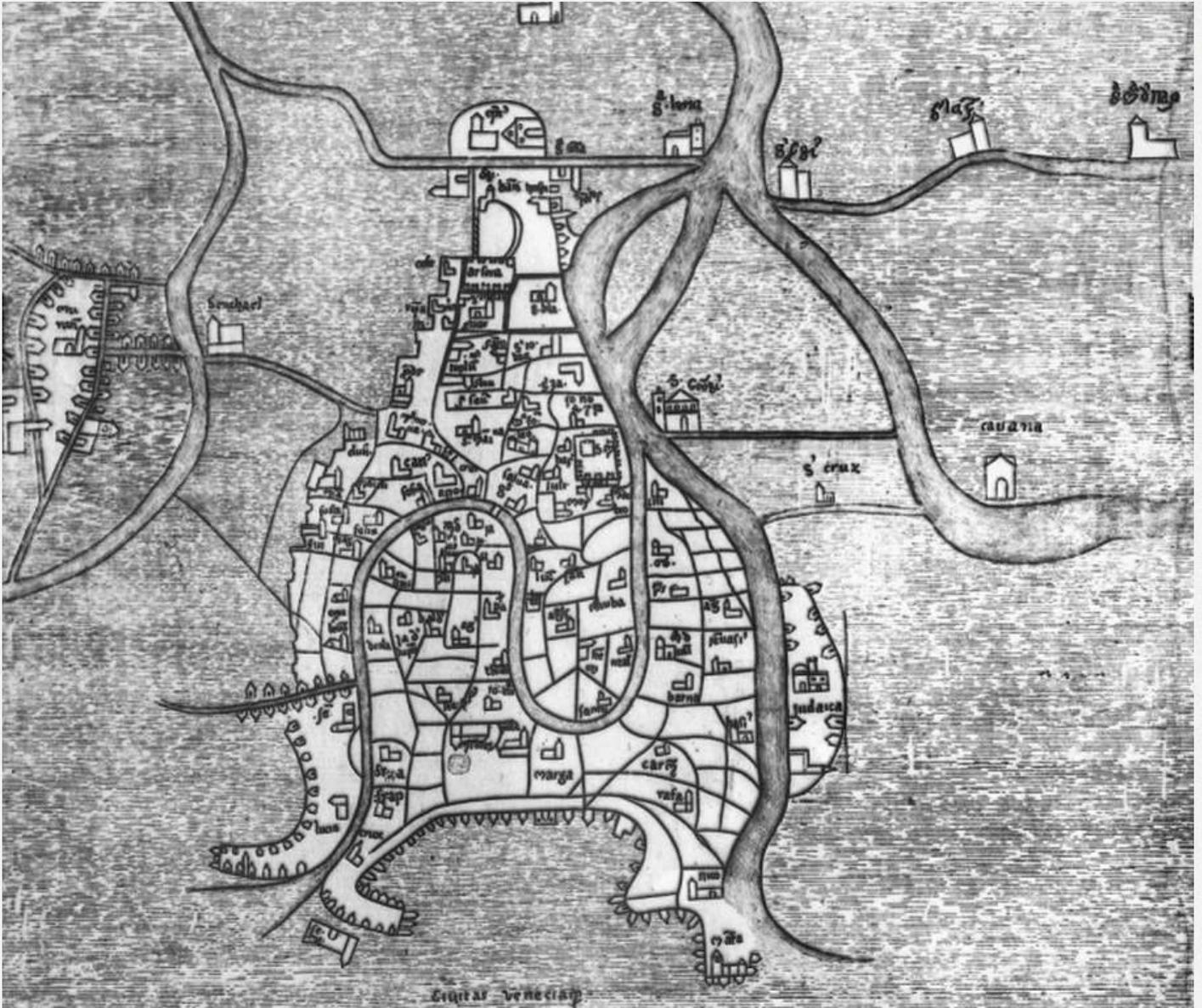
Some late Roman sources reveal that the lagoon was:

- Exploited for commercial trading
- A holiday resort for noblemen
- And a place of fishermen on the islands<sup>1</sup>

But following the end of the Roman Empire and the arrival of the Longobards (568) the region started to indicate small settlements. The original population of Venice consisted of refugees from the undefended countryside and Roman cities such as Padua, Aquileia and Treviso.

They established small settlements on the sandbanks in the lagoon around the island of *Rivoalto*, which now is Rialto; the centre of the Venice. Each small island was ruled by a family and their economy was based on trade activities. Rialto became the trade hub of the city.





Venice during the 12th century (source: unknown)



In the 9th century Venice developed into a city state and a major **commercial empire**. Due to its position in the Adriatic Sea, the fact that it was the centre of naval power and commercial activities, the city flourished and became the main hub of negotiations between Western Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

It became the greatest seaport in the late medieval Europe and the commercial and cultural link with Asia.

- Venice was part of the Maritime Republic<sup>1</sup>: a collective name of eight important city-states that flourished in the Middle Ages, in Italy and Dalmatia (see image on p. 34-35).

The city-states flourished largely under the Byzantine Empire and merchants were controlling the government. They benefited from political and trade fields.

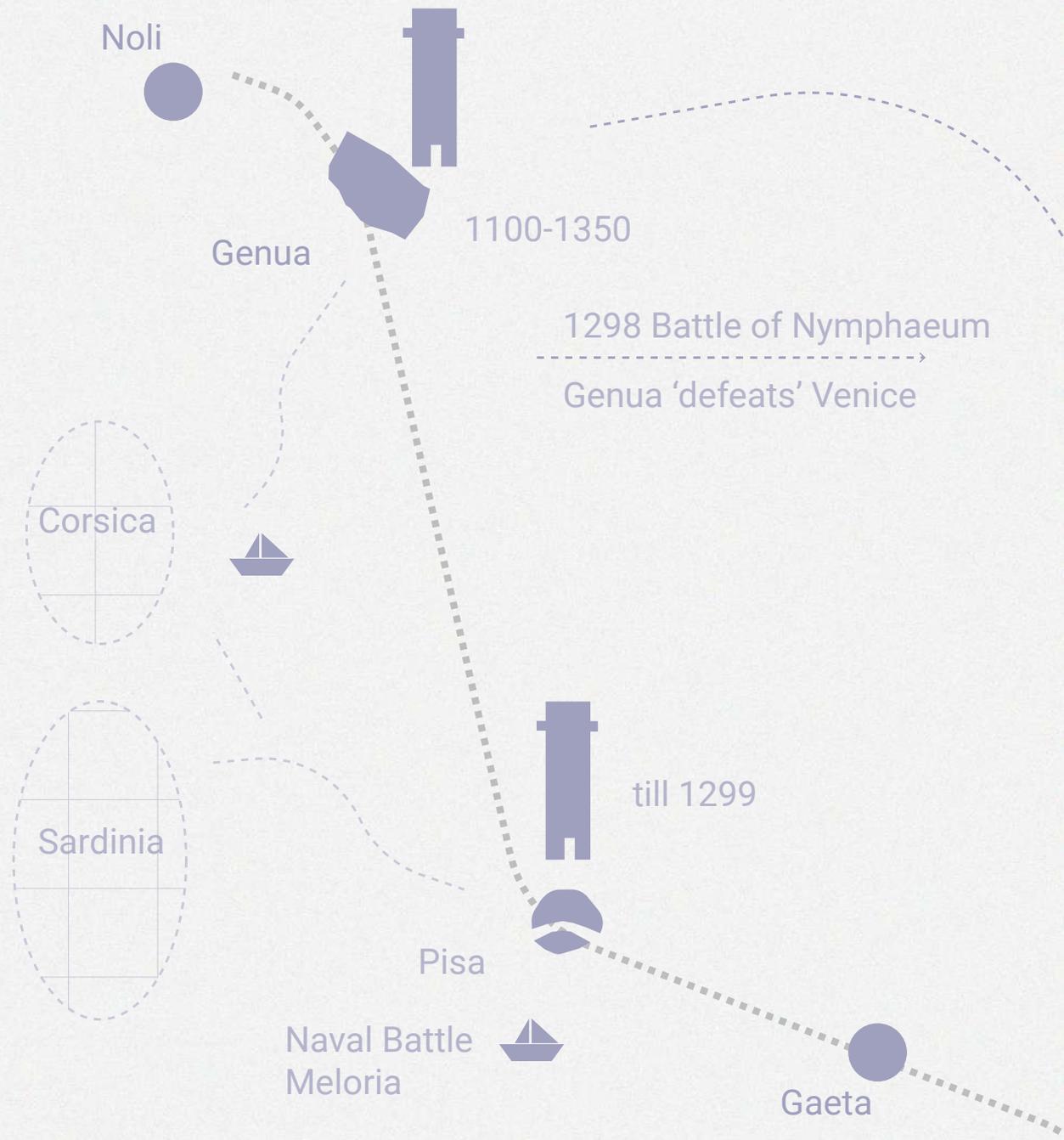
Besides that Venice stood up front in innovative naval industry. In the Arsenale ships were built in a rapid pace. Making it one of the first industrialized factories in the world.

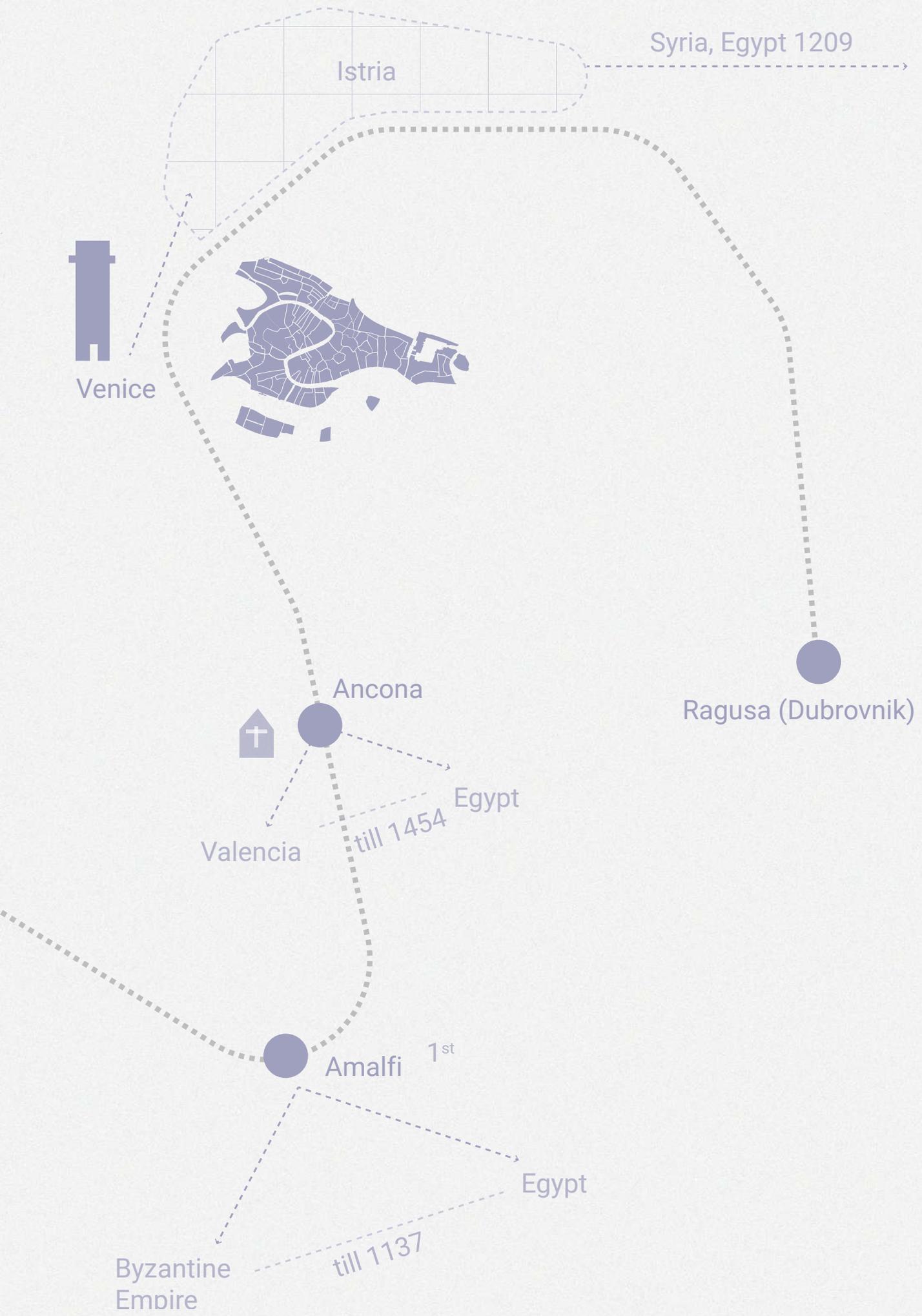


A view of the Arsenale today and its (former) work space (own image: summer 2018)

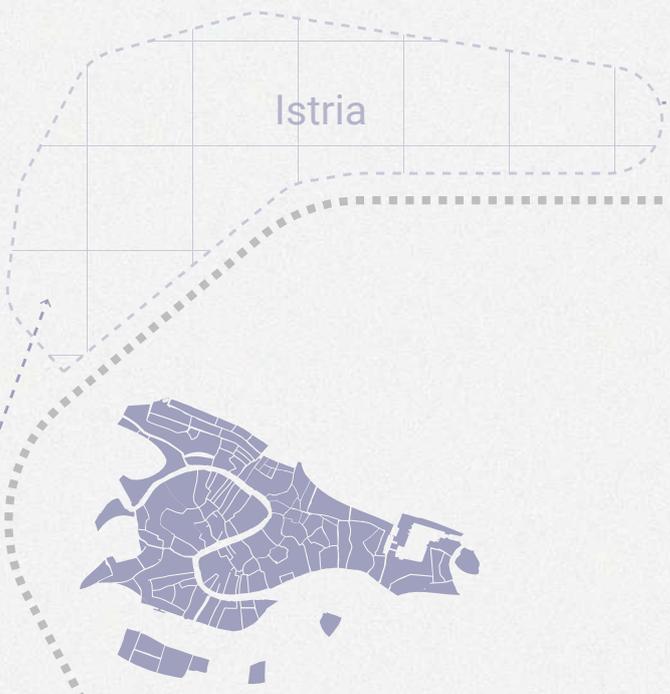


City-states of the maritime republic and their roles





Venice



Istria

Syria, Egypt 1209



Ancona

Valencia

Egypt

till 1454



Amalfi 1<sup>st</sup>

Egypt

Byzantine Empire

till 1137

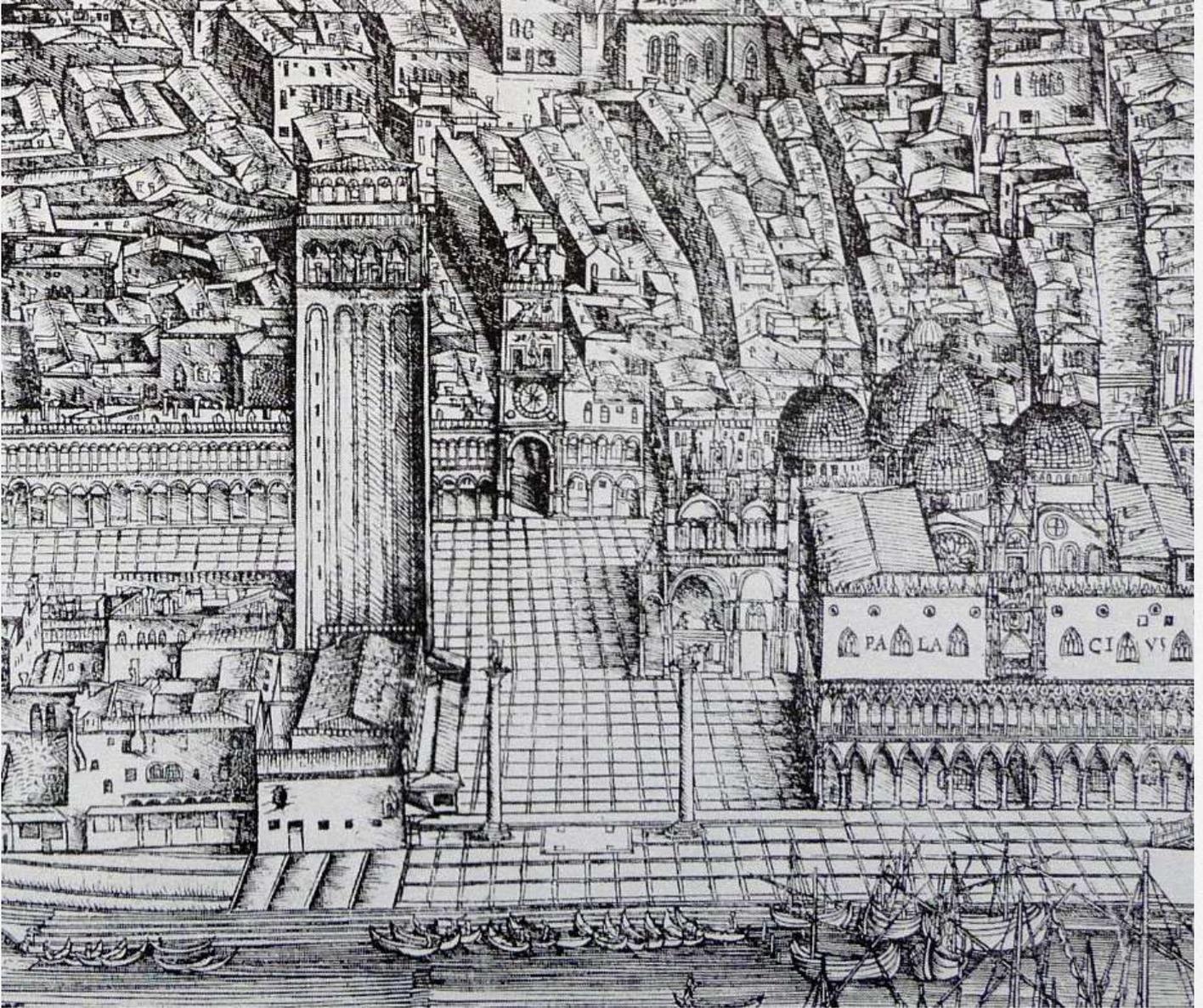
Ragusa (Dubrovnik)

As mentioned before, Venice became 'The Serenissima' and the most important merchant city in the area during the 15th century. This led to its growing importance in the world.

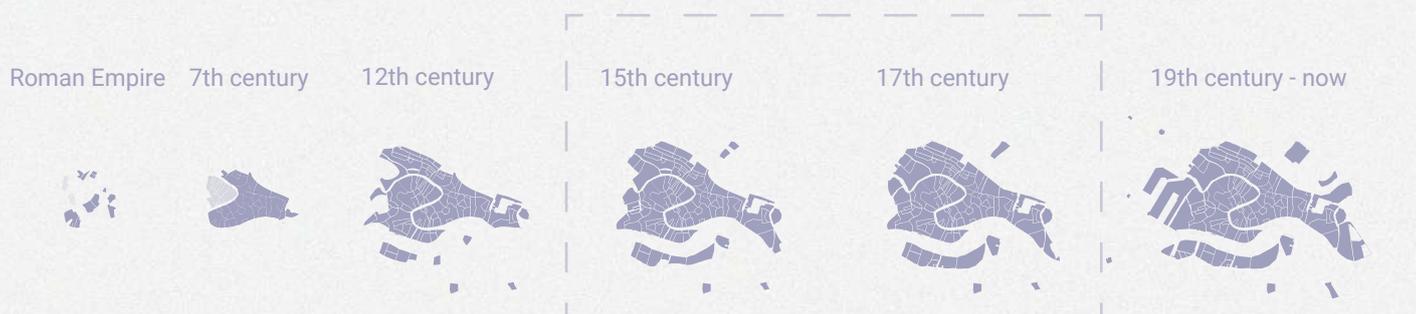
*It was the greatest seaport in late medieval Europe and the continent's commercial and cultural link to Asia. It played, economically, culturally, artistically, a big role in the global network. The city put trade and profit before anything else, even politics or religion. And it developed an extraordinarily modern type of government, close to the modern concept of democracy. Compared to other European cities at that time, Venice was a unique example of social unity and faith in government.*

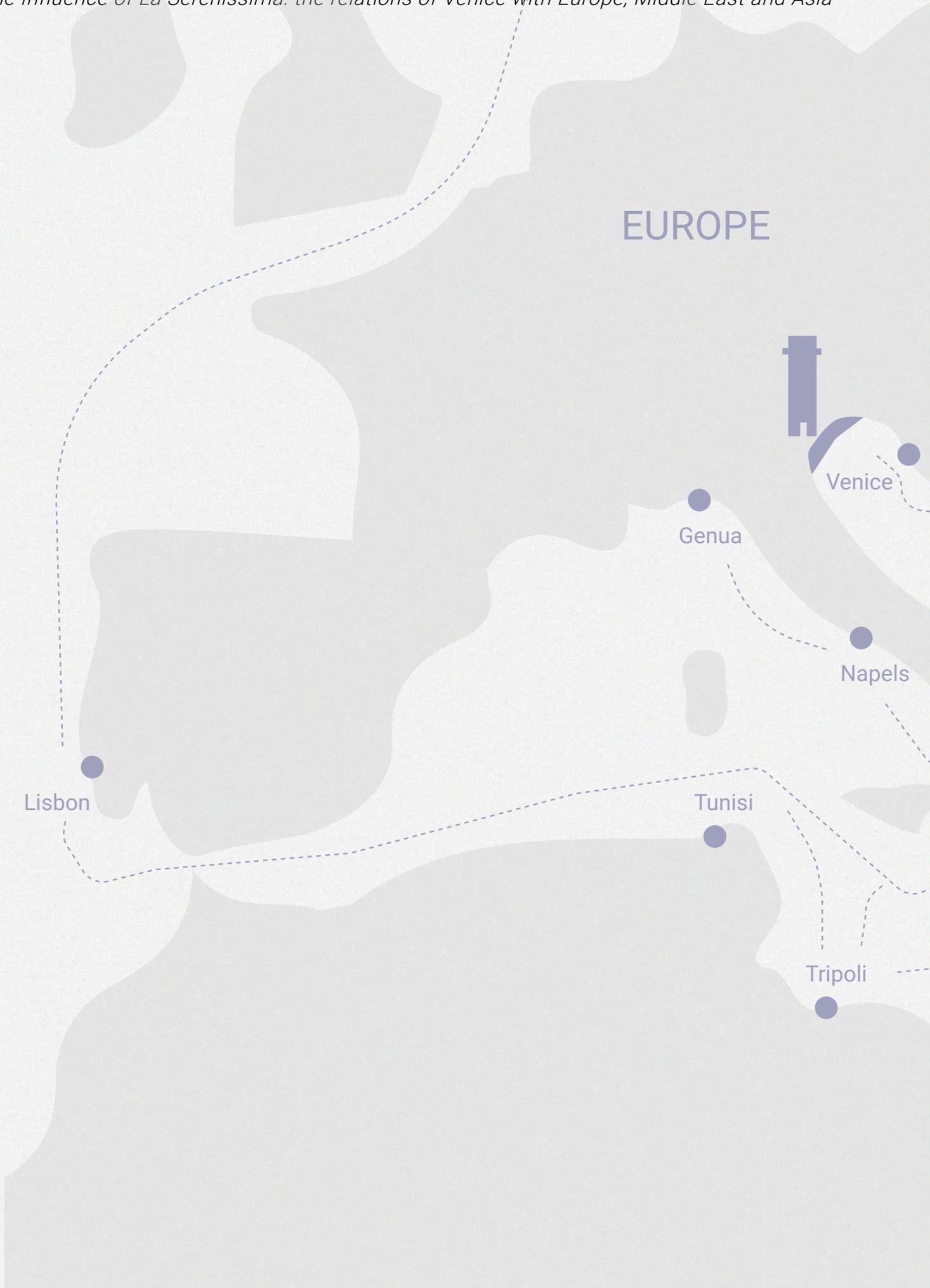
The role of Venice in the lagoon, the region and in the world is timeless. As a matter of fact through the years the importance of this connection has only increased. But in terms of Venice's notion in the world, it is not about trade anymore, but about the big role it plays in the global problem of overtourism.



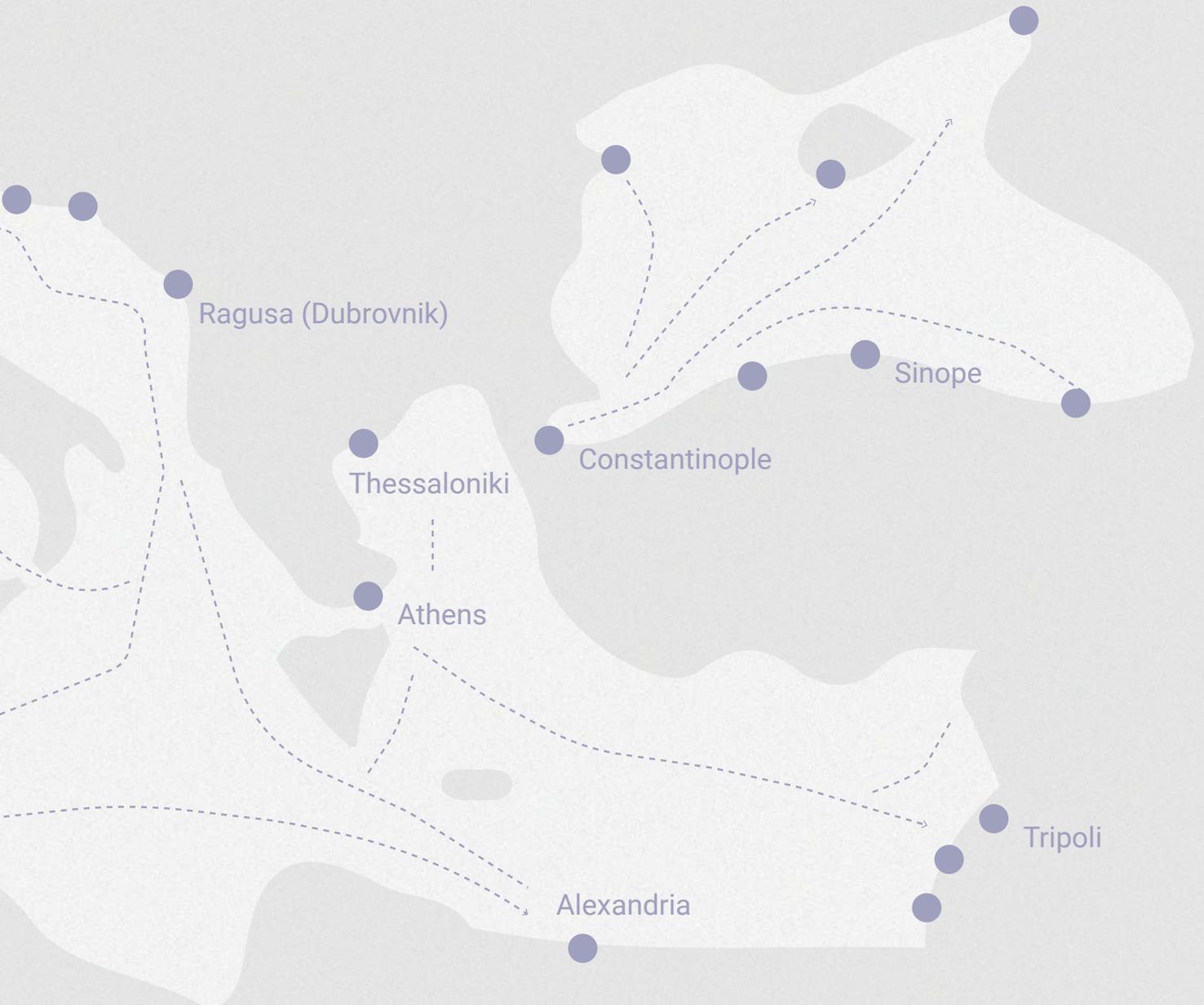


Jacopo de' Barbari (1440-1516) - Piazza San Marco





ASIA →



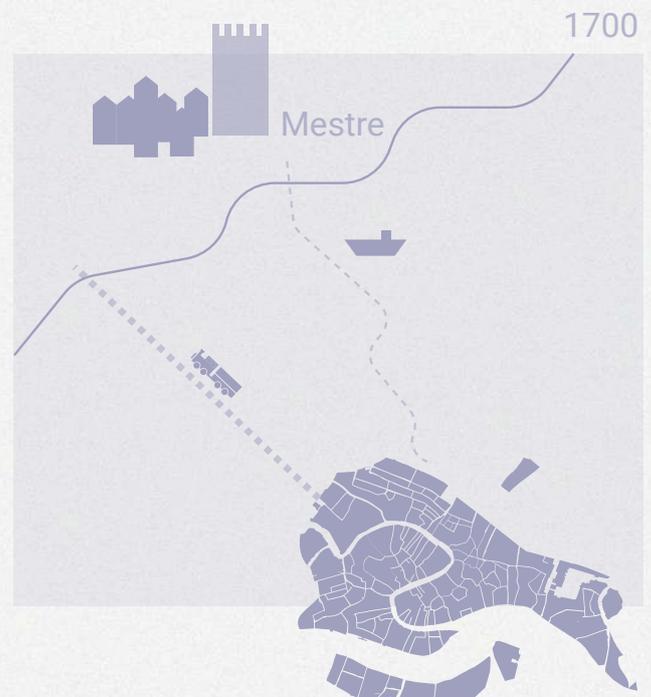
By 18th century, Venice was seen in a new light. It was considered the most elegant city in Europe: influencing art, architecture and literature. When the *camera obscura* was developed it served as a useful accessory in the 18th and 19th century for the wealthy to take on the Grand Tour to make drawings of Italian landscapes or classical ruins, or paint like the Italian painter *Canaletto*. The new form of transportation (the steam ship) and the realization of the railroad bridge over the Venetian Lagoon between Mestre and Venice, brought travelers from far. This marked the start of the development of Venice from a city for **merchants** to a city for **travellers**.

The primary value of the **Grand Tour** was the exposure to the cultural legacy of classical heritage and the Renaissance; it provided the only opportunity to view specific works of art, and possibly the only chance to hear certain music.

The essence of the Grand Tour was a nostalgic, romantic look at classical antiquity.

However the type of tourism that Venice deals with nowadays consists of a large amount of day trippers that are more interested in taking a quick selfie on Piazza San Marco or the Rialto bridge to post on social media, than taking the time to understand the rich history behind it. It excludes a large part a large part of the essence of the Grand Tour.

Today Venice is a **protected Museum City**.





Il Canaletto (1697-1768) - Entrance Grand Canal

Roman Empire 7th century



12th century



15th century



17th century



19th century - now



# Church of Saint Sebastian



Rialto

Arsenale

Campanile

Piazza San Marco



## II.IV. the objective present

*'The liveability decreased due to overtourism'*

The reasons for overtourism in Venice, can be summed up:

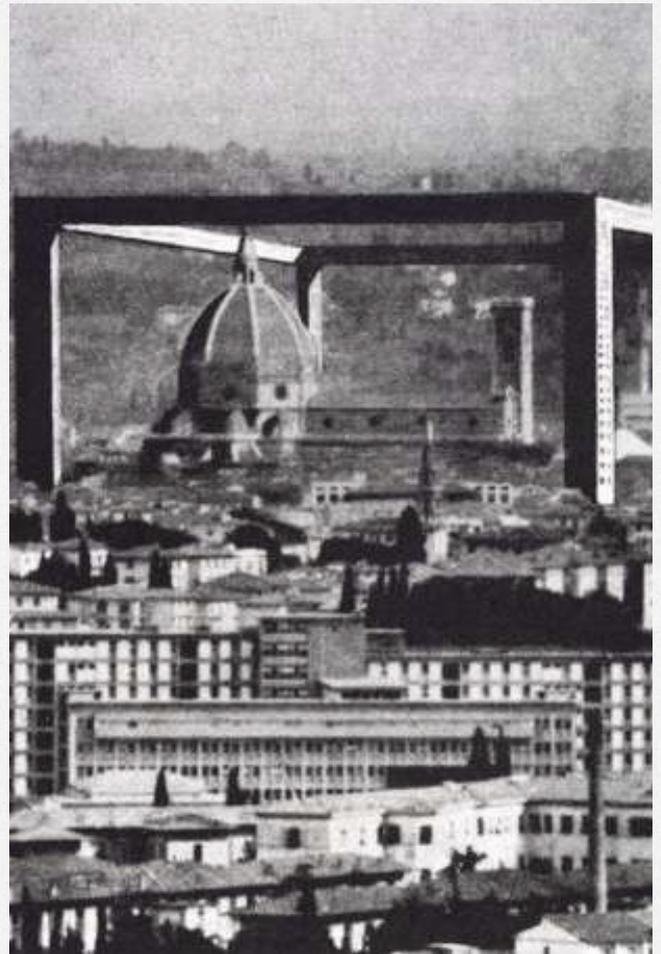
- 01 the unique situation of Venice in the world
- 02 the development of low budget travelling
- 01 the focus in the municipality on the *centro storico* as main tourism extract.



01



02



03

Venice has the highest density of tourists per km<sup>2</sup> in 2019. Both in Barcelona, Amsterdam and Venice the main attraction for tourists is the old city centre (see images).

But a difference between Amsterdam, Barcelona and Venice is, that in Amsterdam and Barcelona tourists not only manifest themselves in the most visited area of the city, but that they also *sleep/eat/buy* in other parts of the city. The knowledge of tourists' that Venice is more than just the *centro storico* is limited compared to tourists visiting Amsterdam and Barcelona.

<b>Amsterdam</b>	<b>2019:</b>	<b>22 million tourists</b>
Historic Centre	8,04 km <sup>2</sup>	2.75 million tourists per 1 km <sup>2</sup>
Municipality	219,5 km <sup>2</sup>	100.225 tourists per 1 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Barcelona</b>	<b>2019:</b>	<b>12 million tourists</b>
Historic centre	9 km <sup>2</sup>	1.3 million tourists per 1 km <sup>2</sup>
Municipality	101,4 km <sup>2</sup>	118.300 tourists per 1 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Venice</b>	<b>2019:</b>	<b>30 million tourists</b>
Historic centre	7,06 km <sup>2</sup>	<b>4.3 million tourists per 1 km<sup>2</sup></b>
Municipality	412 km <sup>2</sup>	72.815 tourists per 1 km <sup>2</sup>



Amsterdam  
the canal belt, and  
the Wallen



Barcelona  
the old citadel



Venice  
*centro storico*

The main focus of tourists visiting Venice is the *centro storico*. The data shows how Venice in the reality of today serves as a Museum City.

This strengthened by the amount of day trippers that visit Venice. With day tripper is meant:

- The tourist that visits Venice but doesn't stay a night. This amount has rapidly increased the last few years.<sup>1</sup>

Tourists increase

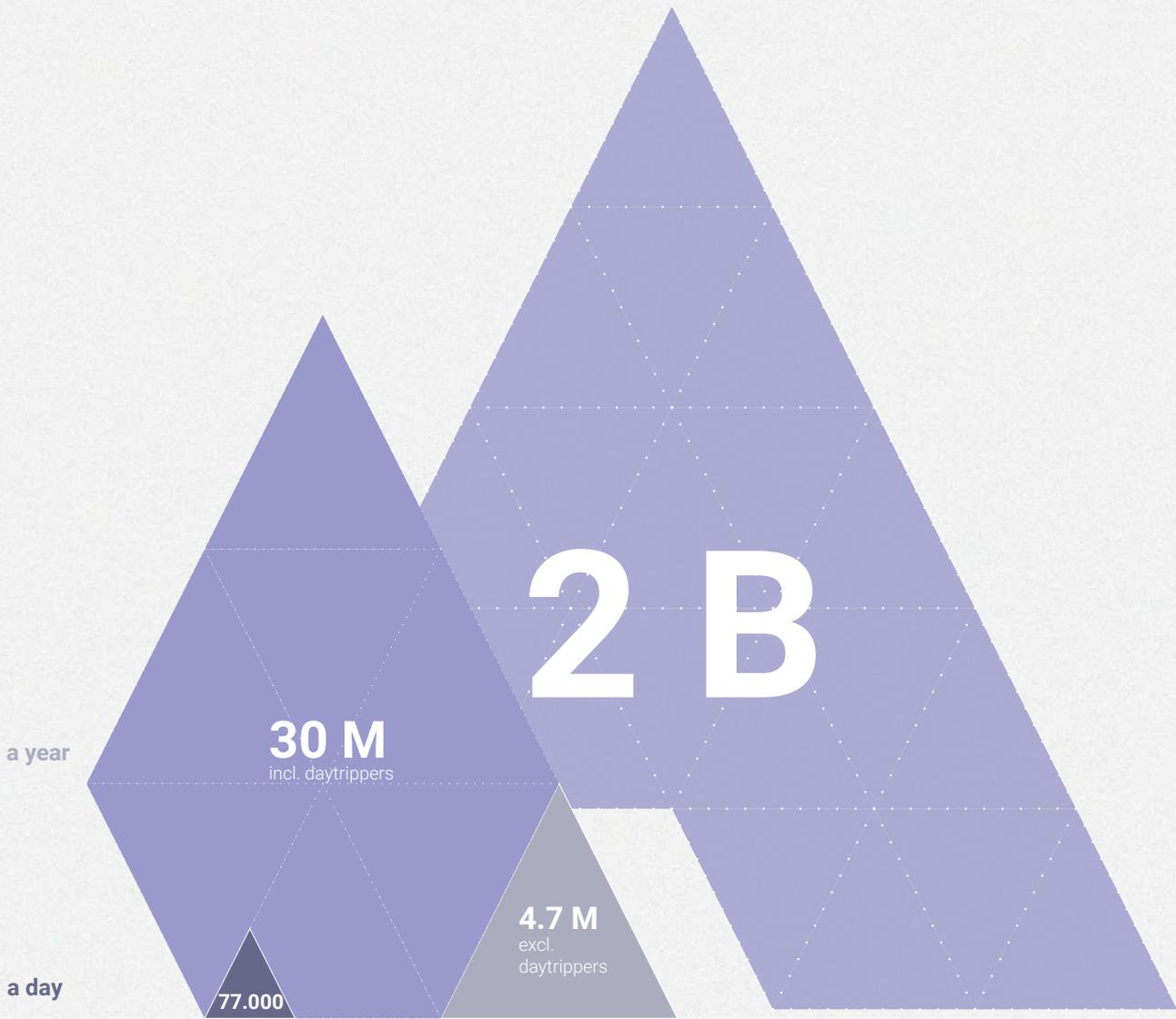
- Between 2011 and 2019 + 30%
- 30 million tourists a year (including day trippers)
- 70% of the tourists are day trippers

The forecast is also still that this number will increase, depending on what happens after the pandemic.



Increasing tourists between 2011-2019

<sup>1</sup> Assessorato al turismo (2019). Annuario del turismo dati 2019. Citta di Venezia (2019)



Tourists a day and a year including day trippers in 2019

And the future forecast

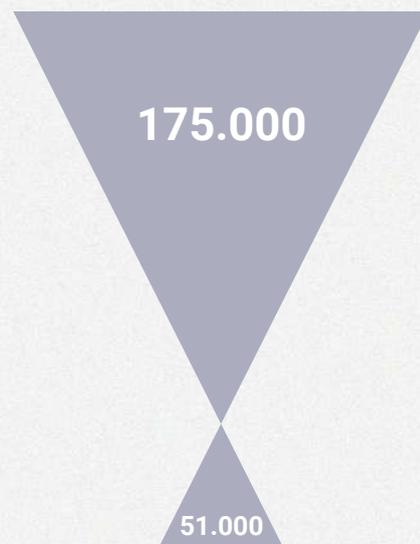
The effects of tourism on the cost of living and work possibilities, led to a decline in residents.

Venice's population was at its peak in 1500. In 1970 it was near to this amount, but nowadays the population of Venice declined. It has just one third as many inhabitants as 50 years ago:

- Population drop in centro storico of 68%

This is because of the fact that the economy in Venice is mainly based on tourism. It has become the most important economic development source. But this also has a negative side, the free market principles rule and a result of this is the liberalization of stores and the crisis in affordable housing.

Interviews with local people gave more insight in the current reality in regard to the liveability (see chapter III)<sup>1</sup>. There has been many protests among the local people about problems such as urban social issues (No Big Ships Committee), gentrification, an unsustainable economy and touristic saturation.



Decreasing residents between 1950-2019

1 (see research book p.124-131 for more information)



The literal countdown of the population in the window of a drugstore near Rialto (own image: summer 2021)

Currently we see unsustainable tourism; the costs exceed the benefits. There is a disassembled demography of the locals living in *centro storico*.

And last year clearly showed the city's dependence on tourism. For example, traditional crafts are disappearing in Venice, in specific *centro storico*, due to limited space available and high prices. A remarkable behaviour of the residents, taken from the interviews held with the locals is the increasing interest in practicing crafts during the pandemic. In the absence of the tourism crowds, and tourism income, residents are looking for new ways to earn money or use their time. An example is the production and maintenance of gondola's on one of the islands in the lagoon. Nowadays only 4% of the population is either an artisan or works in craft<sup>1</sup>.

More than ever, the pandemic showed that overtourism is the consequence of the current policy and governmental direction of the municipality of Venice.



1 Assessorato al turismo (2019). Annuario del turismo dati 2019. Citta di Venezia (2019)



source: <https://www.dw.com/en/venice-in-times-of-coronavirus-relaxed-and-unique/a-54772091>

### III. THE PRESENT STORY

*“When I want to repair my shoes, I have to go to the mainland”*

In addition to the research, interviews were conducted with the local population. These are summarised in a 2-minute film.

In this chapter you can see a number of shots, with the accompanying quote from the locals.

For more information on the interviews and results, see the research book<sup>1</sup>.

Visiting and talking to local people was very rewarding. As a result, this project incorporates the current stories of the locals into its elaboration and design.

Subjects, such as:

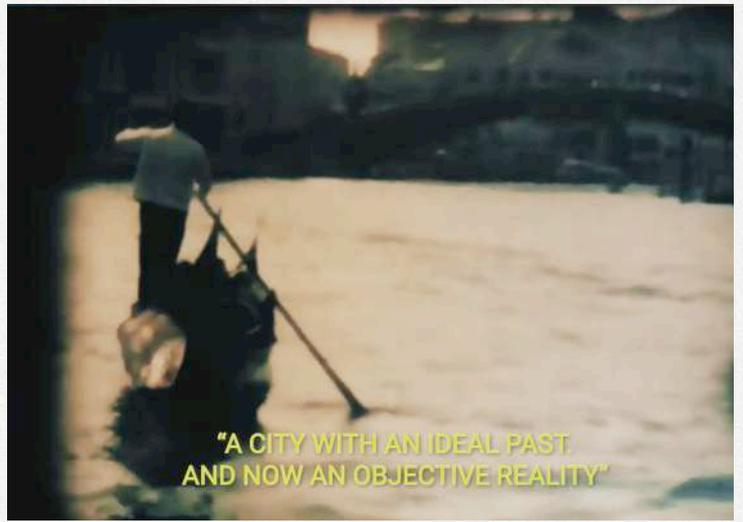
- Focus on affordable housing
- Focus on attracting young families
- Creating work space for the knowledge industry and other companies outside tourism
- Cultural production as focus for an economic impulse
- Finding ways to ‘educate’ tourists and increase the quality of tourism
- Taking into account the Venetian elements, and having respect for the architectural and ecological value when designing a new neighbourhood

The main conclusion, is that the locals would like to see a change in perspective from the government and municipality, where the focus from tourism shifts towards the locals.

**“Tourism  
is  
intoxicating  
the  
city”**



"LA SERENISSIMA: THE POWERFUL AND TOLERANT CITY"



"A CITY WITH AN IDEAL PAST AND NOW AN OBJECTIVE REALITY"



"OVERTOURISM"



"NOWADAYS VENICE IS MORE A LOCATION THAN A PLACE"



"FOR ME CONGESTION IS THE MAIN PROBLEM"



"VENICE IS INTOXICATED"



"IN THE 30 YEARS I HAVE LIVED HERE, THE QUALITY OF LIFE HAS DECREASED"



"I CAN'T AFFORD A HOUSE HERE"



"WE DONT HAVE FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS ANYMORE.  
WHEN I WANT TO REPAIR MY SHOES..."



"...I HAVE TO GO TO THE MAINLAND"



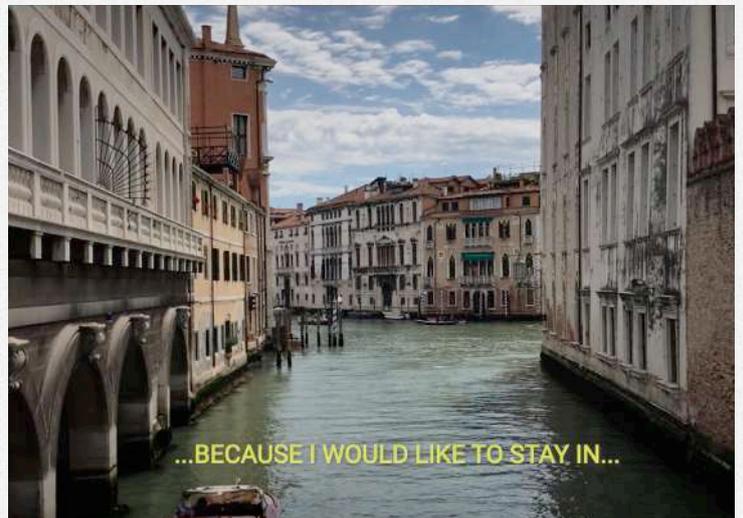
"I THINK WE SHOULD FIND A WAY TO EDUCATE TOURISTS"



"WE NEED JOBS AND YOUNG PEOPLE"



"WE NEED A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE..."



"...BECAUSE I WOULD LIKE TO STAY IN..."



"...IN VENICE"



THE ACT OF LIVING  
KINKE NIJLAND

## IV. DICHOTOMY BETWEEN LIVEABILITY AND OVERTOURISM

*'An overwhelmed city'*

Venice is currently situated between an ideal past and objective reality. The notion and importance of the city in the world is undeniable.

But this image as a Museum City is a big threat. Venice is one of the most famous iconic destinations and one of the main example of tourism overcrowding. What once started with the romantic Grand Tour now stands in the way of many things.

The Laissez-Faire approach has led to an overwhelmed city and unsustainable economy.

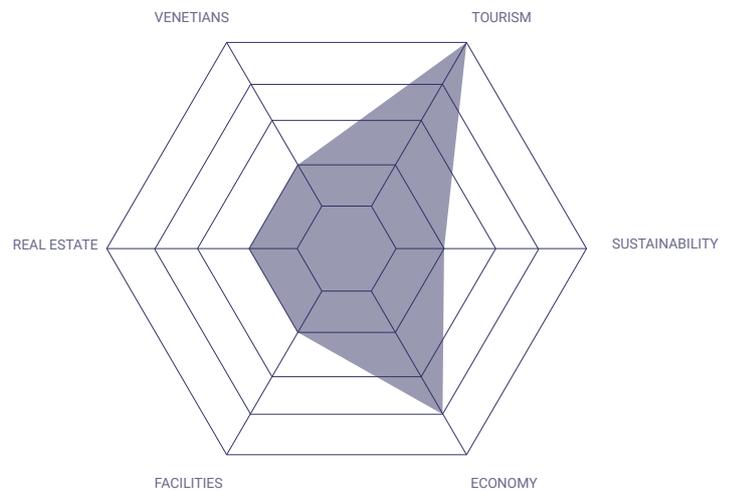
from  
**liveable city**  
to  
**scenography**  
for  
**tourists**

## IV.I. overwhelmed city

*'Stop the ad-hoc'*

The current situation is fully outlined and represented in a strength and weaknesses analysis<sup>1</sup>. Also, the different actors and the consequences for these actors of the Laissez-Faire approach have been outlined (see diagrams).

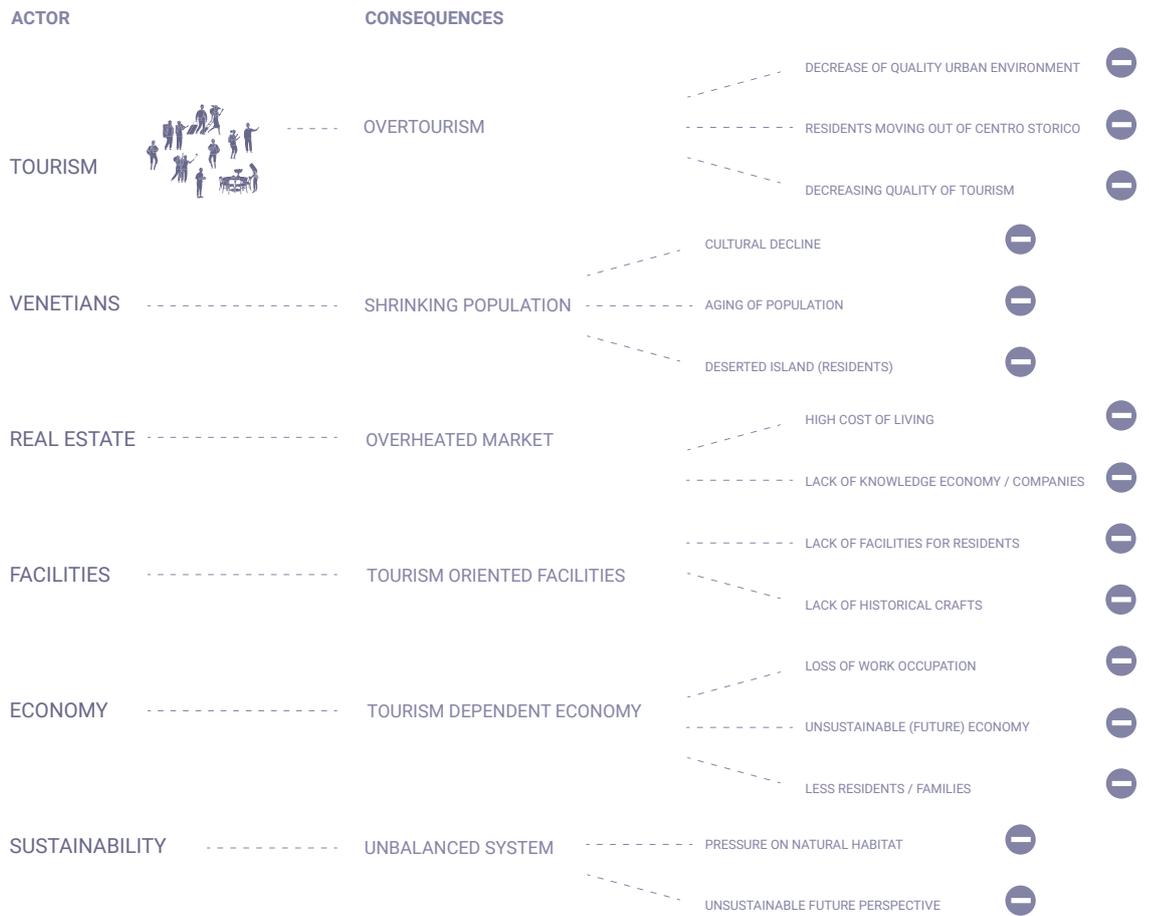
Venice is an overwhelmed city because the crowds, but also the tourism facilities have completely taken over the centro storico (see map next page).



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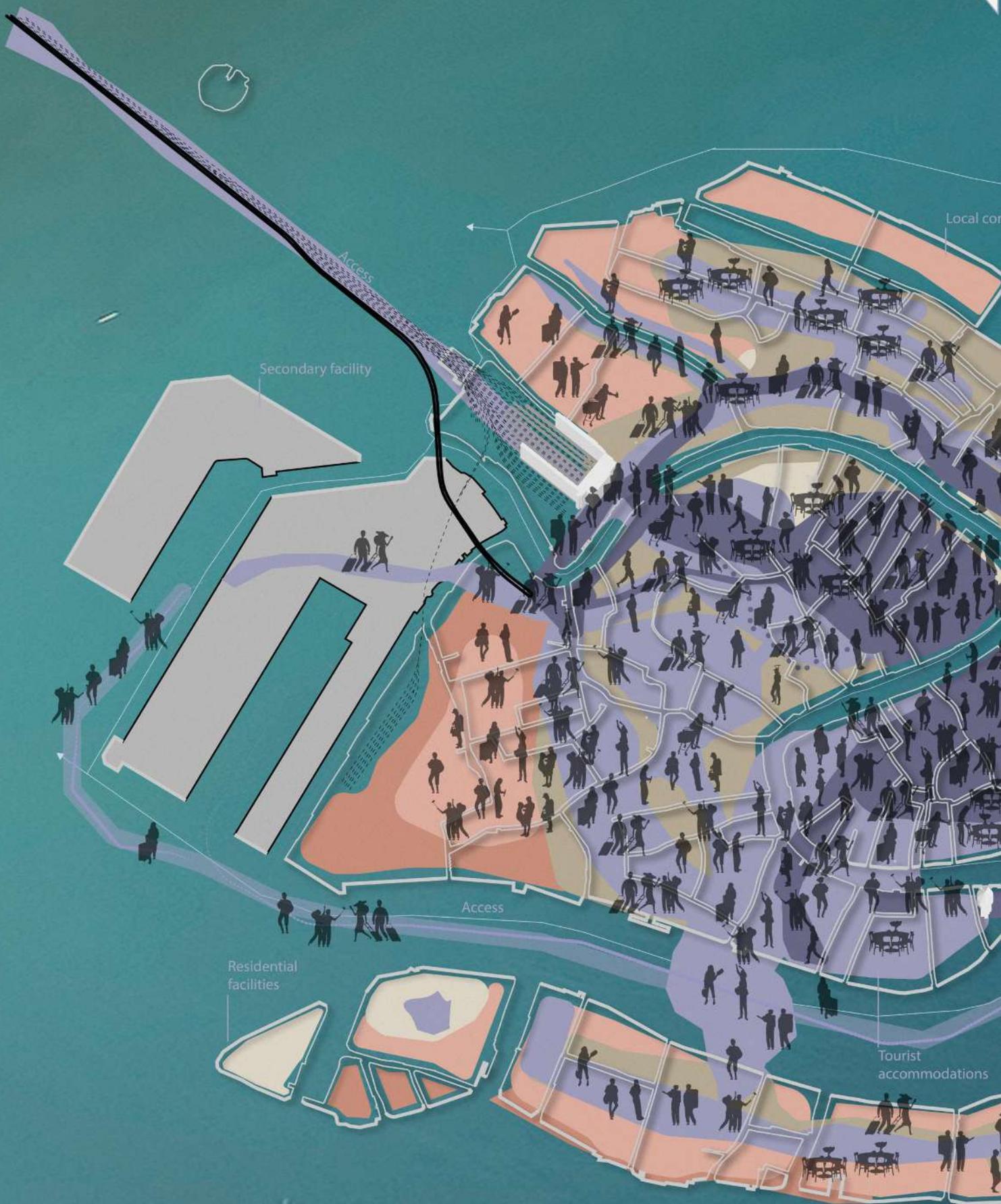
1 (see research book chapter V for more information)

LAISSEZ-FAIRE





Present: the laissez-faire approach has led to an overwhelmed city and an unsustainable economy



- tourism
- tourism-related work / facilities
- residents
- non-tourism-related work / facilities
- culture
- industry / terminal / parking hub
- most crowded





Community

Cultural activities

Tourist attraction

Hard geographical border

## IV.II. from liveable city to scenography

*'A city without an urban life'*

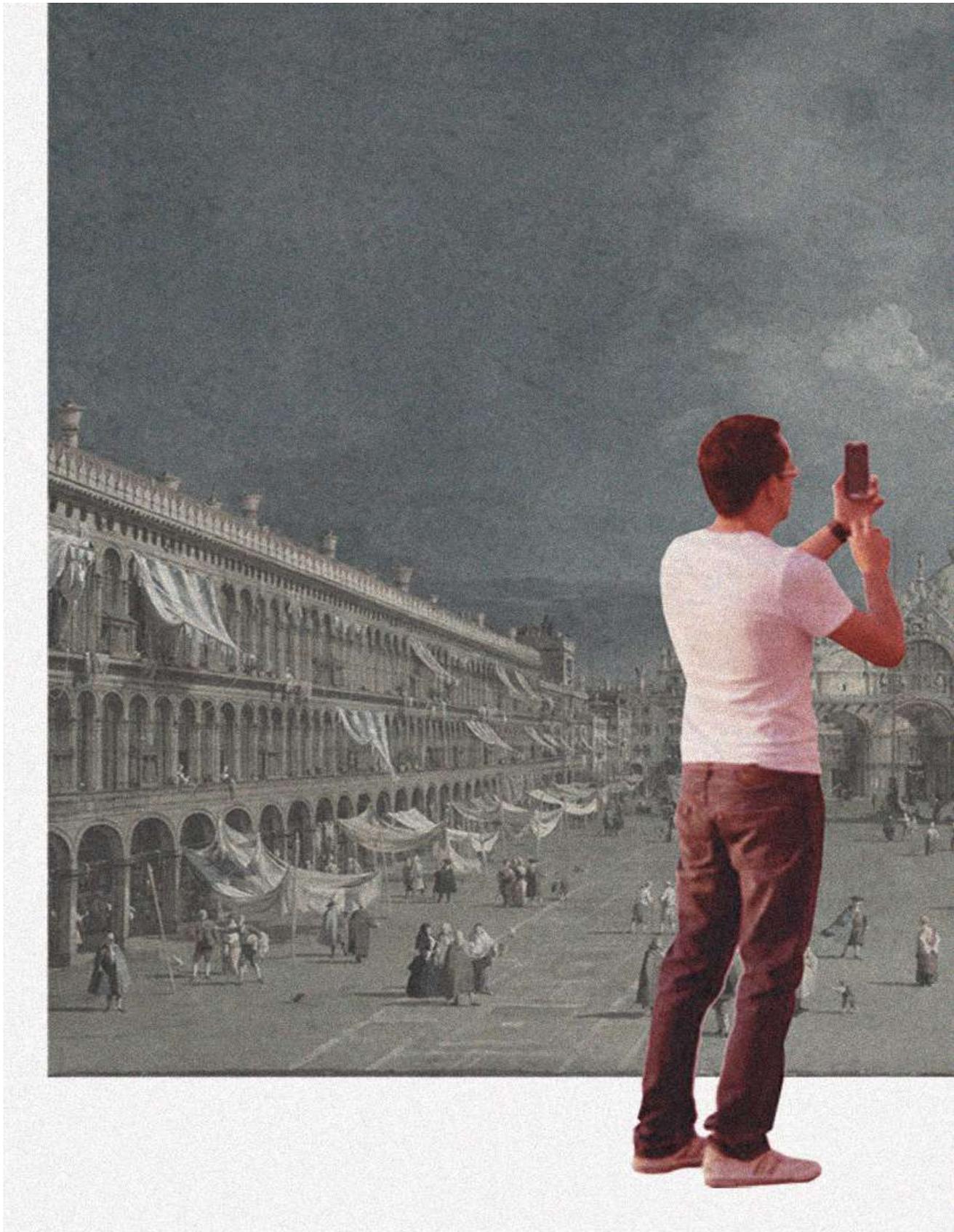
Following images show the division between the liveability of Venice in the past and in the present. The black and white paintings of *Canaletto* show elements of the past, overlaid with a layer in red showing the current context.

**The reality shows that the effect of overtourism is a decrease of the quality of life in Venice.**





*Overcrowded centro storico*  
*Overtourism because of the unique notion of Venice in the world*

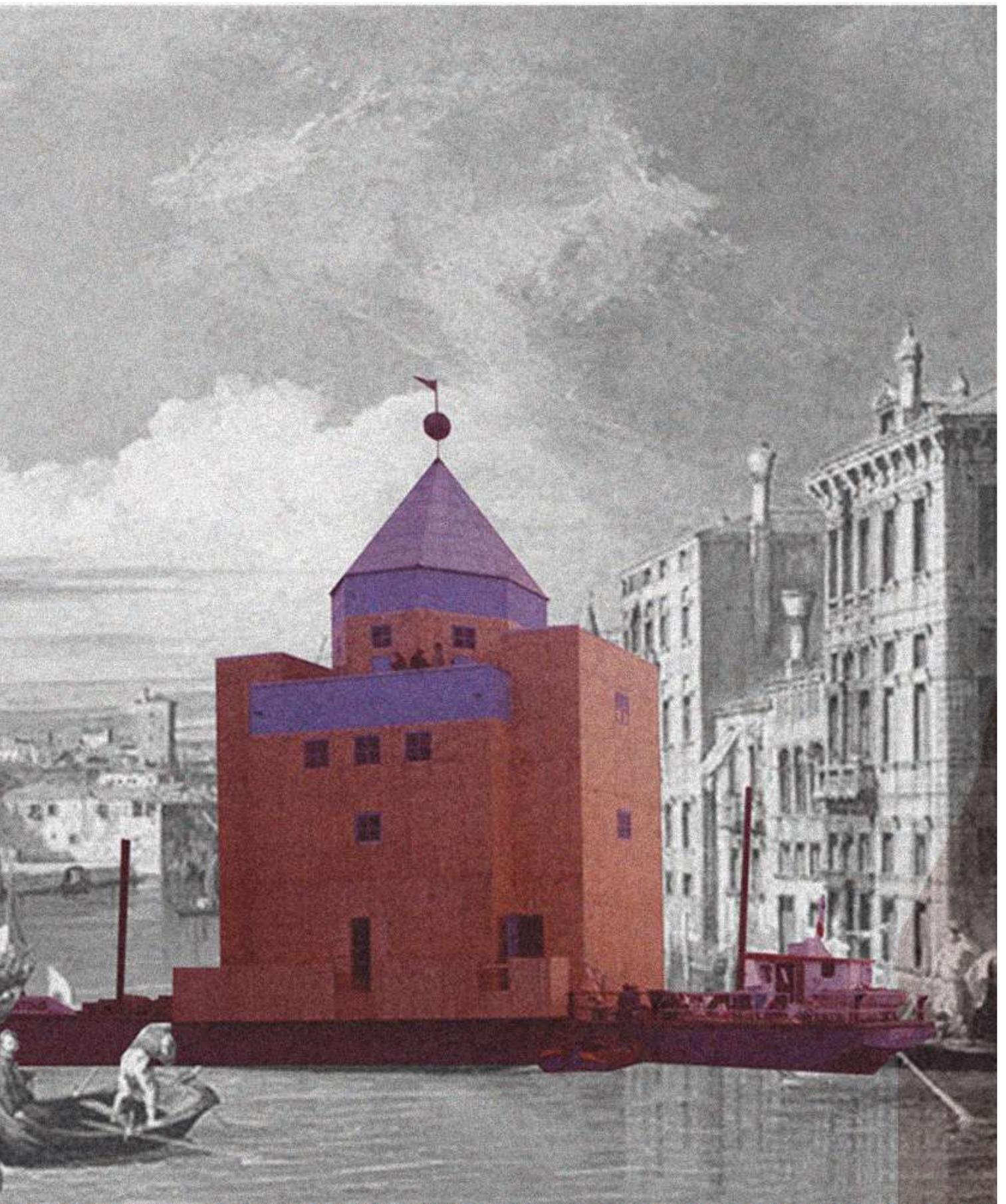




*Overcrowded centro storico*

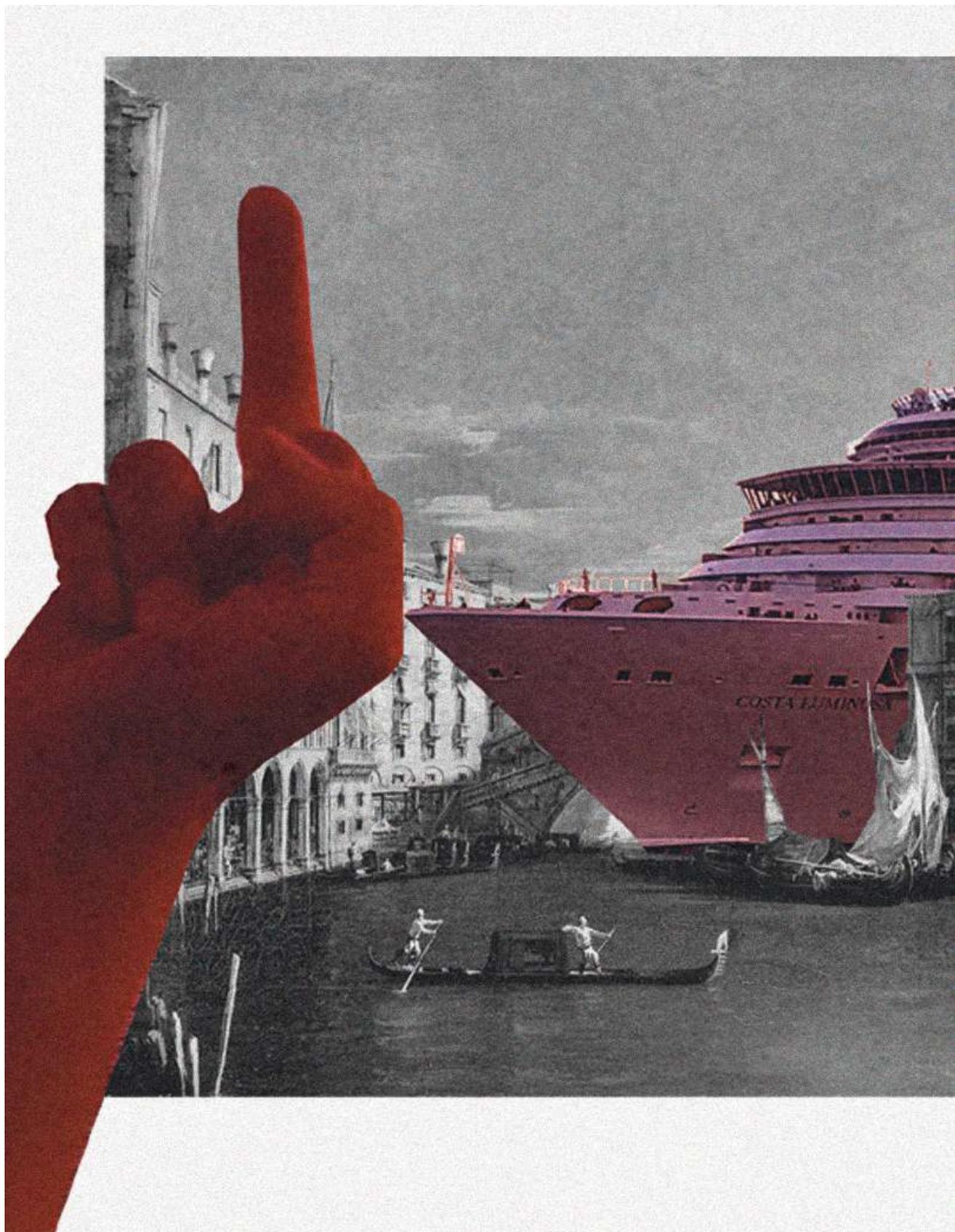
*The Grand Tour has made way for the concept of a Museum City for the mass*

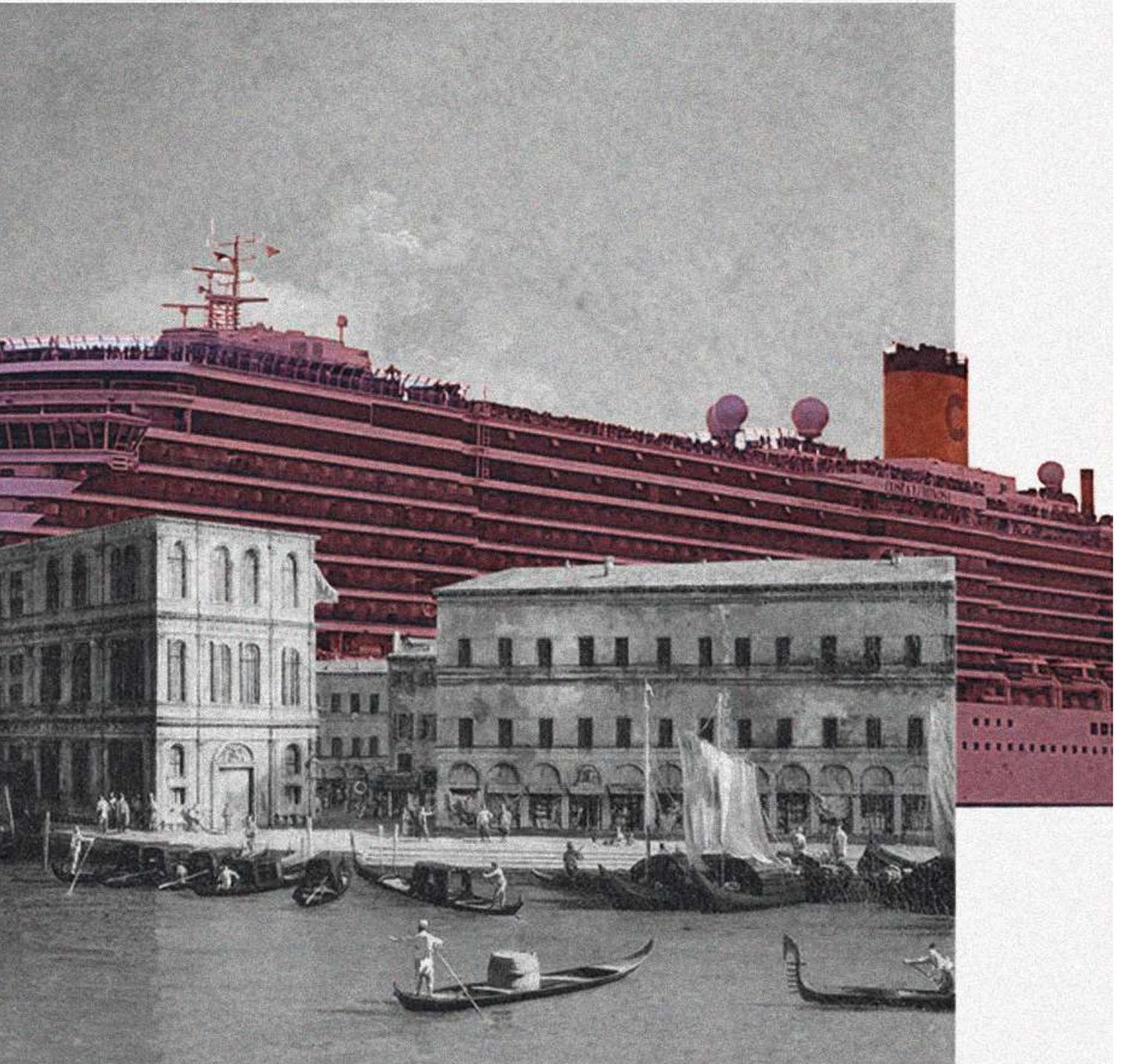




*Tourism mono culture*

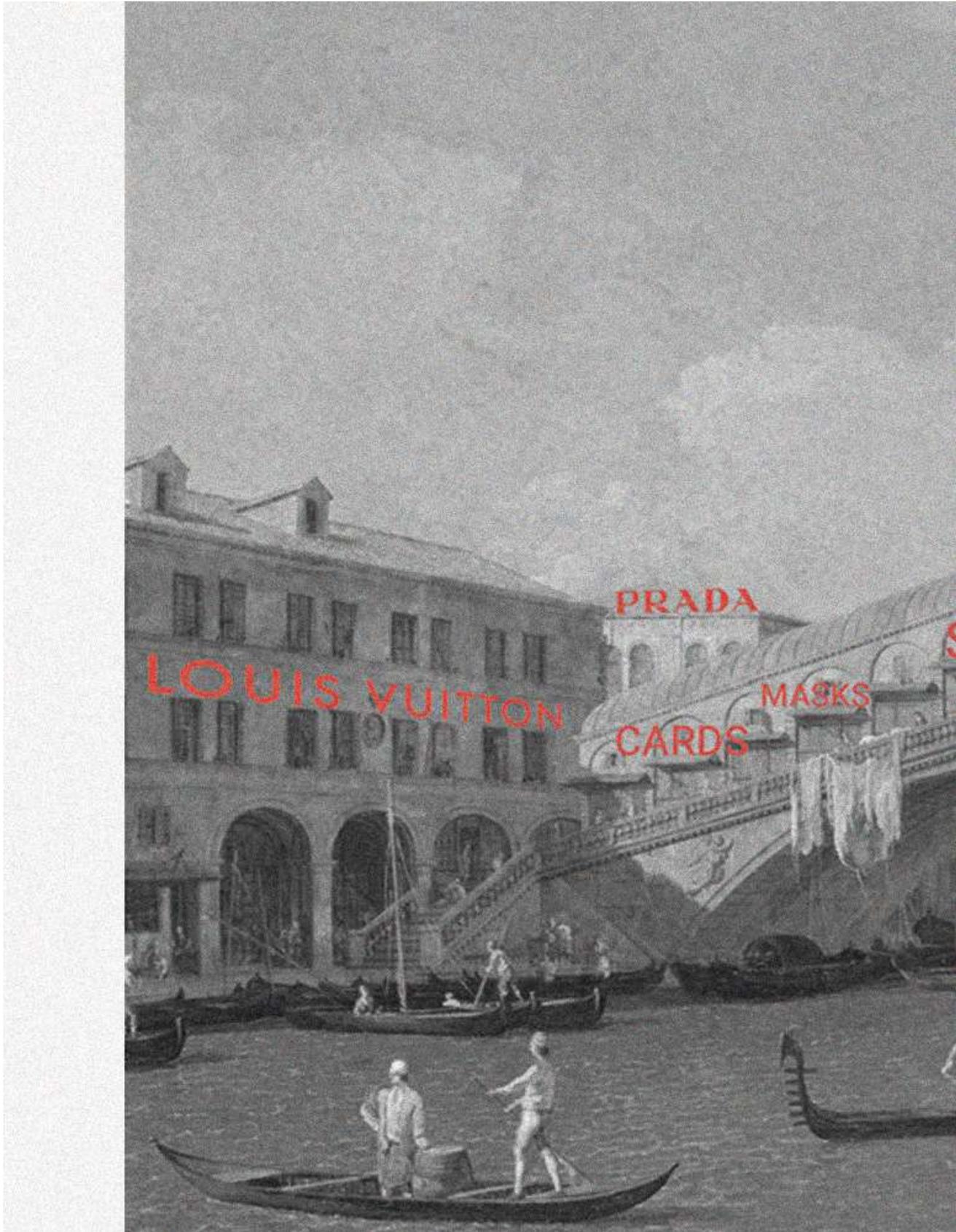
*Cruise ships are seen as socially, economically and environmentaly unsustainable*





*Tourism mono culture*

*Once a 'city of merchants', yet nowadays the shops are mainly tourism-oriented*





*Declining population*

*High house prices and domination by hotels, airbnb's and second homes in centro storico*





*Declining population*

*The speed of people moving out from centro storico has let to a countdown of the population*





## V. STRATEGY: STORY FOR LIVEABILITY

*'We look at Venice as part of a greater whole'*

The strategy has as goal: strengthening the quality of life in Venice.

Venice and its region should develop a long term strategy of resilience rather than a short-term attitude. That is why the strategy for this project is a sustainable (re) development in which the cultural-historical value, the economic appeal Venice and the interests of the locals are essential. The top-down research and bottom-up research complement and reinforce each other in this project and together they bring opportunities for the design. In the strategy the focus lies on liveability, a new story for liveability is written. And in this strategy, further focus is on:

- A review of the perception on the distribution and spread of tourism
- Reinforcing the current and future living conditions
- Restoring a dynamic relation of people and nature to the build environment and ecosystem. This implies a new dynamic approach to the natural heritage

The result of the strategy is reflected in:

- A vision and strategy for Venice as a whole
- A strategy plan for regulating tourism in the *centro storico*
- An urban design plan for a new liveable district.
- And a future resilient strategy plan for the *estuario* and the abandoned islands

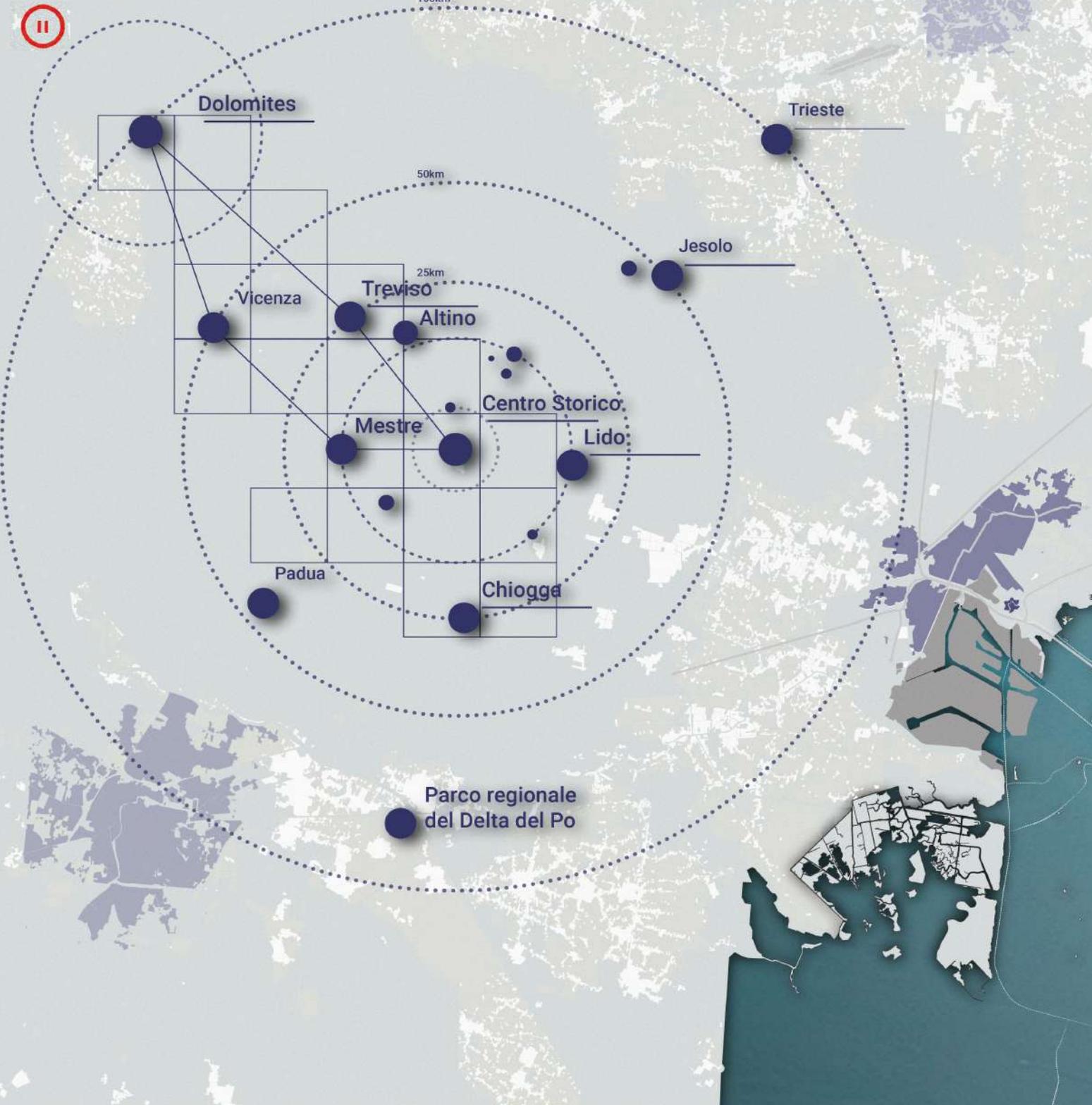
This chapter discusses the writing of the new story for liveability, with actors and design proposals.

a

**new story**

for the sake of

**liveability**



Venice as part of a greater whole



Altino

Lido di Jesolo

Burano  
Torcello

Murano

Centro Storico

Lido

- satellites
- centro storico
- Forte Marghera
- Mestre
- Padua
- Treviso
- main industry
- airport
- terraferma
- terraferma cities
- land infrastructure
- lagoon infrastructure

0 1.5km 4.5km



Pellestrina

Chioggia

Mestre

Marghera

Centro Storico

Lido

Hotel Excelsior

## V.I. elements of liveability

*'As urban designers we should take on the role as writers for liveability'*

The objective reality is that Venice is a stage, a scenography, without an urban life. In this strategy a new story for liveability is written. With a new written story the liveability is improved in regard to overtourism by regulating and turning the unsustainable approach into a sustainable approach.

In terms of the main elements of liveability, Venice is a relatively exciting place according to urban planning principles<sup>1</sup>.

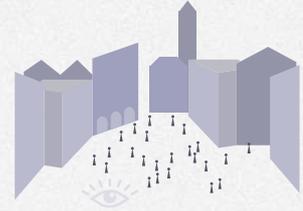
The urban structure of Venice consists of liveable elements: the mysterious alleyways, the height of the buildings, the communal squares etc. But the social elements, which used to be there, have disappeared from the street scene. Part of the strategy, therefore, is to create a new liveable place for the local population. This part of the strategy makes room for:

- New jobs and new economic impulse
- Facilities for the locals and communal public areas
- Affordable places to live

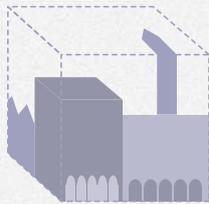
Order and variety



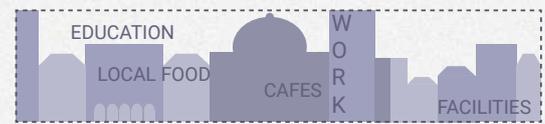
Visible life



Compact



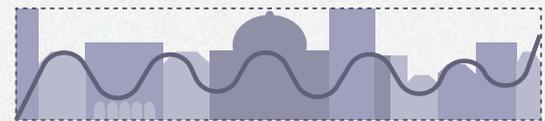
Locality and facilities



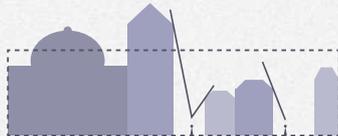
Orientation and mystery



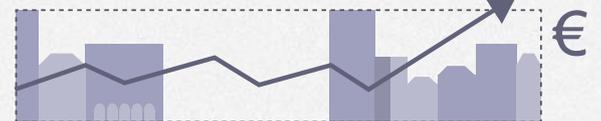
Healthy economy



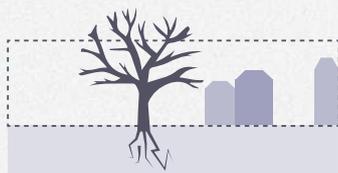
Scale



Affordable housing



Green and sustainability



Valued communities



Spatial / Social principles (Jan Gehl (2010). Liveable cities)

## V.II. cultural production

*'Cultural production as economic income direction'*

The shift from tourism to quality of life means: the shift from tourism to cultural production as main income and social economic structure.

By cultural production is meant: the work of the culture industry.

The history of Venice is rich in local production, from crafts to art<sup>1</sup>. The space for these jobs has disappeared with the advent of tourism, among other things. But the strategy emphasizes this, by making room for this type of work, especially crafts. It also provides space for a new type of cultural production, more in the direction of ecology and biodiversity with technology. This all in order to expand the offer in the city, to educate the tourists and to create jobs for the locals.



A shift from tourism as main extract to cultural production (source: own image (painting left: Bruegel de Oude, painting right: Canaletto, Teatro del Mondo, Rossi))

## V.III. elements in Venice

*'Elements that already exist and that are reinforced in the approach'*

In order to be able to connect with the improvement of the quality of life in the municipality and to focus on cultural production, the first part of the strategy consists of a thorough investigation of the elements that are already there in Venice.

The elements that will be used and reinforced in the strategy are:

- The current movements of the tourists within the borders of the municipality of Venice
- Emphasizing on contemplation of the importance of the world heritage in the *centro storico*
- The spatial liveable elements that make Venice unique in the world, and the reference to those elements in the new design for a liveable district
- The current network of local and cultural production in- and around the *centro storico*
- The architectural and ecological value of the *estuario*
- The supply of the lagoon in relation to a resilient future

Different target groups can be linked to these elements. These are referred to in the next paragraph.



world heritage protection



the tourist's current behaviour is taken into account in the approach



unique urban features that are taken into account in the new proposals



ruins that are architecture valuable on deserted islands



various universities with which links can be forged



local production around *centro storico* that is enhanced in the new network



great biodiversity on deserted islands



ecological value in terms of bird species



favourable locations with fish and shellfish

- Forte Marghera
- Mestre
- Treviso
- main industry
- airport
- terraferma
- terraferma cities
- land infrastructure
- lagoon infrastructure



## V.IV. personas

*'Different actors have different roles to play'*

Following the inventory of existing elements in Venice used for the strategy, the definition of 3 different target groups follows: **the personas**.

The personas defined are as follows: the tourists, the locals and the new travellers. These personas each have their own demographic features and behaviors. A design proposal is then linked to these personas, which is discussed in the next paragraph. But first the personas follow, starting with **the Tourists**.

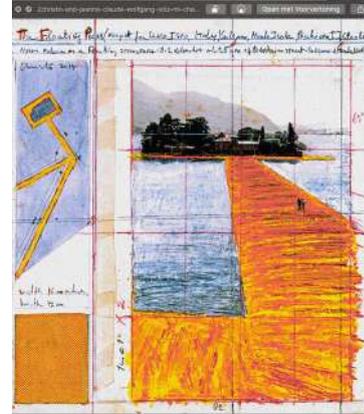
The tourists are mainly of American, European or Asian nationality and most of them are between the age of 26 and 60 years old. They stay approximately 1 to 2 days in Venice, and move only or mostly within the *centro storico*<sup>1</sup>.

There behavior consist of eating, sleeping and buying<sup>2</sup>, and visiting tourist attractions and museums.

In the design proposal, the design goals are linked to the specific movements and behavior of the tourists. The design goals are:

- A way of regulating the tourists flood is designed
- The tourists attractions that exist in Venice play an important connector role in the approach
- Contemplation is an important element

The design proposal consist of the Red Necklace: a route dedicated to the circulation of tourists in *centro storico*.



01 Floating piers from Christo and Jeanne-Claude as reference for the design



02 San Marco as tourist attractor



03 The unique urban fabric as tourist attractor

1 (see research book p.44-45 for more information)

2 (see research book p.52-53 for more information)



*“Congestion is the main problem. So we should regulate tourism, because tourism is a beautiful concept, but we also want to be remembered of the beauty of the city”*

## TOURISTS

### demographics



varies  
1. American  
2. European  
3. Asian



*centro storico*



1.5 to 2.5 days



29% 26-45 y/o  
27% > 60 y/o

### behavioral identity



eat  
sleep  
buy



*centro storico*



visits tourist attractions  
and museums



walks the Red  
Necklace



55% plane  
27% train  
15% car (parks the car  
at Forte Marghera)



The second persona defined in this strategy, which is related to the new liveable neighbourhood focused on local production, are **the Locals**.

The locals want a liveable environment, the most important elements that should be present are work and facilities.

In addition, the rental or purchase prices must be attractive, and the design of the new district must match the Venetian standard.

Because of these reasons the design goals are:

- A liveable district that is designed in Venetian language
- A liveable district that is affordable, offers work(places) and everyday facilities

The design proposal consist of the new liveable neighborhood at Tronchetto Island, the current parking island of Venice.



01 Creating new jobs in local production (painting: Bruegel de Oude, Children's Games 1560)



02 Local production as main focus



03 Existing universities in Venice



04 The existing unique urban features



*"The municipality should invest in young people, cultural production and affordable housing"*

## LOCALS

---

### demographics



Italian varies



municipality



(couple of) years



all ages

---

### behavioral identity



lives and works in the new liveable districts



likes to have all the necessary facilities in the neighbourhood



wants to live in a new part of Venice which is designed with Venetian elements



works as a carpenter and is enhancing knowledge on a new food chain in the interest of the lagoon



Tronchetto



The last persona defined in this strategy, are **the Locals and the new generation Travellers.**

This persona forms the new generation of locals and travellers, working together for a resilient future. The main reason for this persona is the change from fast tourism to slow tourism. The current way of tourism, is unsustainable, it seems<sup>1</sup>.

A new way of tourism is needed for the sake of liveability, not only of Venice, but of the whole world. As the locals said, “*we must educate our tourists*”. This persona therefore represents the new generation of travellers, with a link to the Grand Tour when people travelled to learn and experience art and culture<sup>2</sup>.

The focus for this persona is on the *estuario* and the well-being of it. The travellers don't just stay a few days, but longer. They stay at work and stay-farms of destinations, such as the WWOOF-concept<sup>3</sup> (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms).

Because of these reasons the design goals are:

- Liveable new travel destinations in the *estuario*, looking at deserted islands
- A symbiosis between the locals and travellers, where instead of living side by side, living together is the norm

The design proposal consist of the new destinations in the lagoon, where aquaculture and floating farms are established.

1 (see research book p.68-85 for more information)

2 (see research book p.30-33 for more information)

3 <http://wwoofinternational.org>



01 The lagoon as study field for a resilient future



02 The new design proposal as reference to the Grand Tour of the past



03 Existing universities and organizations in Venice



04 The rich biodiversity existing in the lagoon



*"The tourists should be aware of the local culture and identity. Locals and travellers should work together"*

## LOCALS AND TRAVELLERS

### demographics



Italian  
varies



estuario (lagoon)  
and the well-being  
of it



(couple of) years  
(couple of) weeks



18> y/o

### behavioral identity



lives / travels and works



lagoon



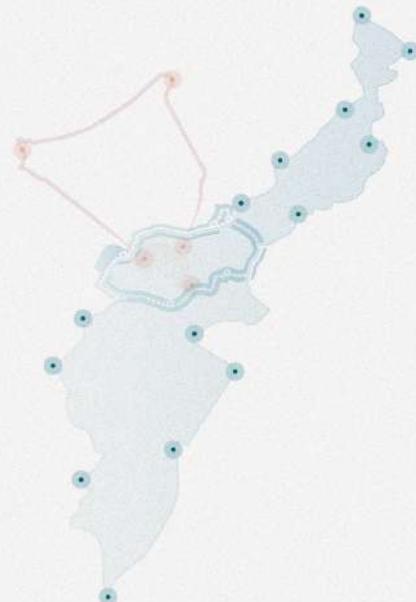
permanently lives /  
temporary stays in the  
area of the lagoon



is a strong advocate of  
a new way of travelling



works at a aqua farm,  
floating farm, wants to  
experience and learn  
from the local  
community



## V.V. storylines

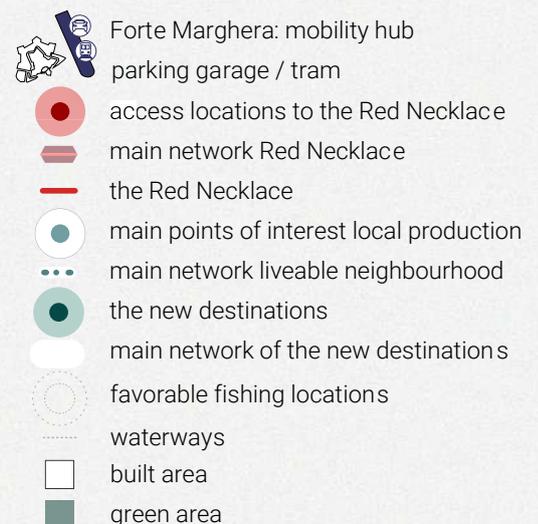
*'Three acts in a film that divide a story into three parts'*

Ultimately, the strategy consists of three different storylines, linked to the previously formulated existing qualities and elements in the municipality, the personas and the focus on cultural production.

The new storylines of Venice are connected through acts, each with its own actors (personas) and design proposal.

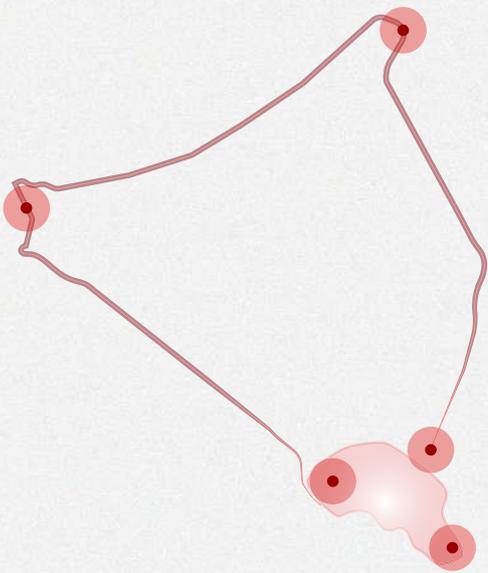
The three storylines in the interest of strengthening the quality of life in Venice are:

- The Red Necklace: route for **the tourists** that regulates the visit. Tourists arrive in Venice by plane, car or train, and follow a route through the historic centre (*centro storico*) that is dedicated to visiting the main tourist attractions and to contemplation
- The New Liveable neighbourhood, which is linked to the local production sites in Venice. The district focuses on affordable housing, increasing employment opportunities and the provision of facilities. The new district will be realized on the current Tronchetto parking island. By dealing with these parking spaces for tourists, and moving them to another strategic place on the mainland, space is created for a new development for **the locals**
- And the New Destinations for the symbiosis between **the locals and travellers**: on the deserted islands in the lagoon, destinations will be established that are dedicated to sustainable tourism and a resilient future for the lagoon and the city

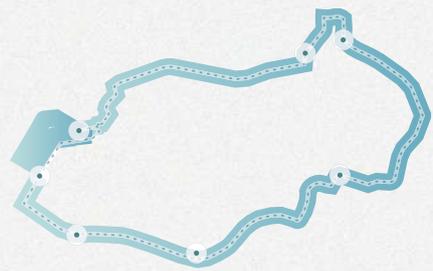




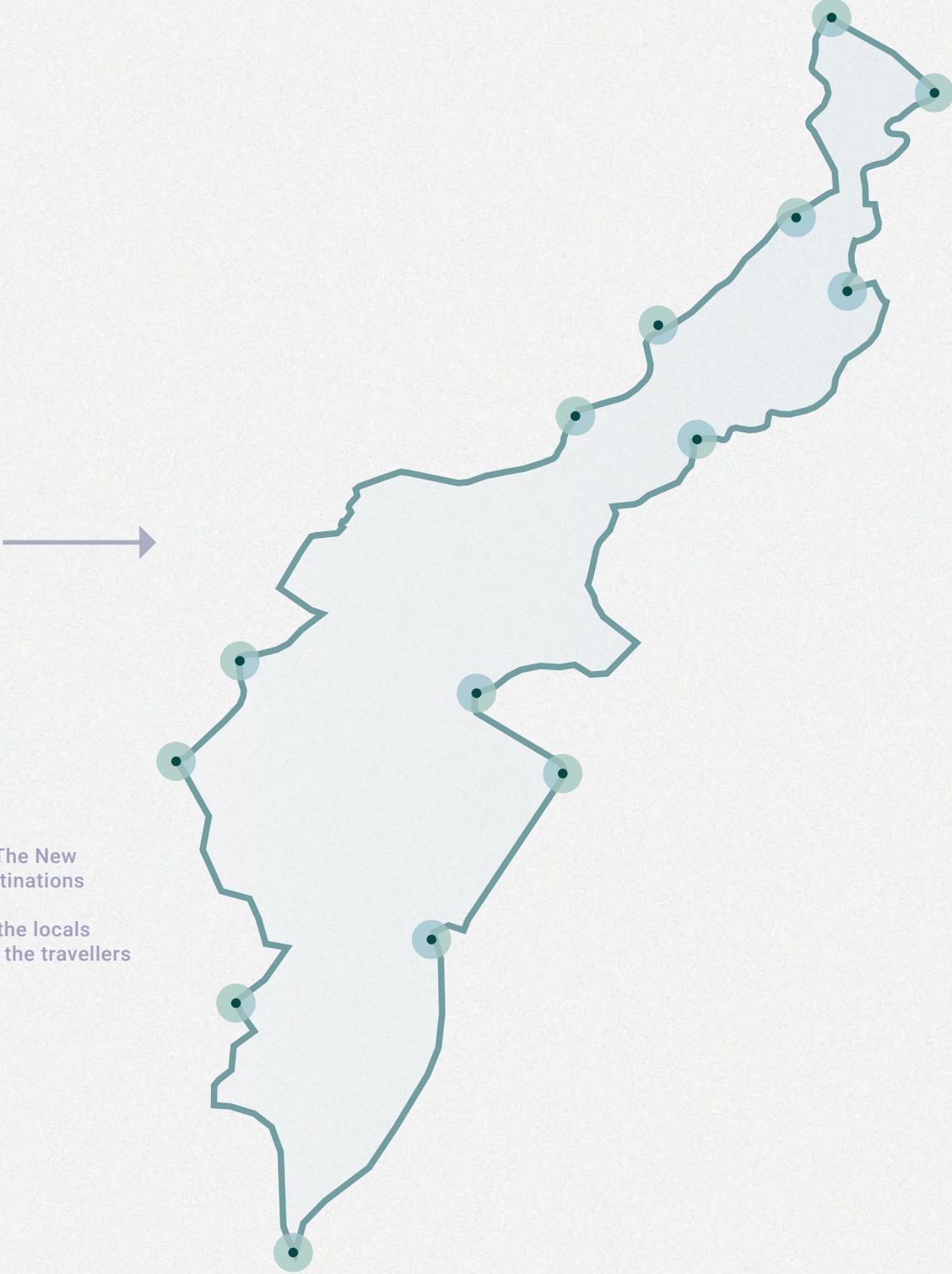
- tourists
- locals
- locals and travellers



01 The Red Necklace  
for the tourists



02 The New  
Liveable  
Neighbourhood  
for the locals



03 The New Destinations

for the locals and the travellers

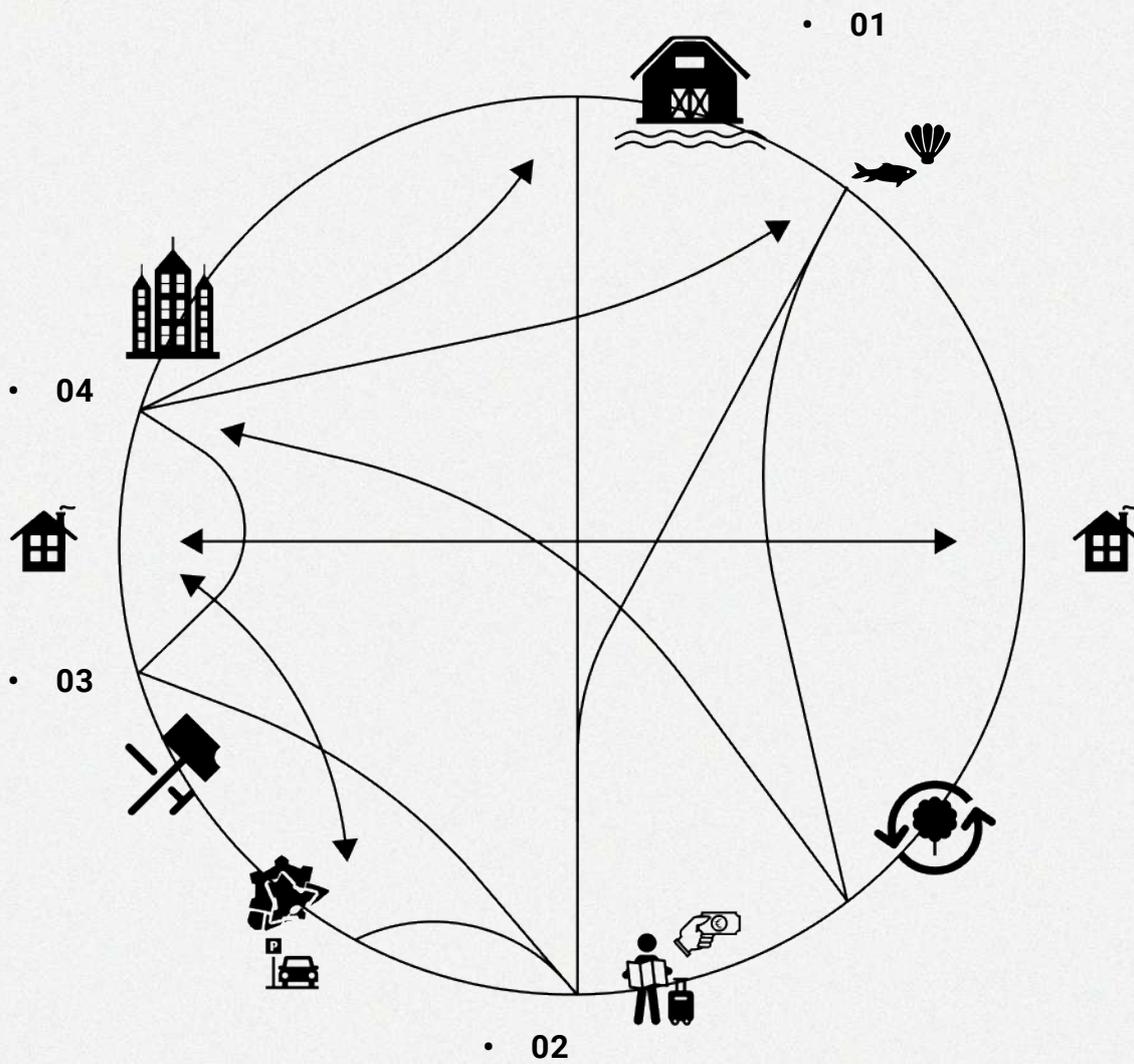
## V.VI. connection

*'A network of stories'*

But the different storylines are also connected.

- **01** In the New Liveable Neighbourhood, a research institute is being realized to investigate new ways of aqua farming and floating farms in the lagoon, as well as other ecological and biodiversity issues.
- **02** The products produced in the New Liveable Neighbourhood and in the New Destinations are sold along the Red Necklace, among others. Thus, the mono culture of the tourist shops is broken
- **03** The new local production hub and the research institute offer jobs for the locals and new families that move to Venice
- **04** This research institute cooperates with the students and the universities present in Venice

And what the three different interventions have in common in general is the strengthening of the quality of life in Venice and its surroundings.



Connection between the three storylines

## VI. ACT I: THE RED NECKLACE

### *'Regulation for congested streets'*

The whole *centro storico* of Venice is overcrowded. Research shows that, the feelings of the locals regarding overtourism are geographically distributed in a homogeneous way, proving that overcrowding and negative impacts related to tourism are spread out equally in *centro storico*<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore the Red Necklace addresses the tourist stress of the locals caused by the spread of tourists in *centro storico*. The design proposal consists of interventions in the public space dedicated to contemplation and circulation of the tourists in the *centro storico*. It regulates by encouraging tourists to walk a certain route to which the interventions are linked.

On top of that, a limit can be introduced, which keeps the numbers walking the route in check.

Venice now has to cope with about 77.000 visitors a day, while the city can actually only cope with 50.000. So, depending on the political decision, the Red Necklace is accessible to a maximum of 25.000 visitors a day.

Regulation of the route is possible because the route has a clear end and start point. Such as the airport, the new mobility hub in Forte Marghera, Santa Lucia train station and the various boat stations.

---

1 (see research book p.48-49/p.62-63 for more information)

ACT I  
**route**  
to  
**regulate**  
and  
**contemplate**

ticket: Red Necklace

01.08.2022



Access

enjoy the local products produced in the Venetian lagoon

At campo San Polo, a stream of water refers to the former rio tera that was there and at the same time contributes to a good circulation of tourists

... and the new bridge eases the strain on the Rialto and gives space to view it with a different perspective





... the new boardwalk moves with the current state of the water and reduces congestion in the area around the Rialto

contemplate the beauty

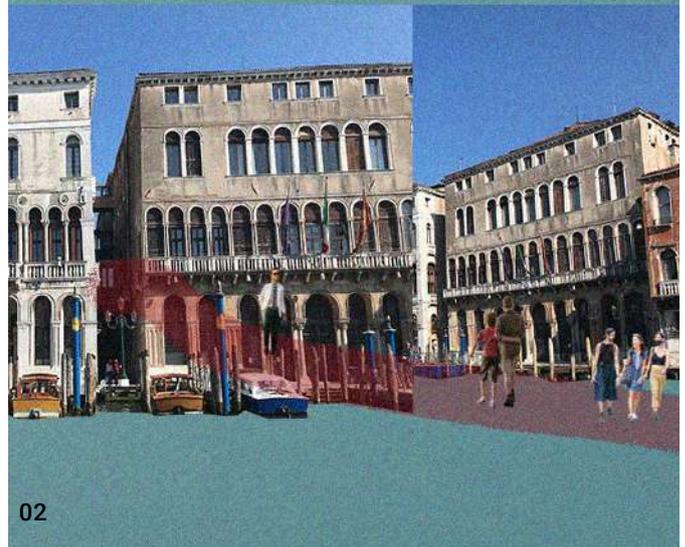
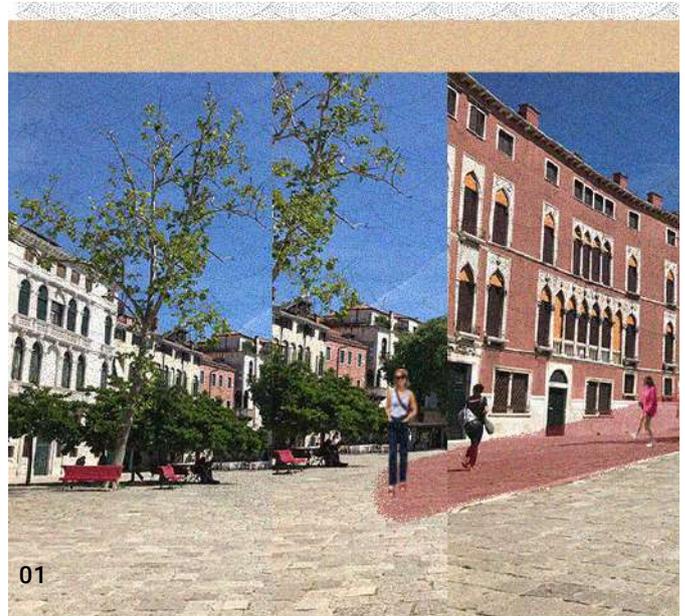
enjoy the local products produced in the new liveable district

Access

max. capacity visitors a day  
2021 *centro storico*: 55.000  
2022 Red Necklace: 25.000

The various public interventions along the Red Necklace form so-called resting points, and are dedicated to the contemplation of, for example:

- The beauty of Venice,
- Its history
- Or the well-known water issues



The locations chosen in this project are logical spots along the busiest route in the city centre.

In June 2021 I walked the route myself, and was able to draw some conclusions; you can taste the atmosphere in the photos and accompanying map on the left.



The Red Necklace: a line of stories and resting places in *centro storico*



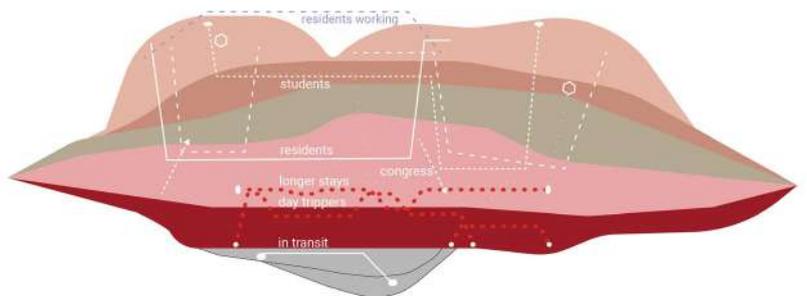


The Red Necklace is based upon the current circulation through *centro storico*. In the image right we see the movements of different type of commuters through the spaces<sup>1</sup>.

- The tourists, or day trippers, arrive - in present time - from the cruise ship terminal, the parking hub Tronchetto island, the train station Santa Lucia or by boat or bus from the airport. They spend time in the centre from 11.00 to 20.00 (see scheme on left page. The movements they make are spread out, but mainly in the districts Santa Croce, San Polo en San Marco
- The tourists that stay longer (>2 days or more) move within the same hours, but spread out more to other districts in the centre
- The locals, mostly not working in the centre but on the mainland, leave in the morning and return by dinner time
- Students are mainly located in the districts of Cannaregio, Dorsoduro and Giudecca

The map and diagram on the opposite page clearly show where the centre of activity is in *centro storico*. The route of the Red Necklace is therefore logically based on these movements.

## The Red Necklace as a solution to tourism stress



**Tourists  
Most crowded**

6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 1 2 3 4 5 hrs.

## URBAN DESIGN RULES

The urban design principles consist of three elements:

- The unique urban structure of Venice is used to design good circulation strategies. Campo San Polo is an example of this principle (see p. 116) and see research book for information about the heritage of the unique urban structure for Venice (p. 16-17)
- The tourists are gravitated into the Red Necklace by enabling the amenities, both tourism related and tourist facilities in free spaces or abandoned buildings. Important to note is that the facilities along the route, are with a local touch, and connected to cultural production
- The permanent and temporary design elements that will be realized, have one thing in common: the aim is to educate tourists. The designs are suggestive towards contemplation of issues that Venice deals with nowadays or in the future

On the next page are two sections that represent the purpose of the Red Necklace in a before and after.

# Urban design principles

01 02 03

... it consists of interventions in the public space dedicated to contemplation and circulation of tourists in *centro storico*

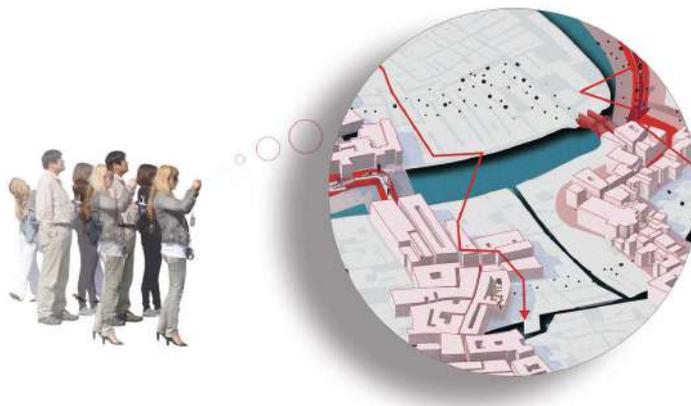


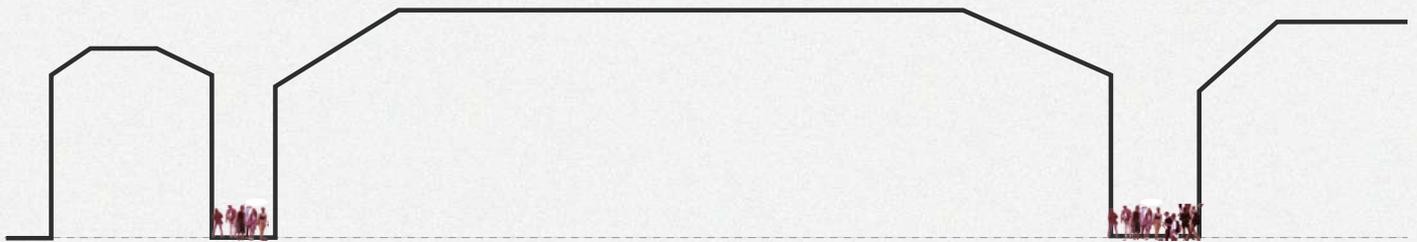
abandoned buildings / plinth spaces are considered for this intervention

... along the Red Necklace there are facilities related to local production in the lagoon and in the new liveable area. This makes tourists aware of the local products and breaks the one-sided shopping culture

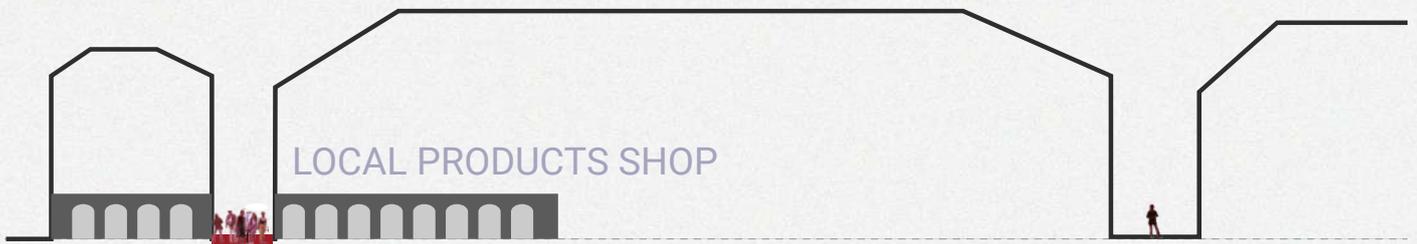


... another principle consists of designing temporary or permanent interventions in the interest of contemplation by the visitor





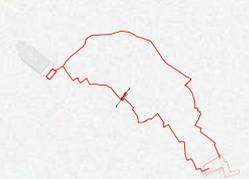
BEFORE: spread tourism in the streets



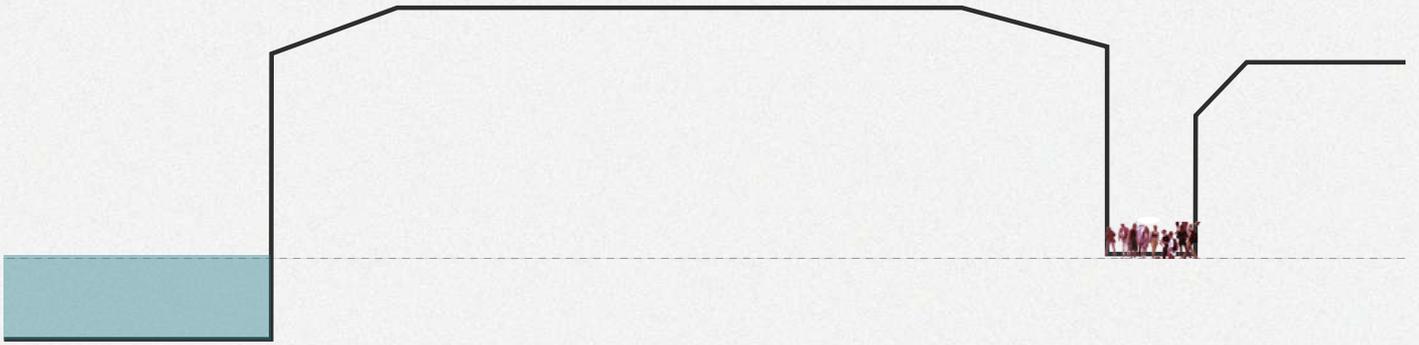
Rio Tera Primo

Calle S. Boldo

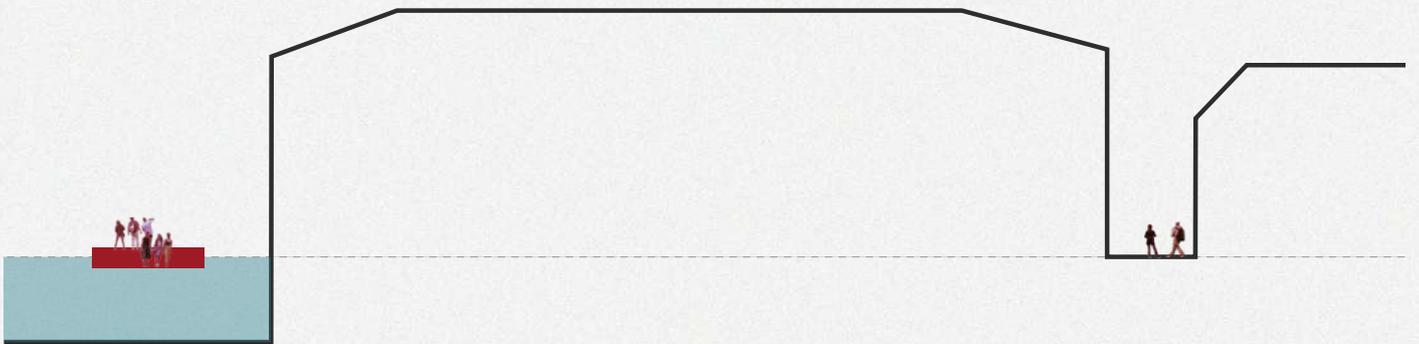
AFTER: regulation of the circulation due to gravitating the tourists



01 section cut Red Necklace before and after



BEFORE: congestion in small streets



Canal Grande

Calle San Grisostomo

AFTER: reducing congestion by creating new pathways



● REC





F 18

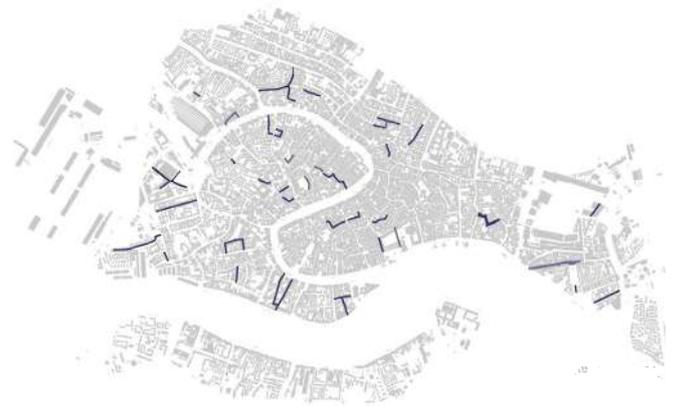
## CAMPO SAN POLO; A BIO DIVERSE WATERCOURSE AS A REFERENCE TO THE PAST AND PRESENT

The *campo* is where the locals come together, to eat, to rest or to play. Campo San Polo is one of the biggest *campo* in Venice and therefore an important element of the community.

The result of the research of the urban structure of Venice showed that some canals have been covered over time, including the canal at campo San Polo.

For this design the bringing back of the *rio tera* in the form of a small stream of water is a reference to the fact that *campo* San Polo has a high chance of flooding during **acqua alta**. At the same time it also forms a suggestion of good circulation of the flow of tourists who pass through the *campo* by following the Red Necklace.

- rio terà underground
- rio terà into pedestrian



- underwater at 1.40 meter acqua alta
- campi
- piazza

The *campo* is where the locals come together, campo San Polo is one of the biggest *campo* in Venice and therefore an important element of the community. At the same time it is also one of the lowest points of *centro storico* with high chance on flooding







Catharina Amalia Park\_ OKRA ZJA\_Apeldoorn\_2013



Grotestraat\_ OKRA\_Nijverdal\_2018



Roombeek\_ Buro Sant en Co\_Enschede\_2008



campo San Polo (existing)



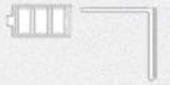
Bringing back the small water stream at camp San Polo



*View from the new slink bridge towards Rialto: a different perspective*

● REC





F 1.8



## THE NEW BRIDGE; A BRIDGE TO CROSS, REST AND ADMIRE THE RIALTO

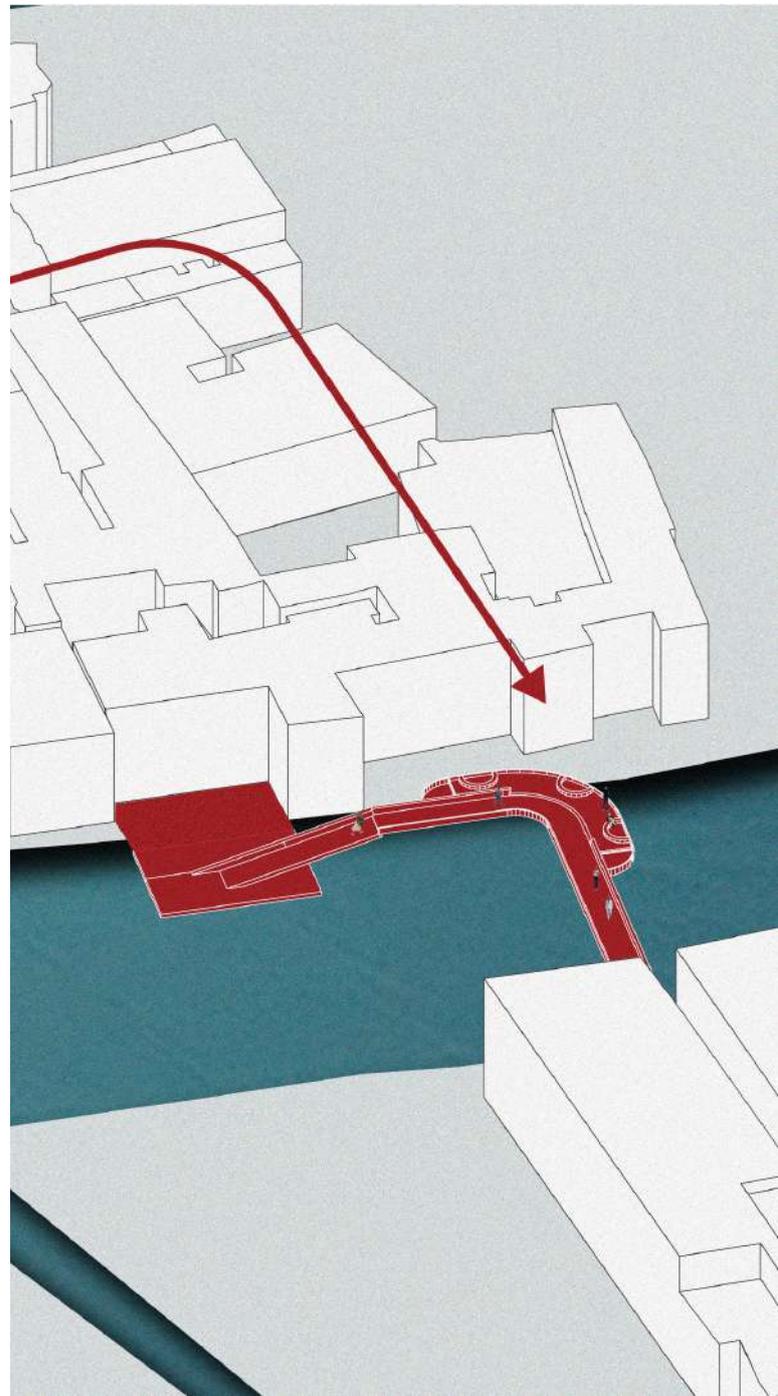
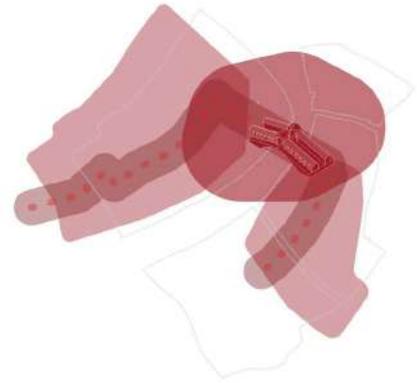
A new bridge is being realized to relieve the congestion on the Rialto. The Rialto bridge is nowadays very crowded and full of tourists taking selfies or pictures. It is also one of the two bridges that allow you to cross the Canal Grande. To reduce congestion, a new bridge is being built that is slender on the one hand to encourage traffic flow, but also to make room for possible rest stops.

Therefore, bridge is divided into two parts:

- **01** A thin bridge course to stimulate the flow of commuters
- **02** And a part designed as public space with seating areas to contemplate the beauty of the city

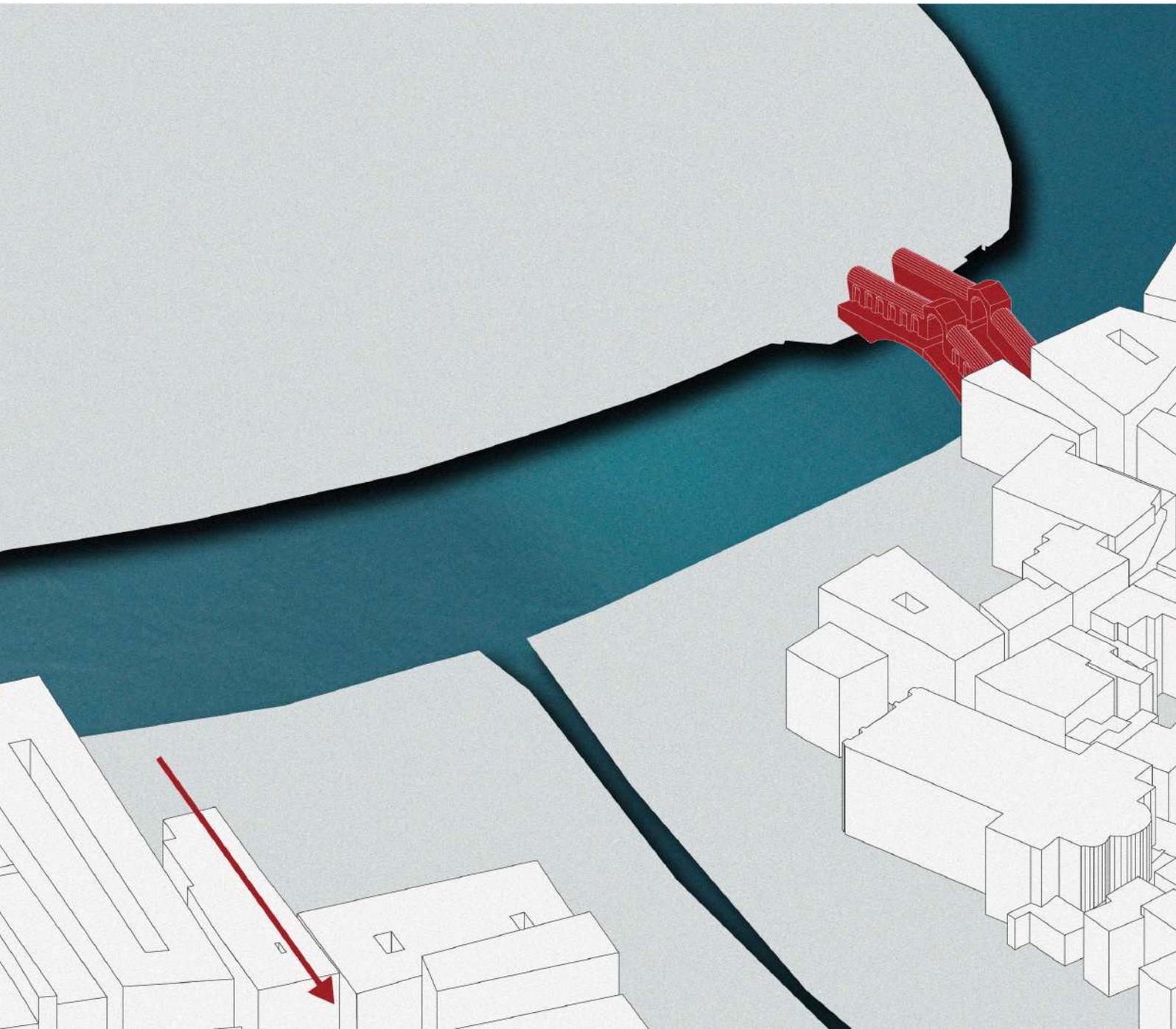
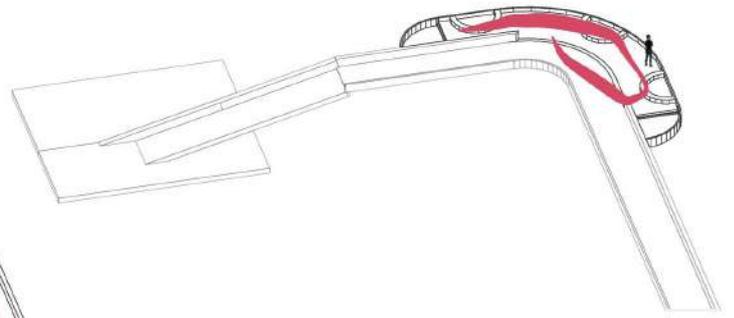
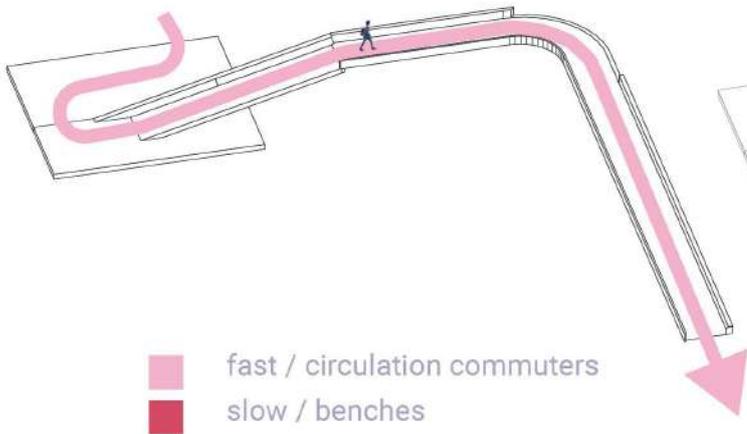
The design principles are:

- The bridge is thin and elegant and is designed in respect of cultural heritage
- The design of the bridge is flexible with the aim of being sustainable for the future



• 01

• 02

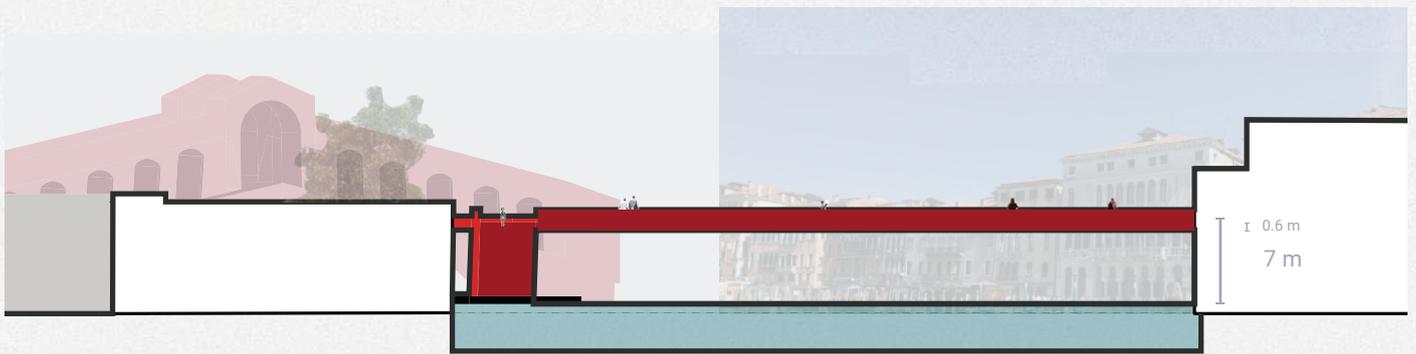




Touristic bicycle bridge\_ Dans Arhitekti\_Bohinjska \_2015



Slank bridge Maersk Tower\_C.F. MØLLER ARCHITECTS\_Denmark \_2017

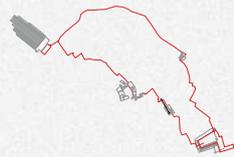


Canal Grande

50 m

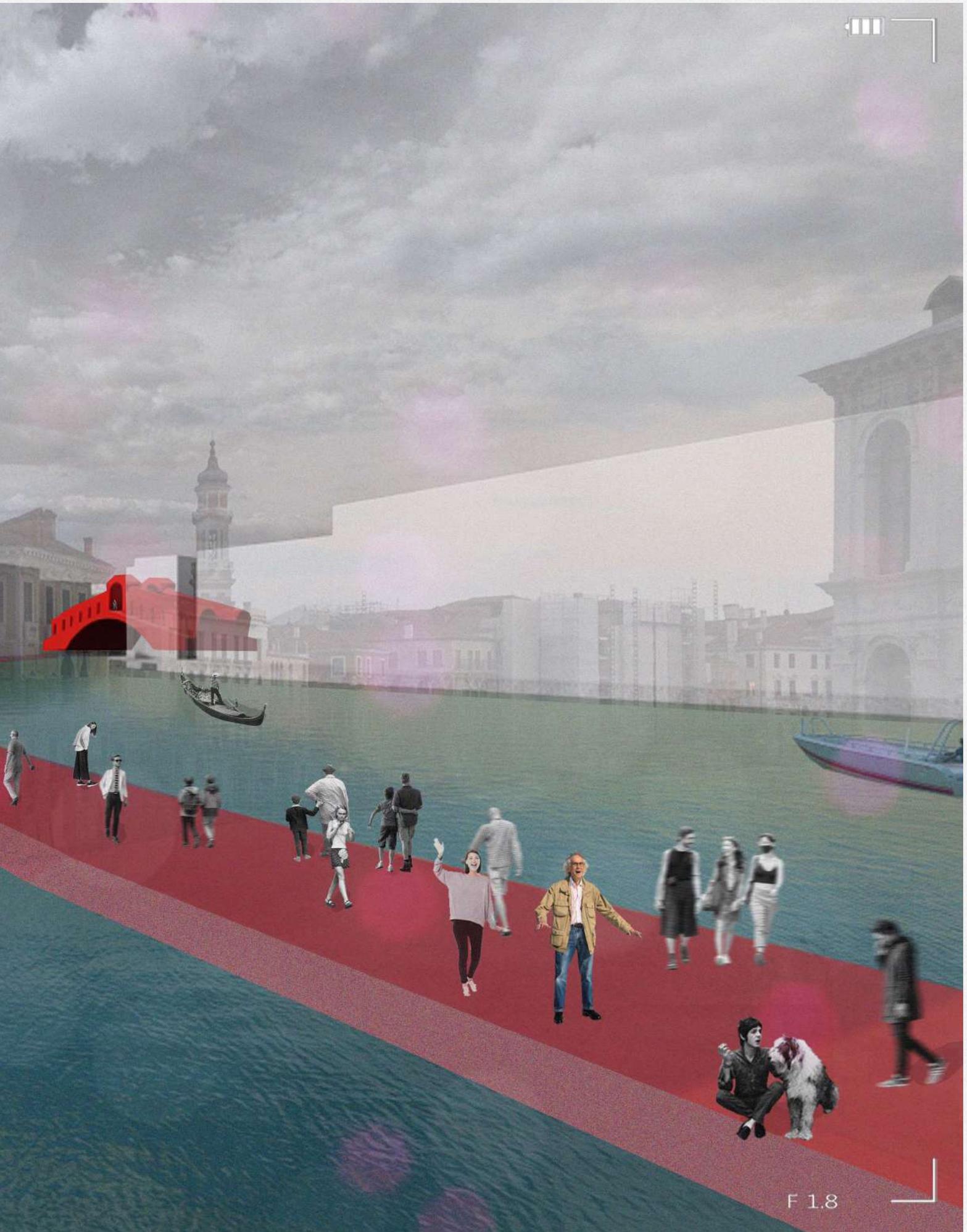
The slank bridge, passing between existing buildings

0 5 10 15 20 m  
1:500



*View of the floating boardwalk that leads to Rialto*





F 1.8



## FLOATING BOARDWALK: REDUCING CONGESTION AND EXPERIENCING THE WATER

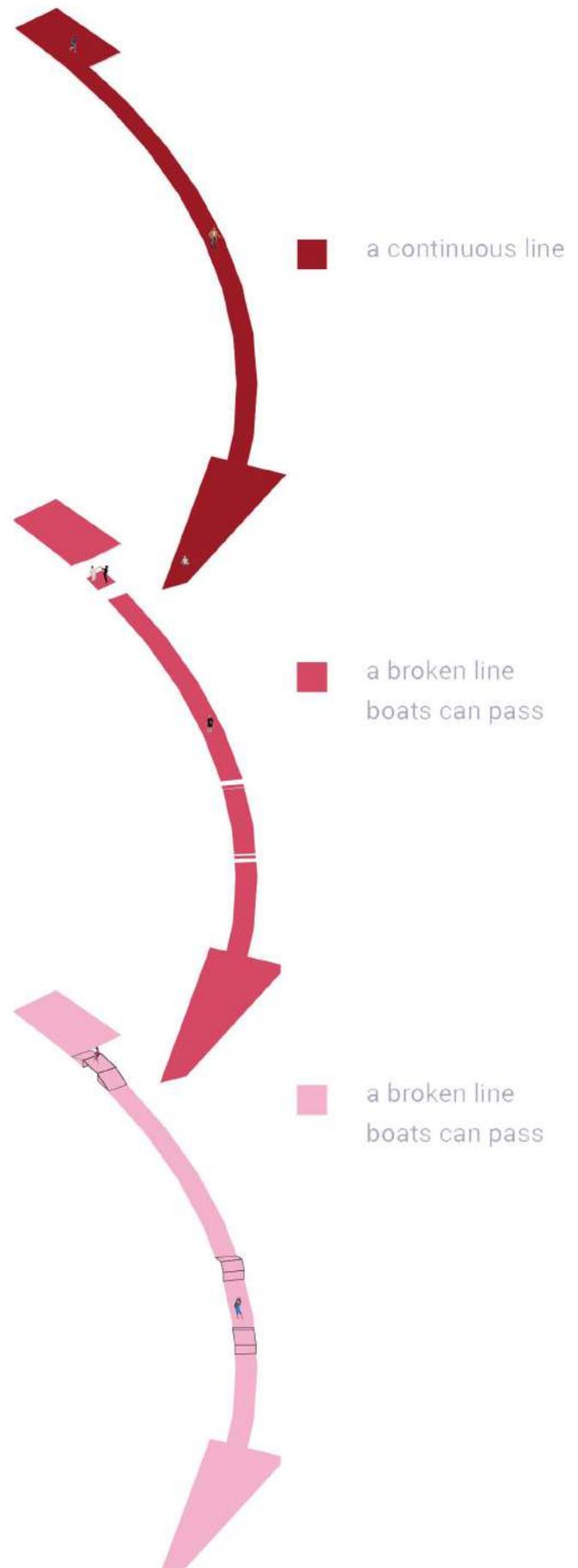
The floating boardwalk (inspired by Christo and Jeanne-Claude's floating pier) allows visitors to experience (the different heights of) the water, as well as leading them through an abandoned building and helping reduce congestion.

This intervention is temporary and changeable because of the easy material.

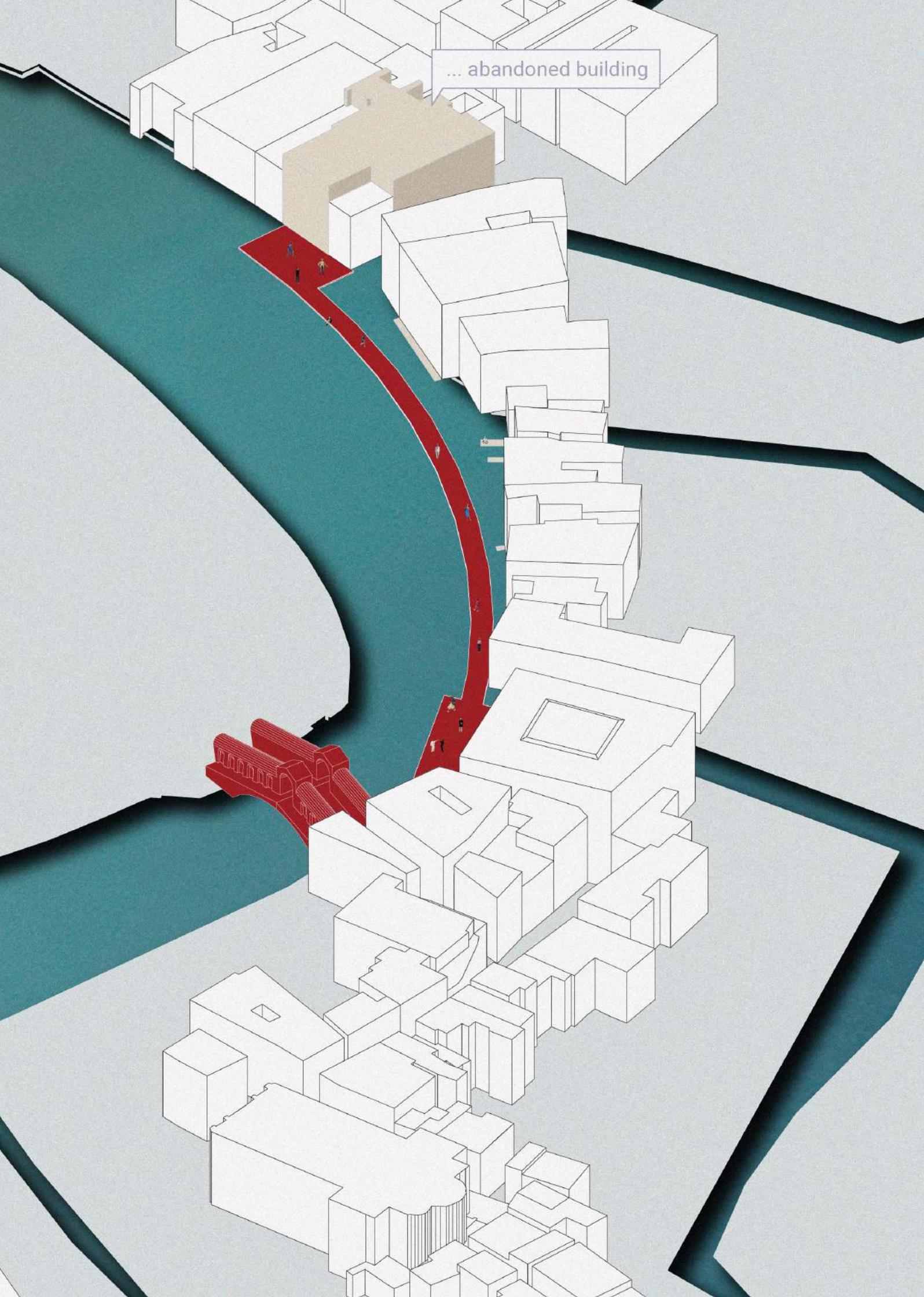
And can be designed in different ways, important is that:

- It is a continuous line, when the intervention is temporary
- When the intervention is permanent, the principle is, that it is a broken line through which boats can pass

The material must allow the walker to move with the water, this can be done like the floating pier of Christo and Jean-Claude by modular floating dock system of 226.000 high-density polyethylene cubes (see image on next page).



... abandoned building





On Water\_ Ayse Erkmen\_Münster\_2017



Abandoned building at Strada Nova (*Centro Storico*)



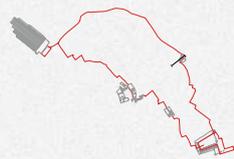
Floating Piers\_ Christo and Jeanne-Claude\_Monte Isola\_2016



Canal Grande



The floating boardwalk, making an experience of *Canal Grande*



## VII. ACT II: THE NEW LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

*'Affordable housing for families, young people and places to work in centro storico'*

The new liveable neighbourhood is a district designed for new living conditions within the *centro storico* thanks to Venice's changed perspective on mobility (see p. 136-137).

Employment outside of tourism and other services and the presence of local amenities for residents have declined dramatically<sup>1</sup>. But Venice has a rich history in art and crafts, which the city can use as a new impulse for the local economy, and to attract young entrepreneurs and new generations to the city.

Therefore the new liveable neighbourhood aims to attract young people and families and provides affordable housing, workspace, neighbourhood facilities and green spaces.

The new district will be capable of hosting:

- **186.695 m<sup>2</sup> BVO facilities on 19 ha**
- **250.900 m<sup>2</sup> BVO living on 19 ha**
- **FSI of 2.3**
- **50 m<sup>2</sup> per resident**
- **Space for 5020 new residents**

Space is also being made for education and the stabilization of a research institute whose mission is to prepare Venice for a resilient future, and which is linked to the lagoon and new employment opportunities.

---

1 (see research book p.56-57 for more information)

ACT II  
**district**  
for  
**liveability**

LIBRARY

Green public spaces where locals can meet each other, play sports and games



... and campi where locals find different facilities and can get together with the community

... and take an evening walk along the quayside

... and private spaces like altanas and courtyard gardens where locals come to rest

The neighbourhood is realized upon the current Island Tronchetto, which was built specifically for car parking. Tronchetto Island is a prime location for the development of a cultural manufacturing hub for existing residents and newcomers alike. The location is optimal, well connected (car, train, people mover) to the mainland and also to the *centro storico*.



At the same time the realization of the Forte Marghera mobility hub will provide parking spaces.

In the current situation, there are about **5000 parking spaces on Tronchetto**, intended for residents but especially for tourists. This design proposes to move these parking spaces to the mainland. The current tram that runs to Mestre, passing Forte Marghera, will be upgraded so that a smooth connection between the island and the mainland remains possible.



Marco Polo

- Airport
- Boat to Centro Storico

Forte Marghera

the 5000 parking places at Tronchetto Island are relocated to the new mobility hub at Forte Marghera

Tronchetto

Murano

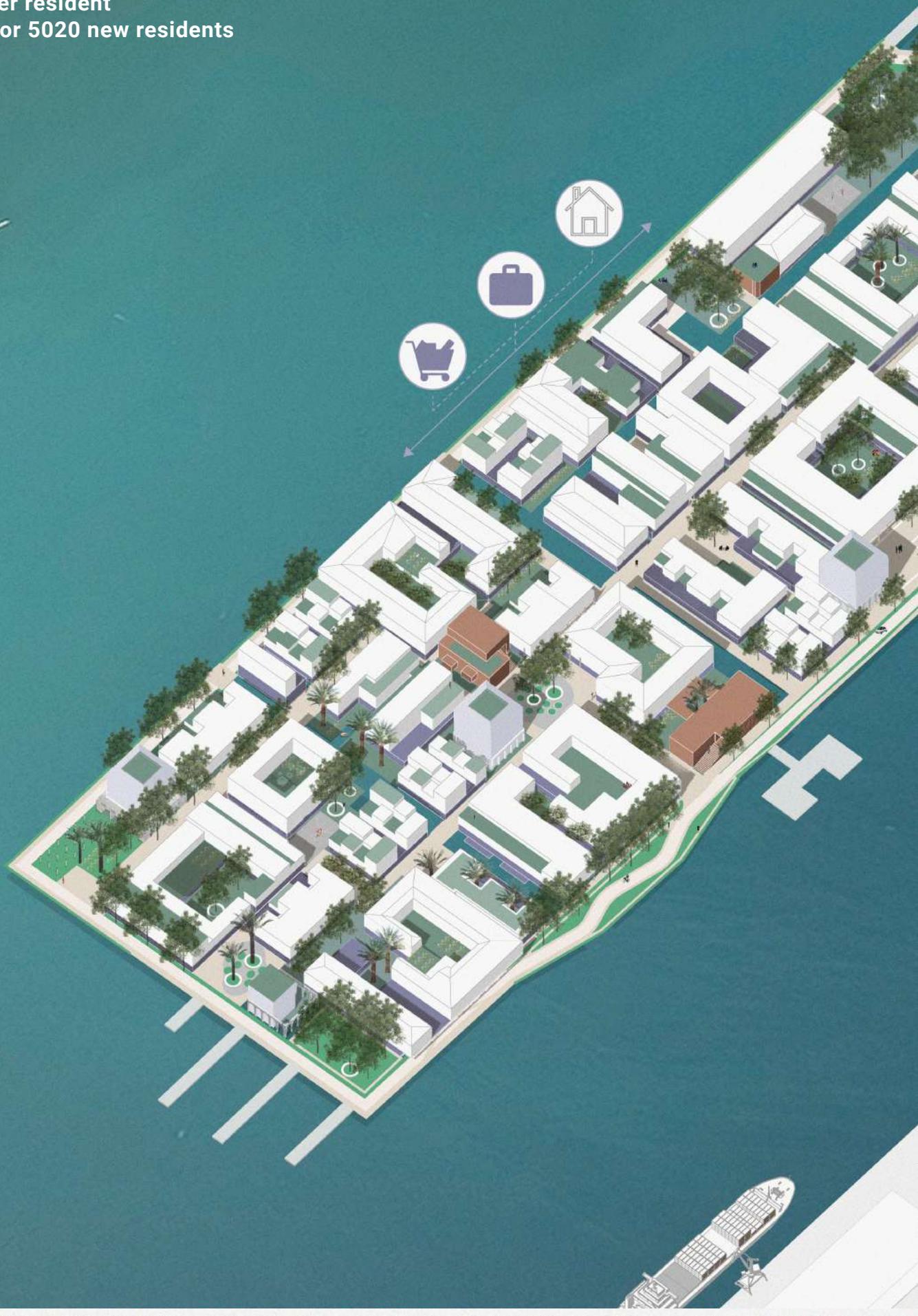
Arsenale





# ● REC

- 186.695 m<sup>2</sup> BVO facilities on 19 ha
- 250.900 m<sup>2</sup> BVO living on 19 ha
- FSI of 2.3
- 50 m<sup>2</sup> per resident
- Space for 5020 new residents





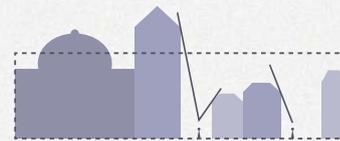
## URBAN DESIGN RULES

The design of the new liveable neighbourhood is based upon the unique urban features of Venice. The core urban design principles consist of three elements:

- **01** The principle, which historically makes Venice special, is the typology of having a plinth with facilities, and above: living. This typology stems from the *acqua alta* that ensures that only one person lives on the ground floor.
- The ground floor facilitates different kind of functions. The upper floor living area is designed integrally with the plinth.
- The plinth should radiate life and should therefore have an open character and not closed or closed facades.
- **02** The appearance of the facade also derives from Venetian principles. Originally, the *palazzo* was designed with a left - core - right principle. The facade was split into 3, so to speak, and later horizontality was also introduced. One principle is therefore that the facade is playful and has 3 cores. These can be expressed vertically or horizontally. On the next page are two sections that represent the purpose of the Red Necklace in a before and after.
- **03** In Venice, the maximum building height is 20 metres, with a few exceptions. The plan for the new district also has this principle, with a few residential towers at strategic locations as exceptions.



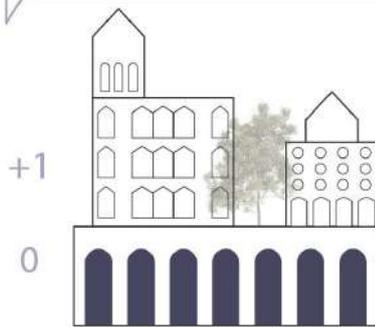
Locality and facilities



Human scale and balance

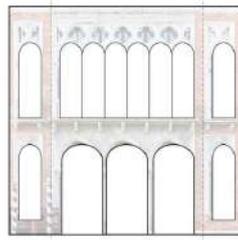
• 01

a lively living environment is provided on top of the plinth



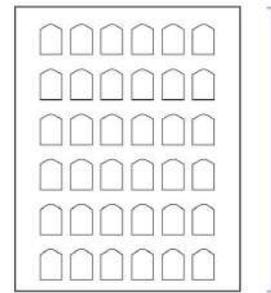
• 02

left core right



• 03

... the maximum building height is 20 metres with some exceptions



The Venetian facade is vertically oriented in 3 parts and this may serve as a starting point for the design of the facades

## A PLAYFUL AND MYSTERIOUS GRID

The building blocks in Venice are so to speak closed building blocks with a playful twist: dismantled. There is no strict division between public and private; the *campi*, *campiello* form the 'quiet' inner areas.

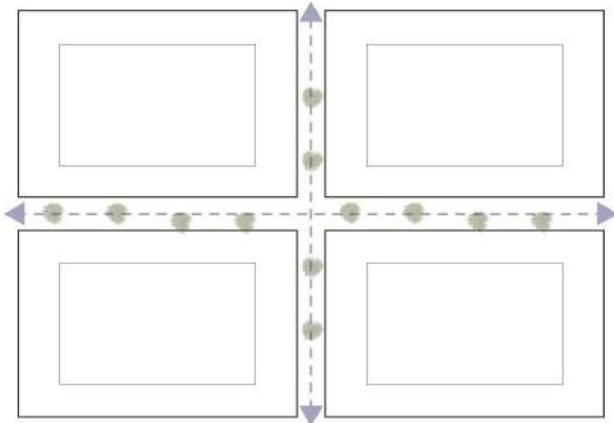
The new design follows this principle. This creates room for variation, but also hierarchy in the spaces. There is public space around the blocks, places for semi-private use and private use in the green inner gardens and roof gardens.



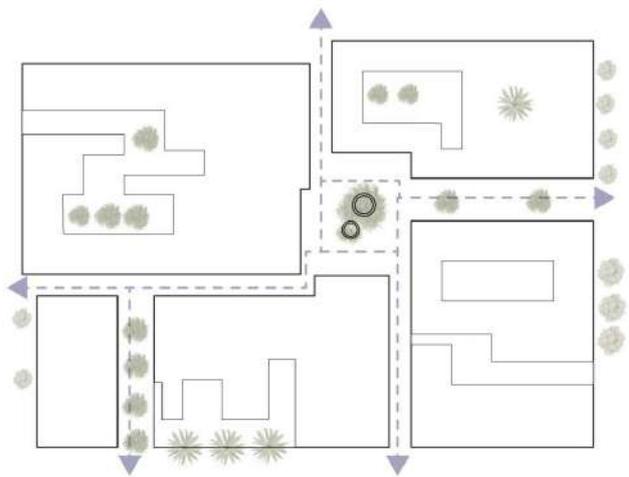
Orientation and mystery



Valued communities



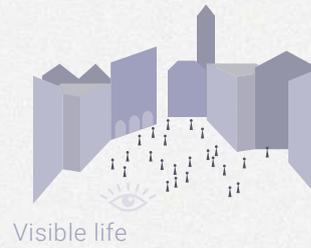
... and no rigid grid



but public space that delineate the development plots... Where you can gain different experiences in an informal network while moving from *campo* to *campo*

## THE DISASSEMBLED VENETIAN BLOCK TYPOLOGY

The previously described typology may be followed by variations. Different types of spaces are played with. In addition, the plinth can also carry different functions; when it is larger, one can think of a supermarket or a large workshop, and when it is smaller of a shoemaker or a bakery.

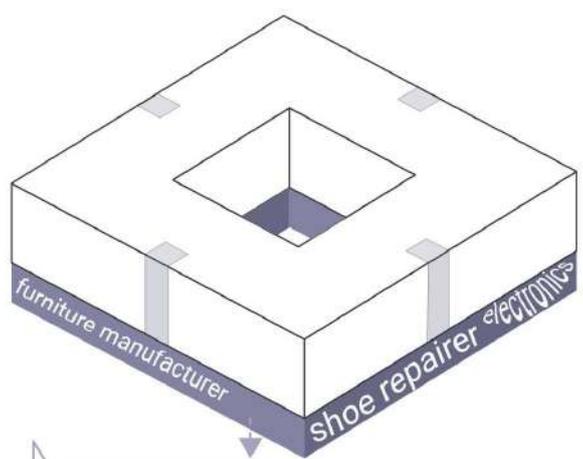


Visible life

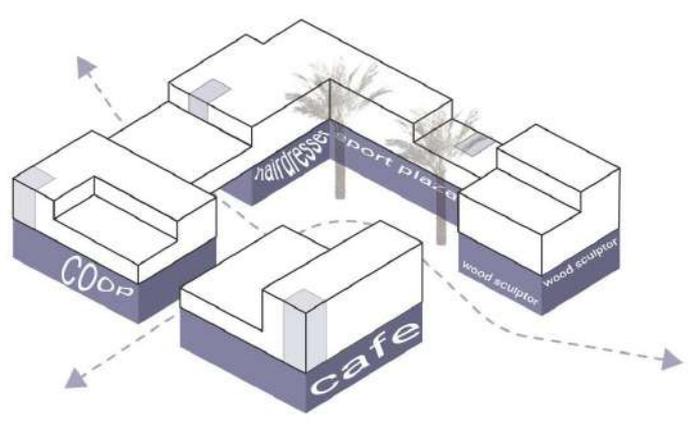


Healthy economy

... no ordinary courtyard block



a lively plinth



... but a variety and different versions of the courtyard archetype: the dismantled Venetian block is imaginable in various ways

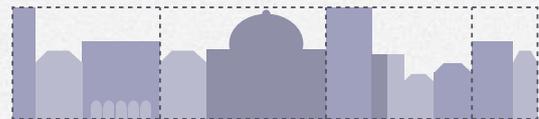
## A HOME FOR EVERYONE

Nowadays it is very difficult to buy or rent a house in Venice. This is due to the tight housing market, but also to the large number of houses being rented out to tourists.

The new liveable neighbourhood provides space for houses that are accessible to different target groups, ages and price ranges. This is possible because an economic impulse is also coming to Venice: the research institute. At the same time, tourism is regulated yet the income is not immediately reduced. The municipality of Venice must take its role in this, and choose for the locals: a home for everyone.

The disassembled courtyard blocks will be hosting modules (7x7meter)of different sizes:

- XS 24m<sup>2</sup> for student housing
- S 49m<sup>2</sup> for student housing
- M 73m<sup>2</sup> for student housing
- L 98m<sup>2</sup> for student housing
- XL 147m<sup>2</sup> for student housing

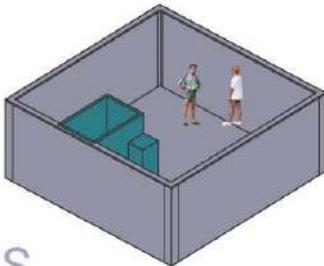
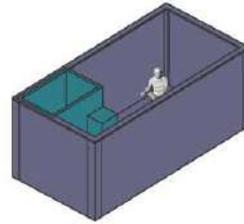
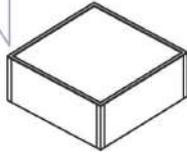


Order and variety

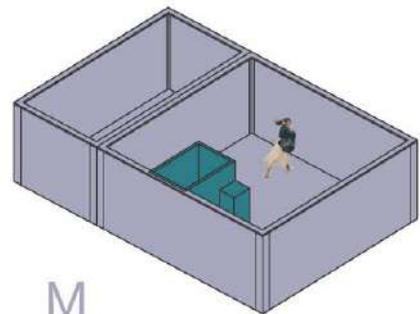


Affordable housing

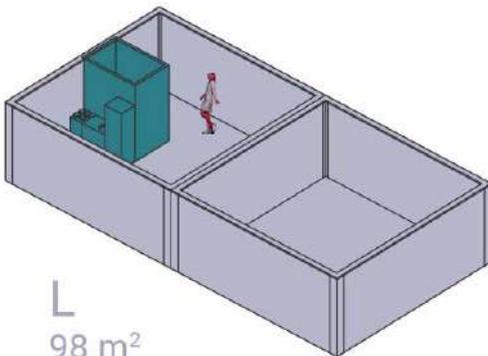
assuming a module  
of 7 x 7 metres ...



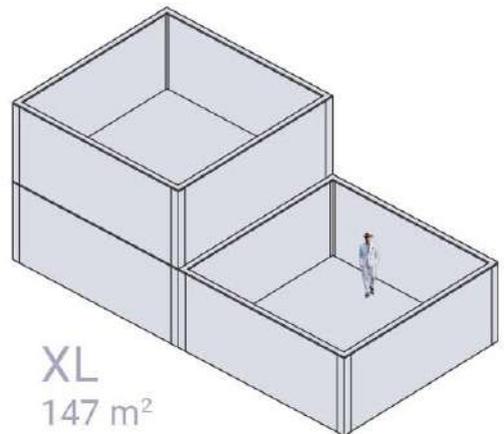
**S**  
49 m<sup>2</sup>



**M**  
73 m<sup>2</sup>



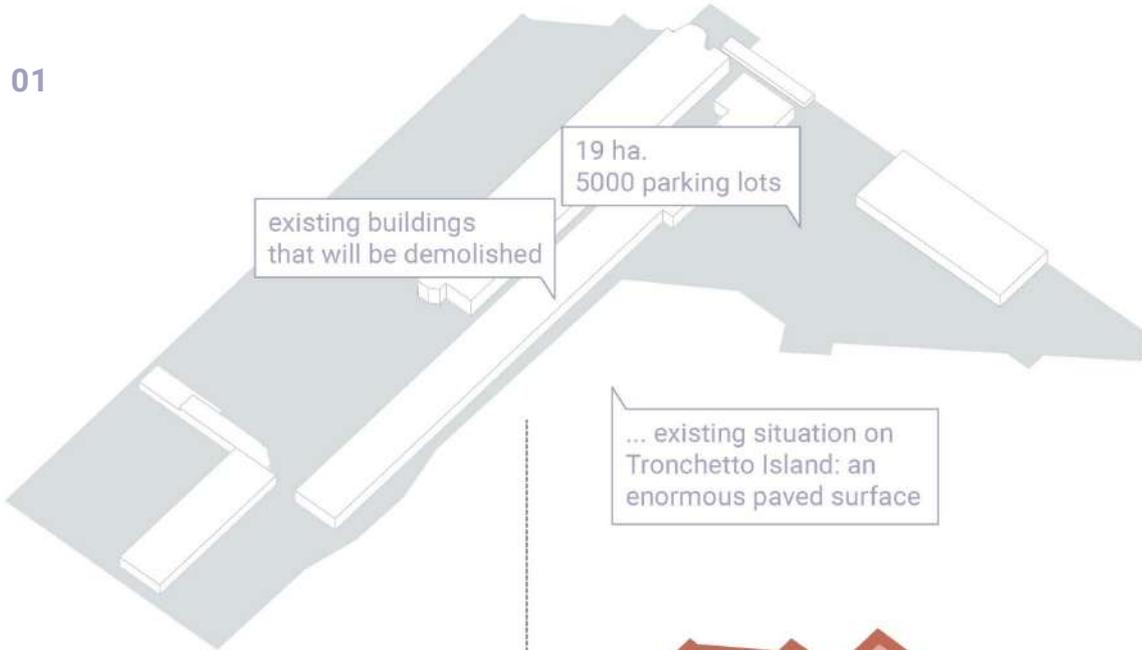
**L**  
98 m<sup>2</sup>



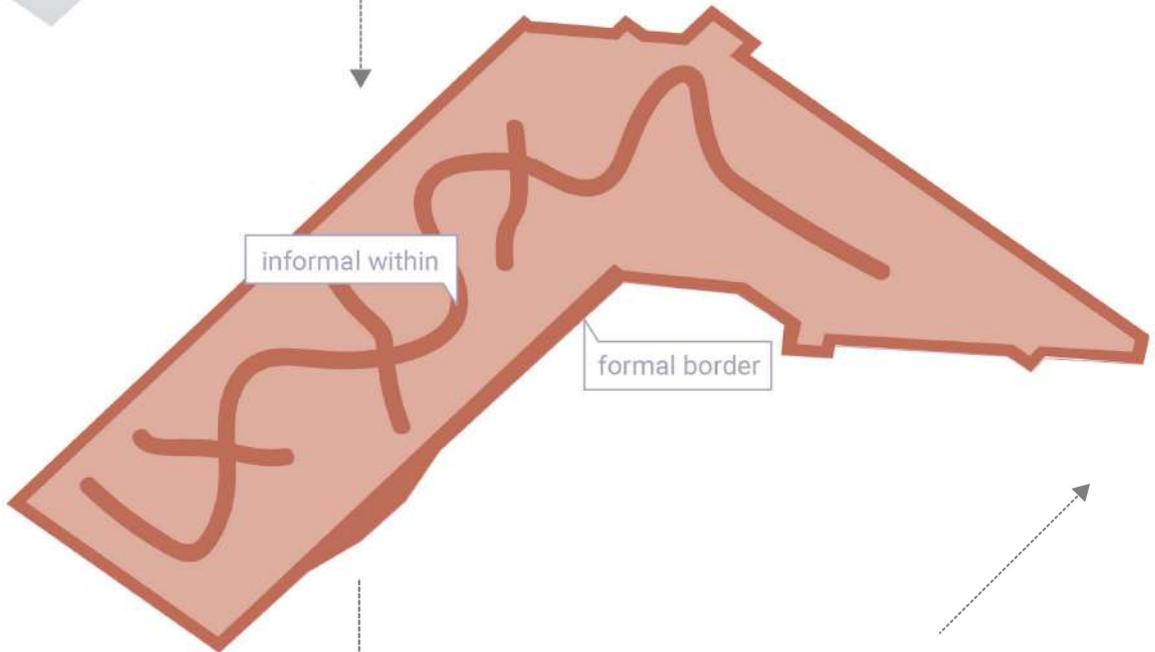
**XL**  
147 m<sup>2</sup>

Design steps 01 - 06

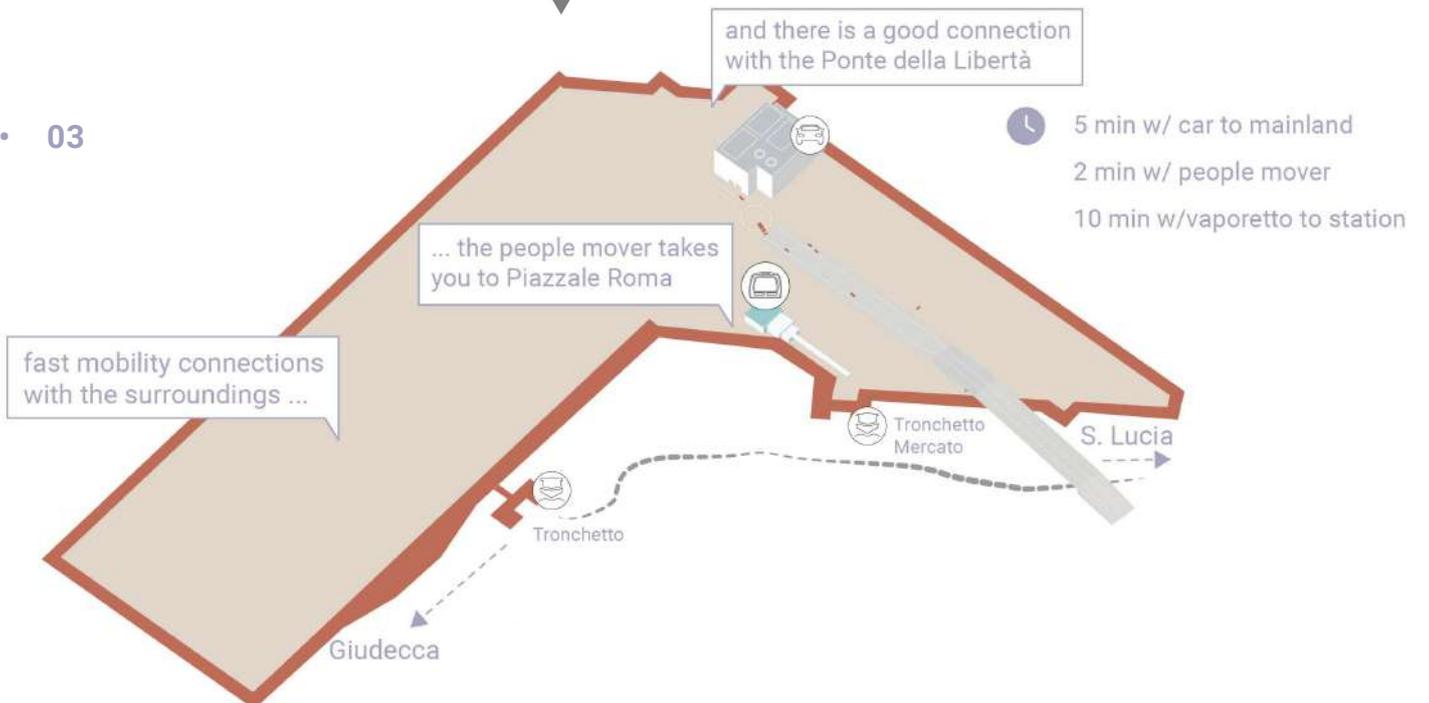
• 01



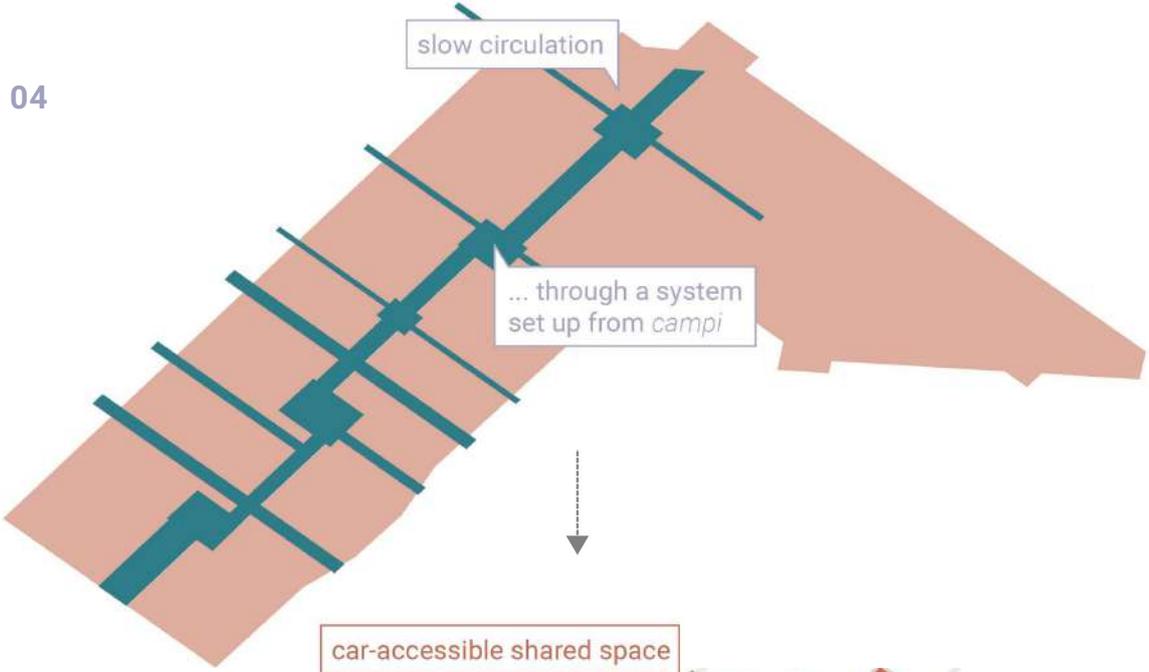
• 02



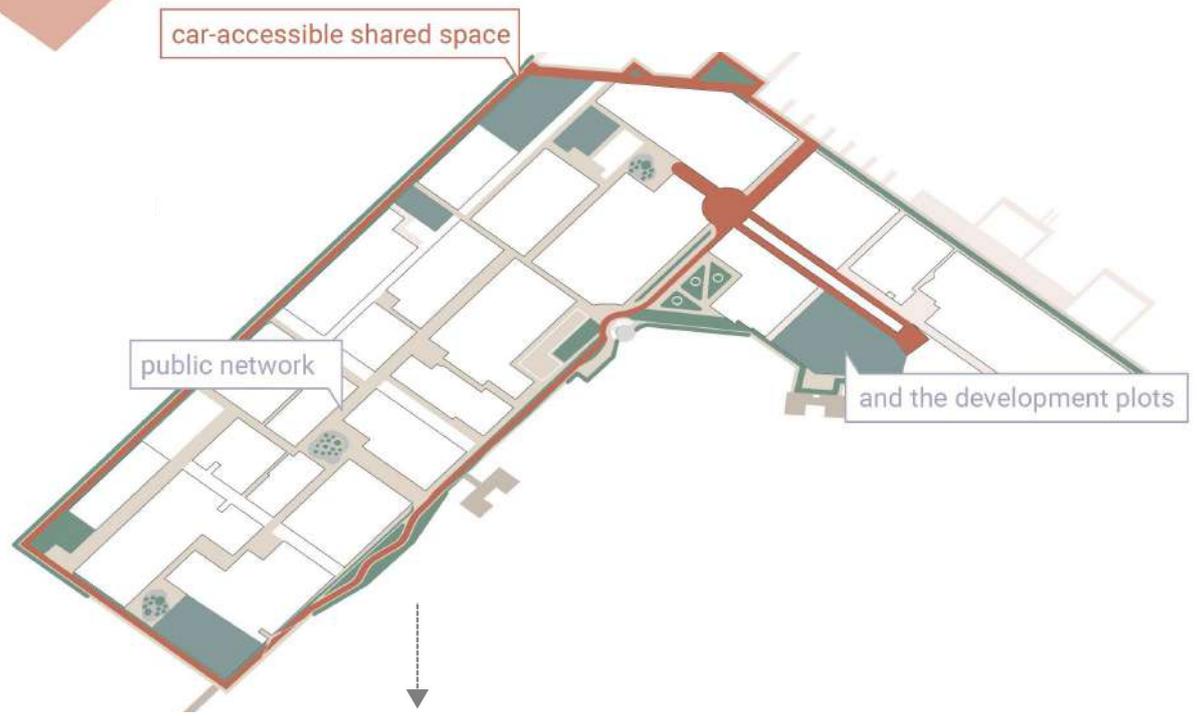
• 03



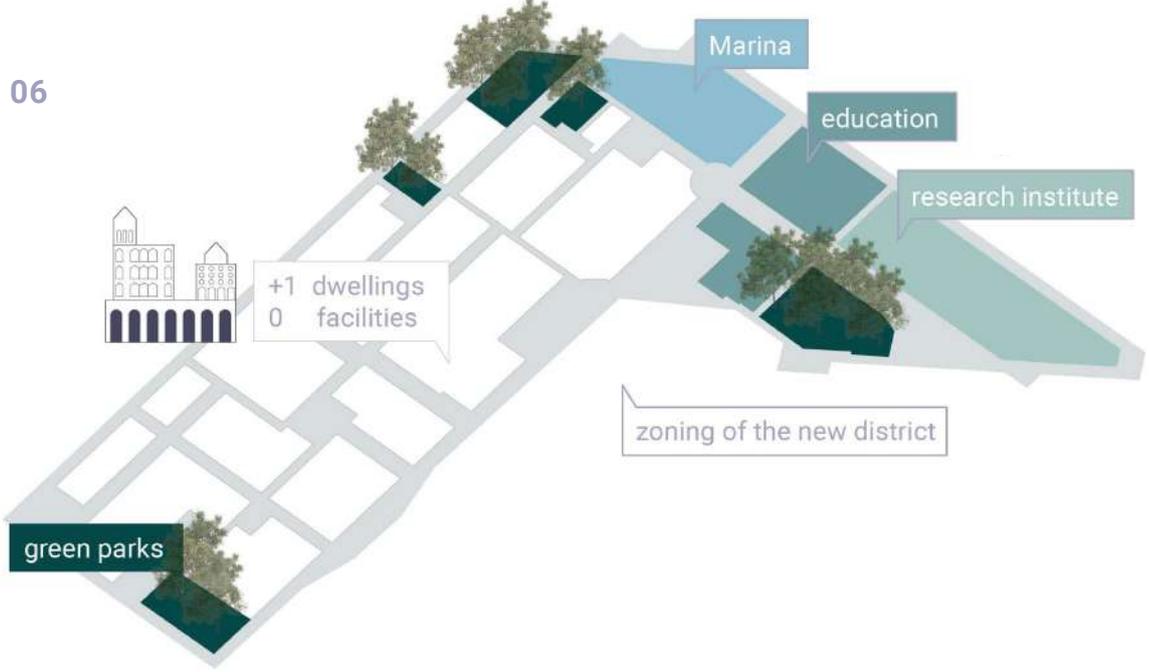
• 04



• 05



• 06



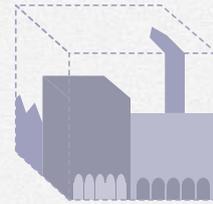
## PROGRAM

The new liveable neighbourhood is divided into several zones:

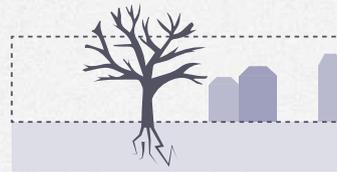
- To the north of the plan is an educational zone, where the research institute is located, as well as various educational institutions
- In addition, there is a parking building, which also has other functions
- The existing marina will remain and be upgraded
- There are also a number of social facilities, such as a library, health centre, ecological museum
- The plinth will contain various large and small-scale functions, such as supermarkets, shops, gyms, day-care centres, exhibition and work spaces
- And many places have been reserved for green and sustainable programming
- Finally, the remaining program is residential

Research Institute	26.000	m <sup>2</sup>
Educational centre	38.540	m <sup>2</sup>
Parking hub	28.170	m <sup>2</sup>
Marina	20.304	m <sup>2</sup>
Library	4250	m <sup>2</sup>
Health Institute	5250	m <sup>2</sup>
Museum	3980	m <sup>2</sup>
Plinth facilities	60.501	m <sup>2</sup>
Living	250.900	m <sup>2</sup>

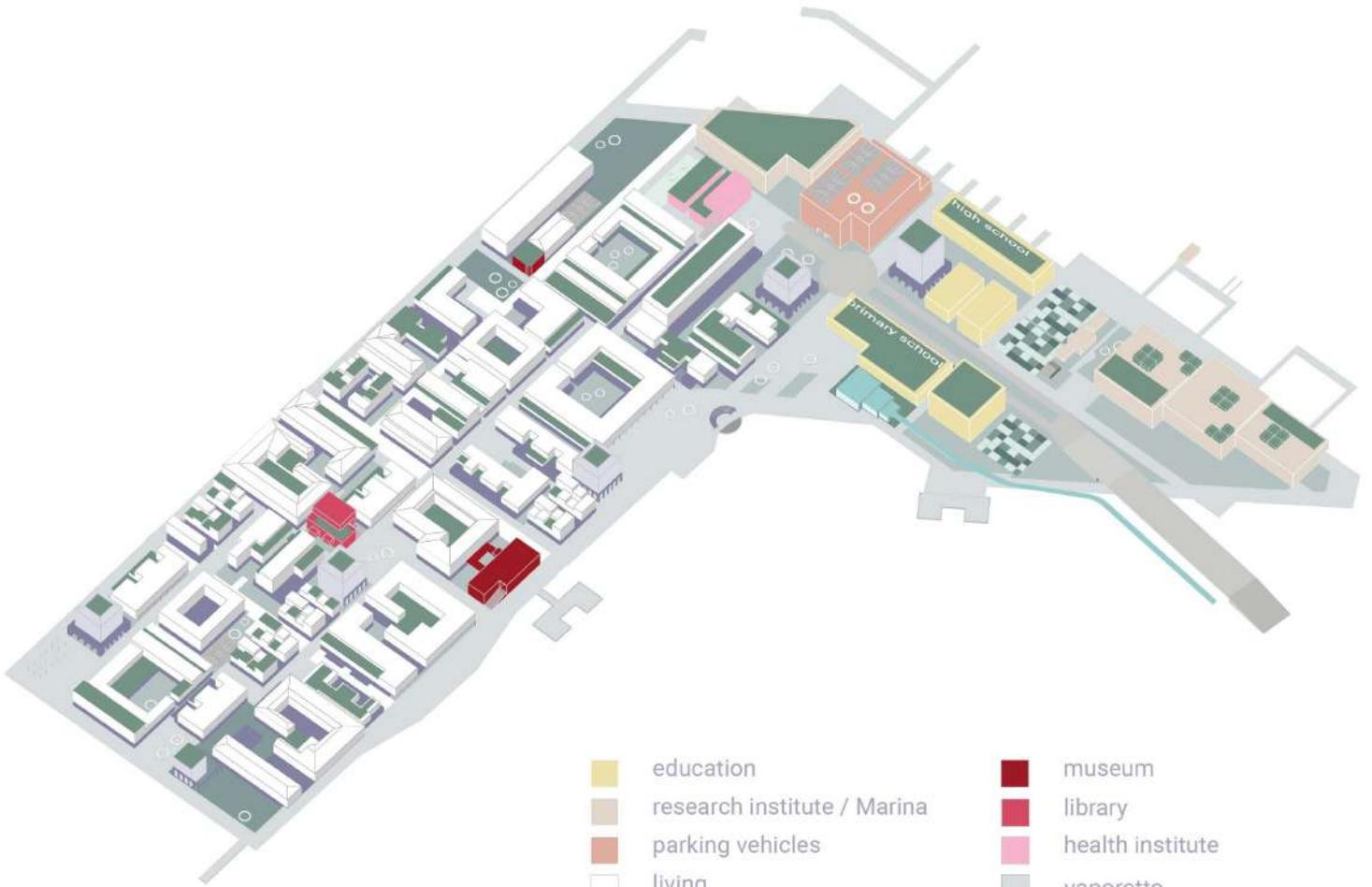
- **TOTAL** 437.595 m<sup>2</sup>



Compact district



Green and sustainability



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #f0e68c; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> education                   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #800000; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> museum           |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d2b48c; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> research institute / Marina | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #c00000; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> library          |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #cd853f; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> parking vehicles            | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff69b4; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> health institute |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffffff; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> living                      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #a9a9a9; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> vaporetto        |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #b0c4de; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> living towers               | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4682b4; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> people mover     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #483d8b; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> plinth with function        |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2e8b57; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> green roofs                 |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2f4f4f; border: 1px solid #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> public park                 |  |

# ● REC

- new development < 20 m
- existing situation
- main road
- shared space
- entrance facilities functions
- entrance parking
- parking garage resident
- vaporetto line
- vaporetto station
- people mover
- tree
- public
- semi private
- private
- botanical garden
- jetty
- Venetian bench



01



01 section cut Tronchetto



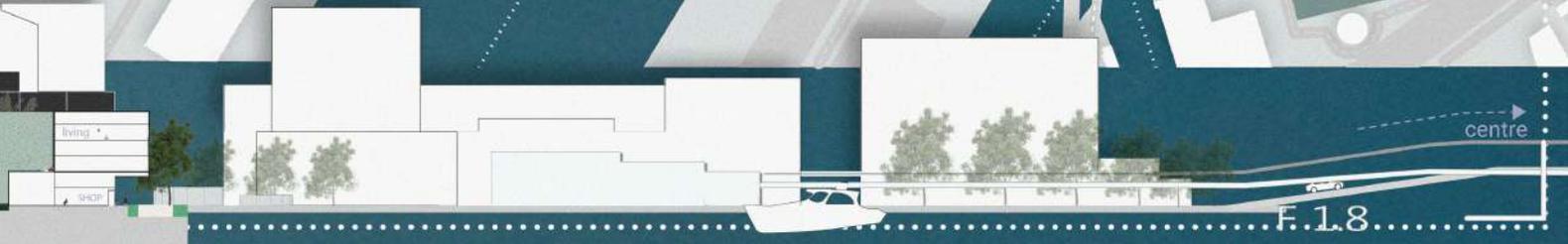


  Ponte della Libertà

 Santa Lucia Station

 Cruise Terminal

Piazzale Roma



centre

F.1.8

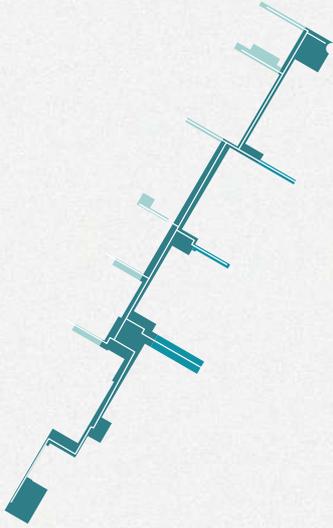
*View on the new campo; the community comes together in a stony but also green space*





F 1.8





A network of *campi* in the new district



*Campiello* at Canal Grande (Centro Storico)



COMERÇ Street\_Vora Arquitectura\_Barcelona\_2019

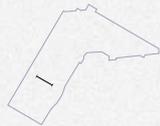


*campo*



30 m

Section of the new Campo, a rhythm of stony - green - stony



*View on the inner courtyard; the residents of the block come together in a big green space*





F 1.8



Holland Park Villas\_Team John McAslan\_London\_2018



Zuiderplein\_Atelier Kempe Thill\_Antwerp\_2020



Infinity Bench\_Azocar Catron\_Concepcion\_2018

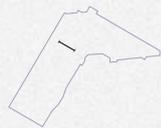
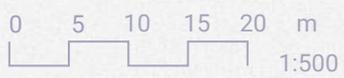


private courtyard

public calle



Stone edge and green inner area



*View on the different functions in the plinth connected by an arched gallery along the boardwalk*





Pizzeria di Giacomo

APERITIVI  
WINE BAR



F 1.8



Sorenga\_LPO arkitekter\_Oslo\_2015



Riverwalk\_ Ross Barney Architects\_Chicago\_2016



A quay along the water where people can walk and meet



## VIII. ACT III: THE NEW DESTINATION

*'The new future destination as example for a new type of tourism'*

The new destination is a design proposal for the deserted islands in the lagoon, specifically: San Giacomo in Paludo, an island located north of Venice. The purpose of this proposal is to create a symbiosis between nature and culture.

The nature and ecosystem of the lagoon provide the perfect opportunity for locals, students and the new generation of travellers to work together on work- and travel farms for a resilient and independent future of the lagoon.

And the name new destinations comes from the fact that many of the islands in the lagoon served as pilgrim islands; pilgrims arrived on these islands and were then sent to monasteries in the lagoon. The new traveller as a persona is the pilgrim or grand tour traveller<sup>1</sup> - as a reference to the past- of the future.

The island of San Giacomo in Paludo is at the centre of the lagoon north of Venice along the Scomenzera Canal San Giacomo, the major artery that connects the historic centre of Venice and Murano and Burano, Torcello and Mazzorbo. San Giacomo in Paludo it is the only one of the deserted islands of the Venetian Lagoon that is easily accessible using existing transmission lines, and its geographical location in the barycentric system of the northern lagoon makes it a site of primary importance in the management of any initiative for environment and a place of hospitality. San Giacomo in Paludo may become the new port of the north lagoon, strategic location and the first new destination.

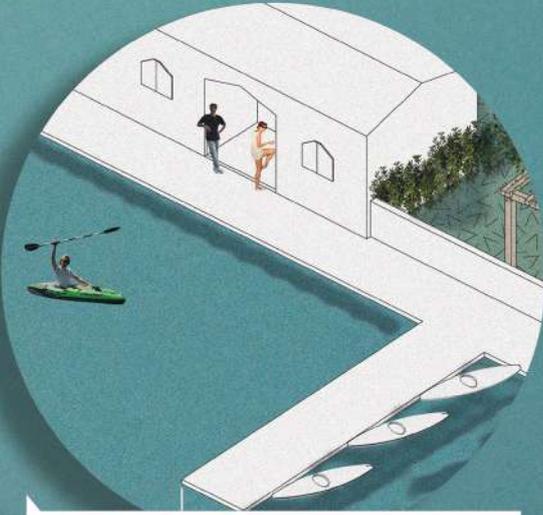
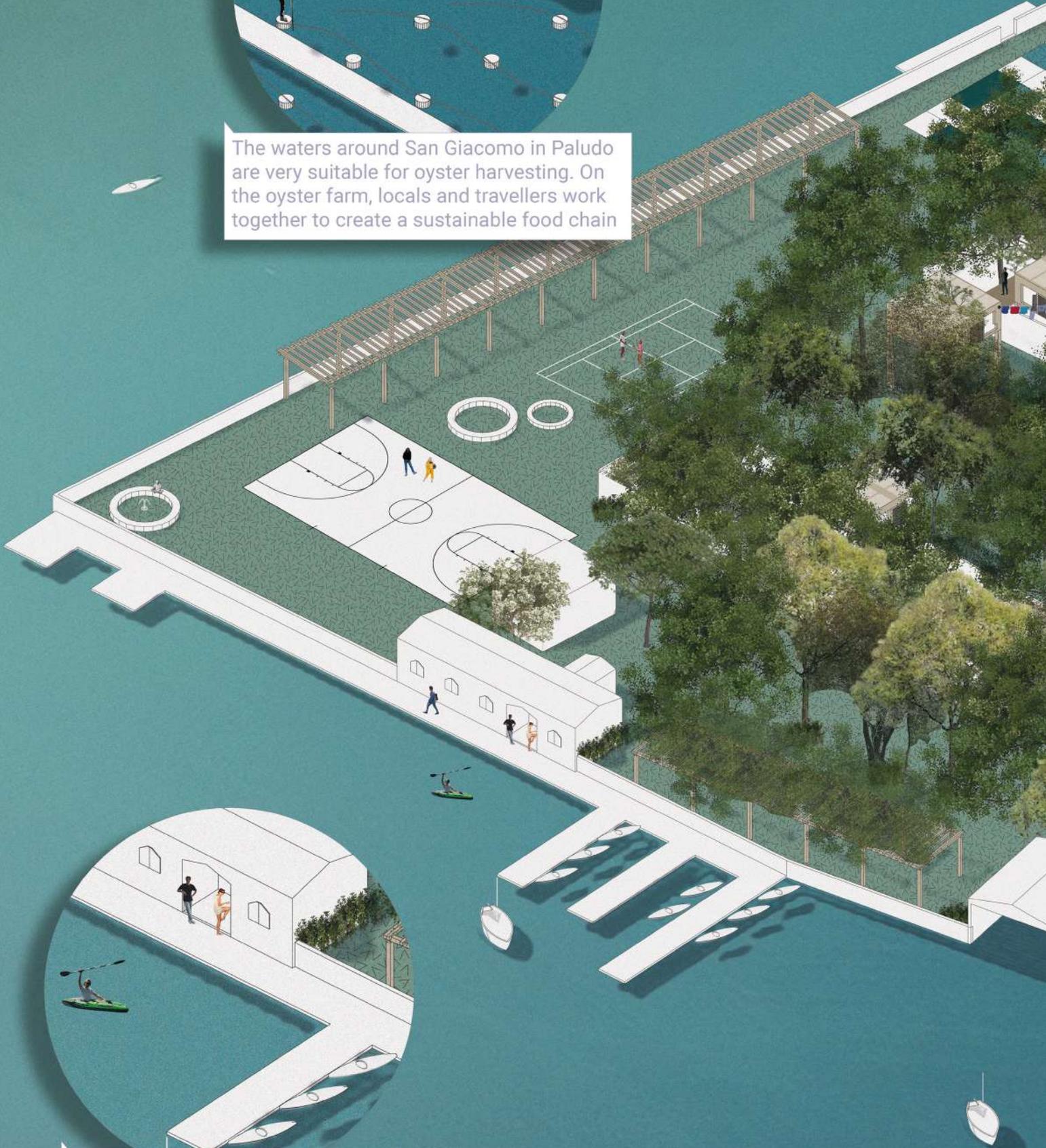
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<sup>1</sup> (see research book p.56-57 for more information)

ACT III  
**destination**  
for  
**travellers**  
and  
**locals**



The waters around San Giacomo in Paludo are very suitable for oyster harvesting. On the oyster farm, locals and travellers work together to create a sustainable food chain



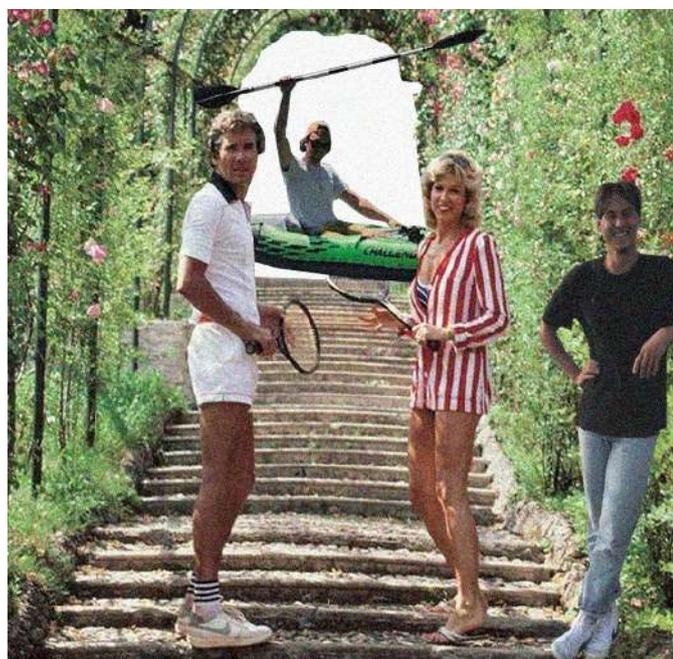
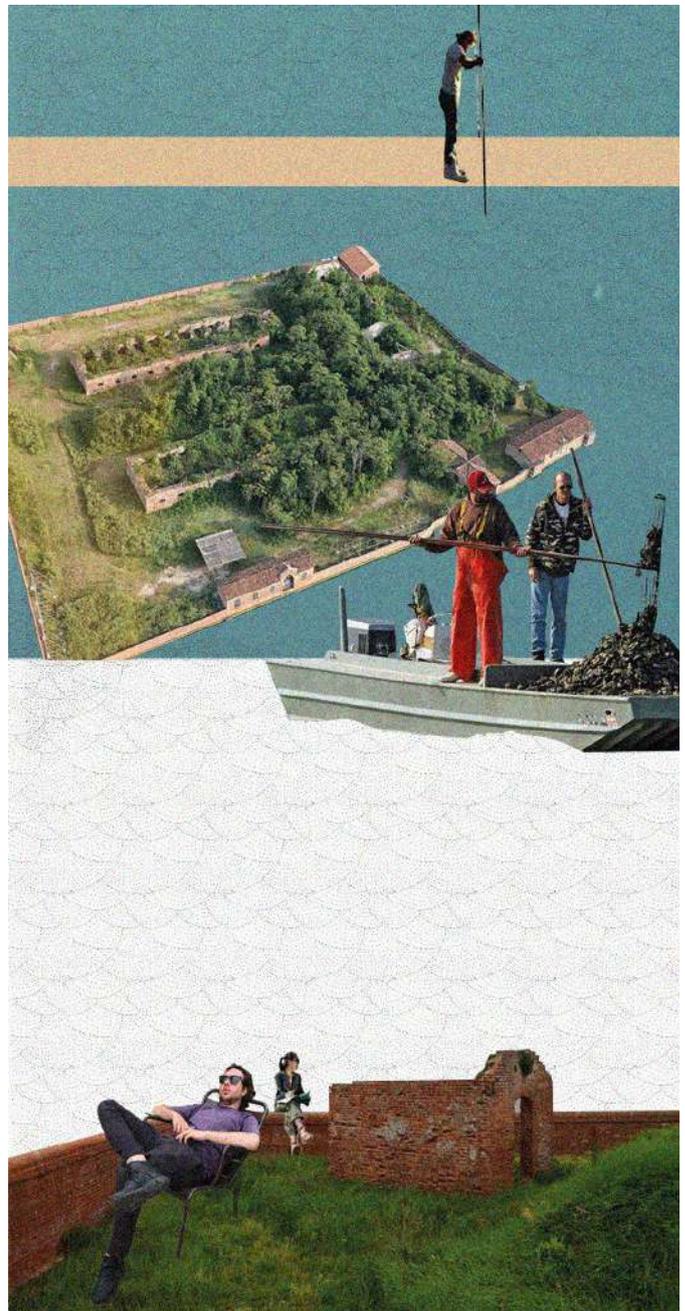
During leisure time, there are many opportunities to have a good time



Travellers stay - against board and lodging - in sustainable tree houses that respect the ruins and nature and overlook the lagoon and the island

Located in the north Lagoon between Murano and Madonna del Monte, this island was donated by Doge Orso Badoer II for the construction of a monastery dedicated to St James. It was used as one of several hospices in the lagoon for **pilgrims heading to the Holy Lands**. It passed through several different monastic orders, and was briefly used as an island of quarantine in 1456. It was eventually given over to the Franciscans in the 16th century, who stayed until they were suppressed in 1769. The Austrians converted it to military use, a use continued by the Italians until 1961.

**But** today it is abandoned, except for archaeologists who have excavated a number of medieval structures. Now the island is under license from the State of the environmental association VAS (Verdi Ambiente e Società).



As first location for the new destination, it has presence of archaeological sites, with wide green spaces, and the island is located along the migratory routes of some birds. So will also feature bird watching, nature observatory and laboratory teaching.

Yet more importantly: it is surrounded by waters that are very good for harvesting oysters. Therefore an oyster farm will be installed at San Giacomo in Paludo.



Guglielmo Ciardi (1880-1885) - Piazza San Marco Pescatore in laguna





The strategy for the new destinations focuses on the entire municipality of Venice. There are currently many islands in the lagoon that are abandoned or not in use. Each of them has a value, be it architectural, ecological or cultural. Together, they are part of the new strategy for Venice, which offers a perspective on a new and sustainable way of tourism.

The islands will be used for a resilient future, each with its own purpose. San Giacomo in Paludo will be transformed into a board and lodging aqua farm. And so other islands will also host floating farms. Some of the islands need to be protected and are ecologically relevant or will be used as base points for the research institute.

The map on the right shows all the islands that will be included in the strategy, together with their objectives.

- abandoned + state property
- ecological relevance
- abandoned + private property
- ecological relevance
- island in use
- favorable fishing locations
- waterways



Monte dell'Oro

20 Sant'Ariano

Isola dei Laghi  
Isola Mazzorbello

11

Buel del Lovo

19 Isola Madonna del Monte

12 Ridotto di Crevan

13 San Francesco

San Giacomo in Paludo

Isola di Tesserà

04 Isola di San Giuliano

09 Isola Campalto

18 San Secondo

14 Lazzaretto Nuovo

17 San Giorgio in Alga

05 Santa Maria della Grazia

San Servolo

San Lazzaro degli Armeni

San Clemente

Sacca Sessola

16 Sant'Angelo della Polvere

06 Lazzaretto Vecchio

07 Santo Spirito

01

Poveglia

08 Ex Batteria Poveglia

02 Ottagono Abbandonato

03 Ottagono Alberoni

15

Spignon

base points research institute

ecological value

destination of farming / aquaculture

San Giacomo in Paludo

0 500 1km 1.5km



## RESEARCH INSTITUTE: BASE POINTS

### **01** Poveglia:

Abandoned / State property

#### *Story*

The island was uninhabited after the inhabitants fled in 1379 because of the War of Chioggia. From 1776 it was used to isolate people suffering from the plague or other diseases. Later, the island was home to a psychiatric institution, which closed in 1968 and has been abandoned ever since. Access to the island is prohibited in principle.

#### *Future purpose*

Location and base point for the research Institute.

### **02 03** Ottagono Alberoni, Ottagono Abbandonato, Ottagono San Pietro:

Abandoned / Private property

#### *Story*

On July 16, 1571 the Senate decreed the construction of three "males" to defend the port and the canal of Malamocco.

#### *Future purpose*

Locations and base points for the research Institute.

### **04** San Giuliano:

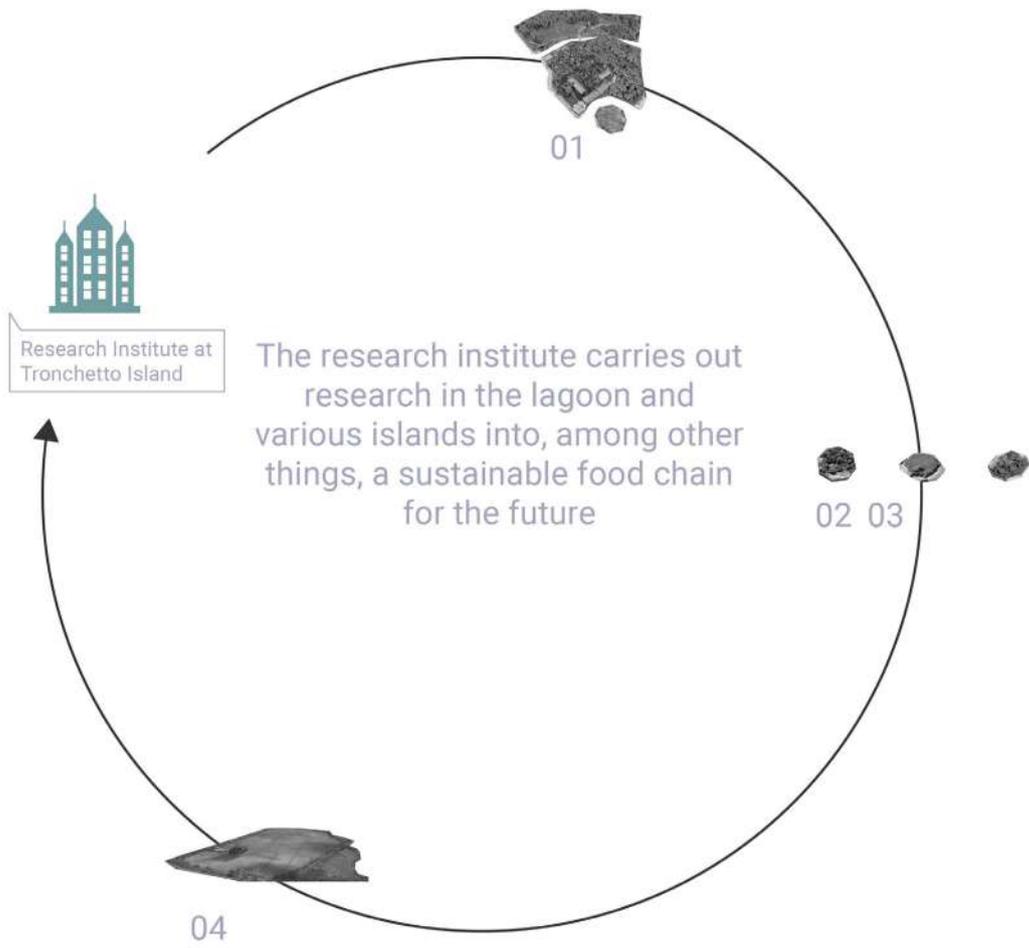
Abandoned / State property

#### *Story*

Like other lagoon islands, San Giuliano hosted monastic settlements, but it was also a strategic place from a defensive point of view due to its position near the mainland.

#### *Future purpose*

Basepoint for the research Institute.



## WORK AND TRAVEL FARMS

*Future purpose of some of the islands:*

A focus aqua, fish - floating farms.

**05** Santa Maria della Grazia:  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

Santa Maria della Grazia rose during the Middle Ages in the place where Venice's waste was discarded. In 1264 there was a home for **pilgrims heading to the Holy Lands.**

**06** Lazzaretto Vecchio:  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

An island assigned to act as a disease quarantine during times of plague to keep the rest of the lagoon city safe. It was later used, as were other islands, as a military post.

**07** Spirito Santo  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

The little island of Spirito Santo had a monastery since the 12th century. After the function of monastery, Spirito Santo hosted refugee monks.

**08** Ex Bateria Poveglia: **09** Isola Campalto  
Abandoned / Private property  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

It was one of the eight batteries that defended the city and was therefore the site of a fort.

(Abandoned) / Private property:

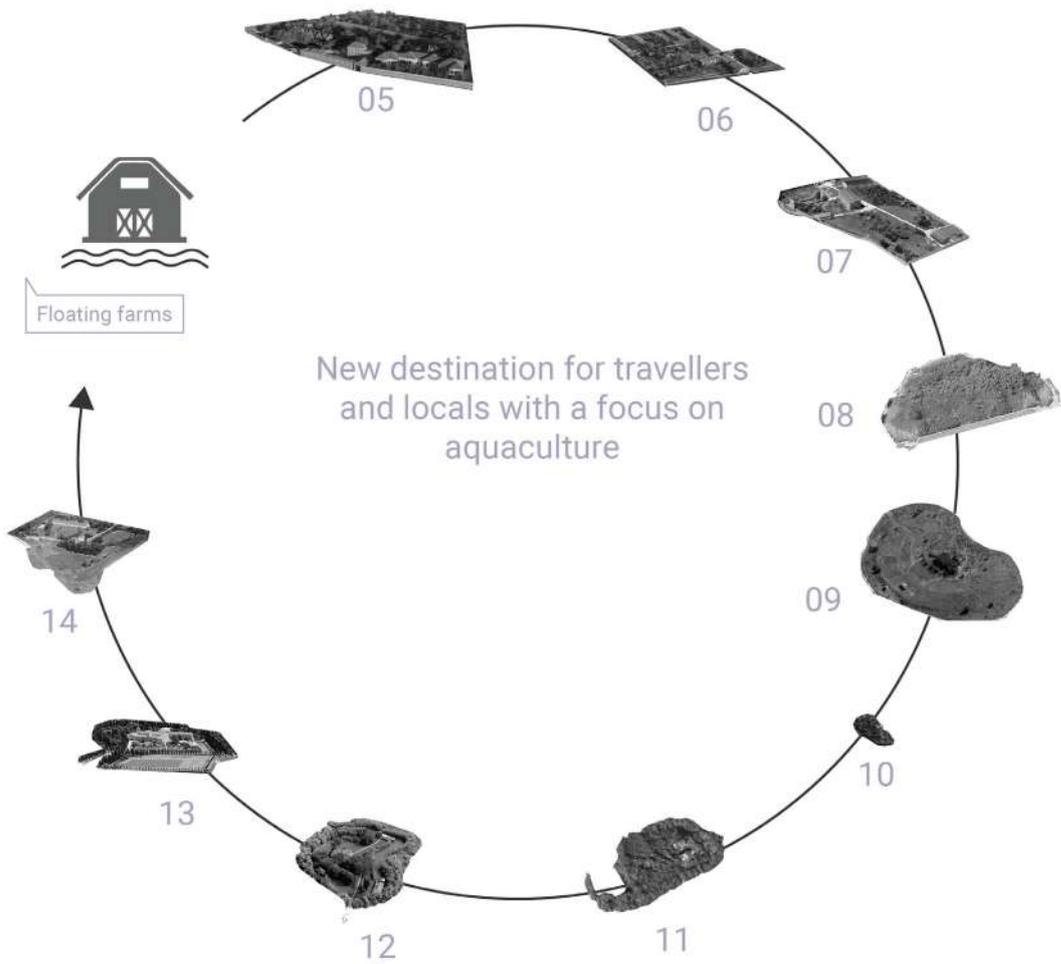
**10** Isola Carbonera

**11** Buel del Lovo

**12** Ridotto di Crevan

**13** San Francesco del Deserto

**14** Lazzaretto Nuovo



## ECO ISLANDS

**15** Faro di Spignon:  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

The lighthouse of the lagoon.

### *Future purpose*

Controlling room (research institute) and bird watching centre.

**16** Sant'Angelo della Polvere:  
Abandoned / State property / Ecological value

### *Story*

From 1060 it housed a church and monastery. Later they decided to depopulate it due to its unhealthy air and to install a gunpowder depot. In 1689 lightning struck the island, destroying the whole complex.

### *Future purpose*

A focus on ecology.

**17** San Giorgio in Alga:  
Abandoned / State property

### *Story*

It was installed as an island that housed a monastery. In 1717 a fire burnt most of the buildings. As of 1799 there was a political prison, but nowadays the island is completely abandoned.

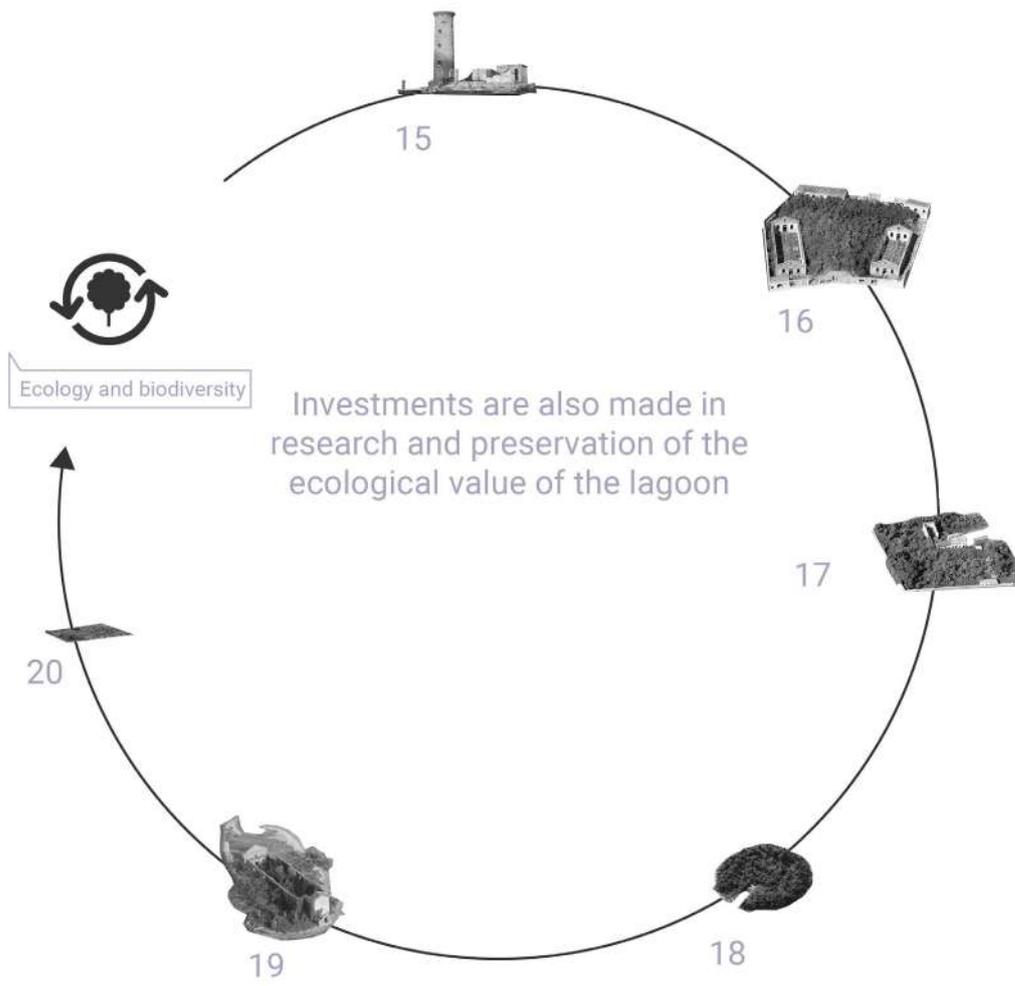
### *Future purpose*

A focus on ecology and cultural centre.

**18** San Secondo:  
Abandoned / Private property / Ecological value

**19** Isola madonna del monte:  
Abandoned / Private property

**20** Sant'Ariano:  
Abandoned / State property



## NEW NETWORK

The existing network in the lagoon will be supplemented by the possibility of using sustainable transport.

Such as

- Electric vaporettos
- Canoes
- Other sustainable modes of transport

An important aspect of this is that today's cruise ships<sup>1</sup>, which are unsustainable, will follow a new route, according to the current political choices, which does not cross the *centro storico*.

- possible future cruise ship route
- ▒ lagoon infrastructure

● REC

Station  
St. Lucia

0 500 1km 1.5km

F 1.8





F 1.8



## LIVING

As previously described, the current environment of the islands is of high ecological and cultural value. This is why, the new residence typology will be designed in such a way that it retains its current ecological and historical value (see upper section).

The design principles therefore, are:

- The new accommodation modules are made of sustainable materials such as wood
- And they are elevated above the ground, like tree houses
- The modules are easily degradable and flexible in use

## WORKING

The farms can grow various fish, or food. In San Giacomo in Paludo, for example, oysters can be harvesting. In the south-eastern part of the island, there is a favourable fishing place because the waters there are shallow.

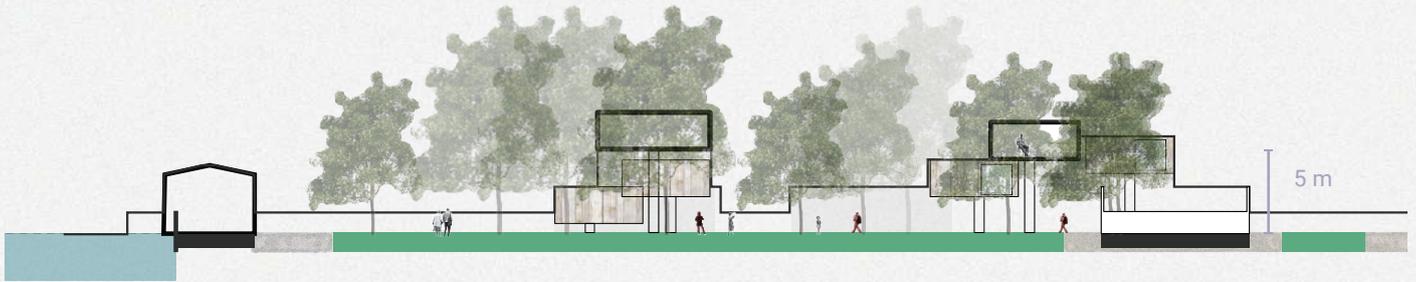
Floating modules are designed to serve as work areas, while jetties provide a good connection to the various points where the oysters can harbour (see down section).



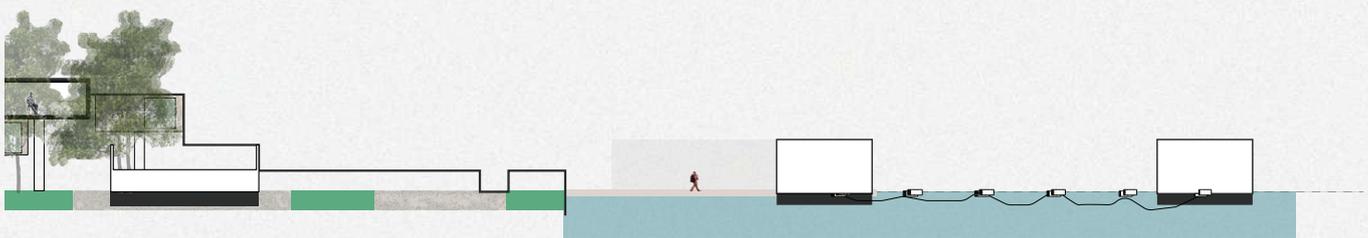
In respect of nature



Tree houses\_Salgado E Liñares Arquitectos\_Spain\_2019

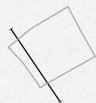


San Giacomo in Paludo



San Giacomo in Paludo: Oyster Farm

Sequence of spaces with different functions



*View on the tree houses; that are built with respect for nature*

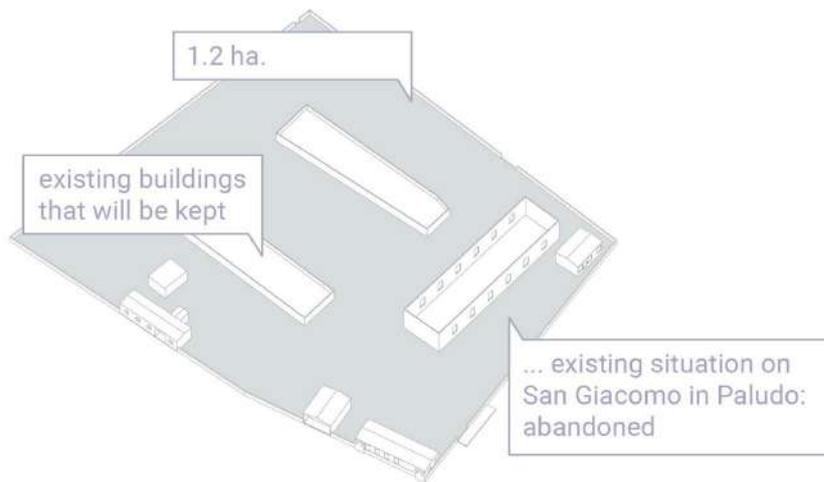




F 1.8

Design steps 01 - 06

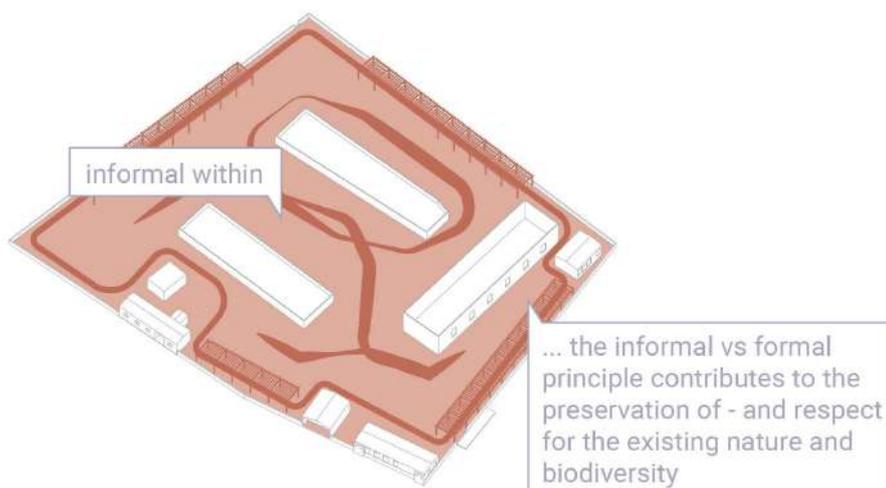
• 01



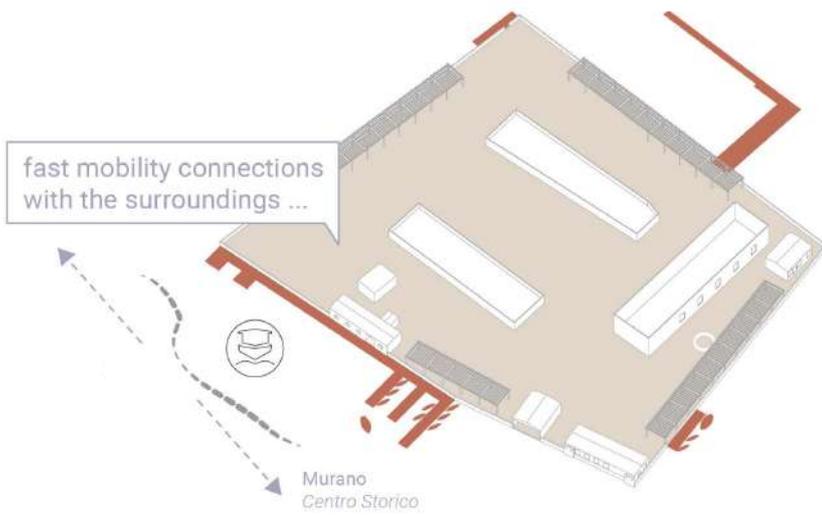
• 02



• 03



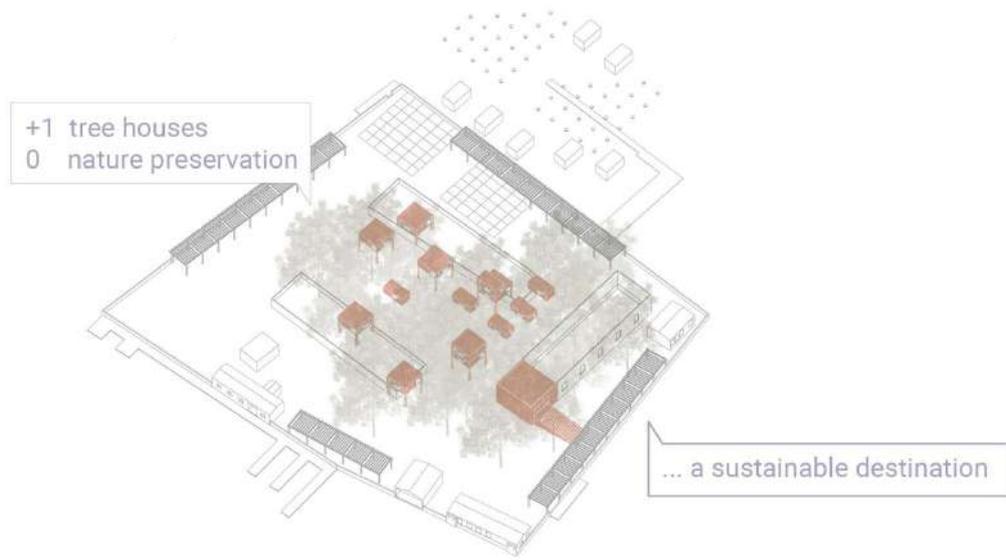
• 04



• 05



• 06



*View on the oyster farm, at the south/east side of San Giacomo in Paludo*



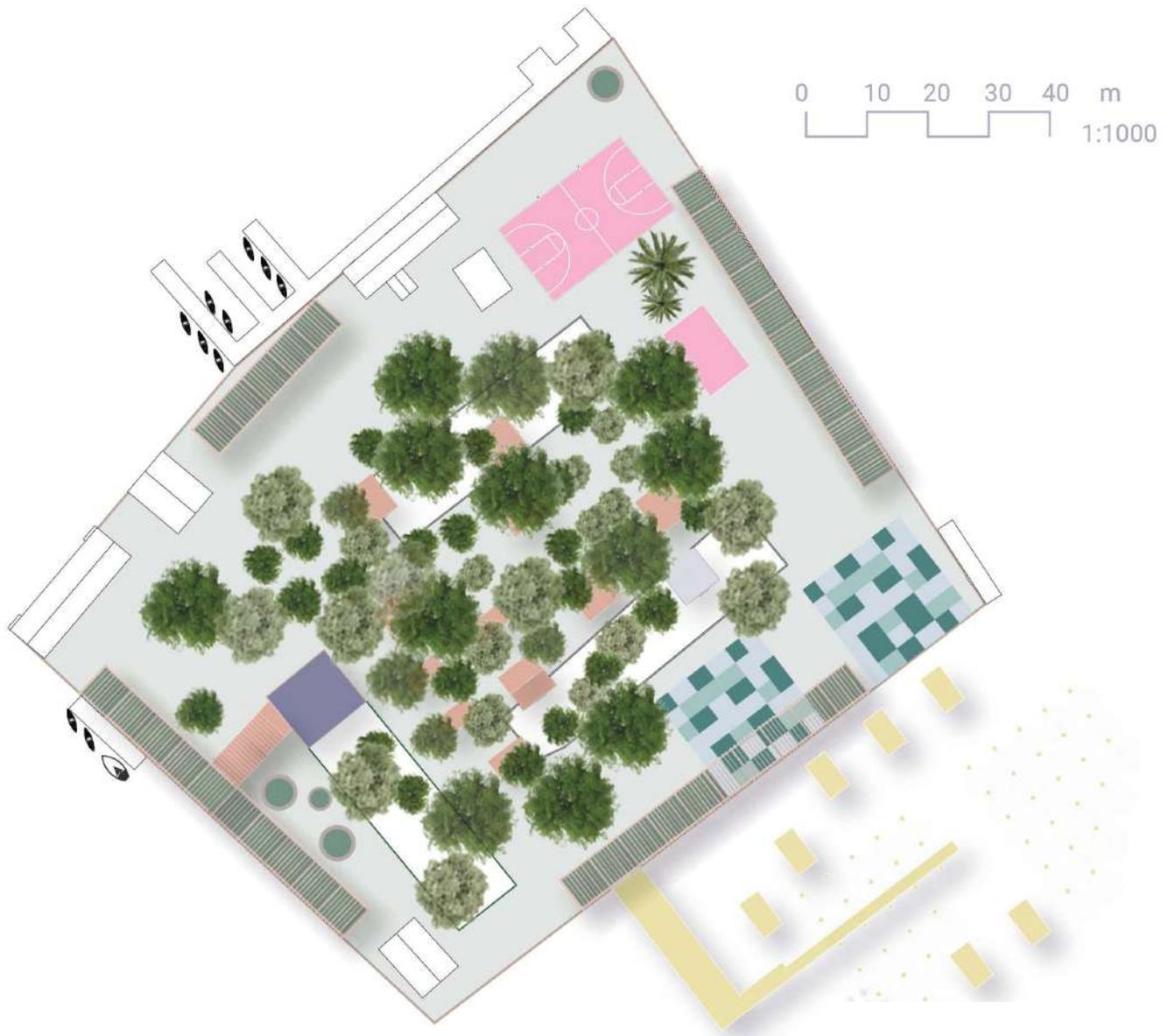


F 1.8





The plan in axo; a variety in program



Masterplan of San Giacomo in Paludo; a deserted island transformed into the new destination: a work and travel farm

## IX. THE ACT OF LIVING

*'act: take action; do something. living: the pursuit of a lifestyle of the specified type'*

As urban designers, human beings, politicians, citizens: we have to take the threat of tourism on the liveability of cities seriously.

This graduation project has looked in detail at the dichotomy between overtourism and liveability. And it puts forward a proposal, which is to improve the liveability of the endangered - UNESCO - site Venice.

The perspective has to change, tourism as we practiced it before the pandemic - and now that tourism has restarted - is no longer appropriate to our times. It is not sustainable to use tourism only as an economic resource. It comes at the cost of the liveable places on earth.

Therefore this graduation project states that we must stay away from the dichotomy between overtourism and liveability, and opt for a reconciliation:

- Shift the focus from tourism to cultural production
- Regulate the masses
- Design places for the locals
- And create new destinations for a new kind of - sustainable - tourism

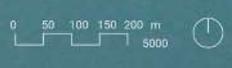
In this each actor has its own role to play and responsibility. As a tourist, a local or traveller, we should all take part in: **The Act Of Living!**

the  
**act**  
of  
**living**



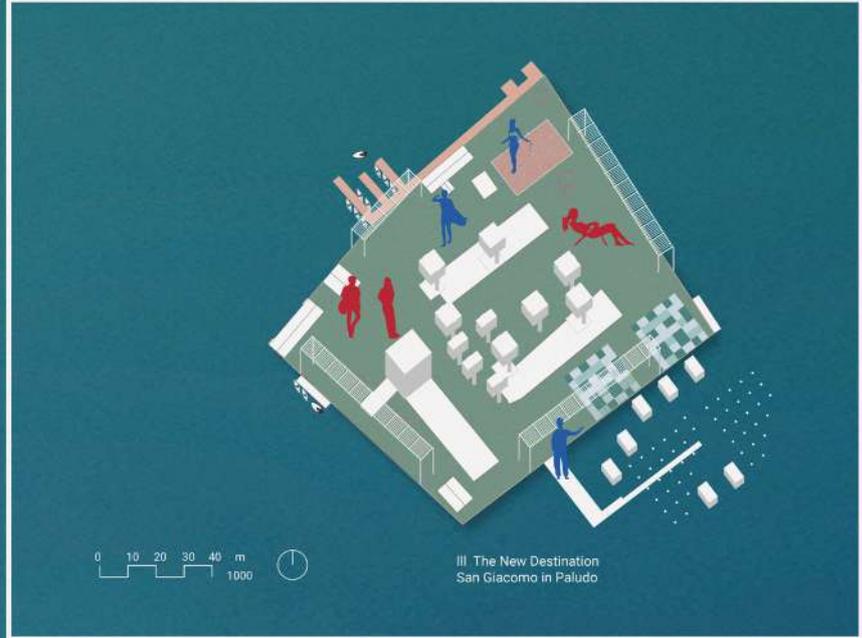
- tourists
- locals
- locals + travellers

- tourism
- tourism-related work / facilities
- residents
- non-tourism-related work / facilities
- culture
- current terminal / possible future development





Community



# THE ACT OF LIVING

STARRING:

the tourists

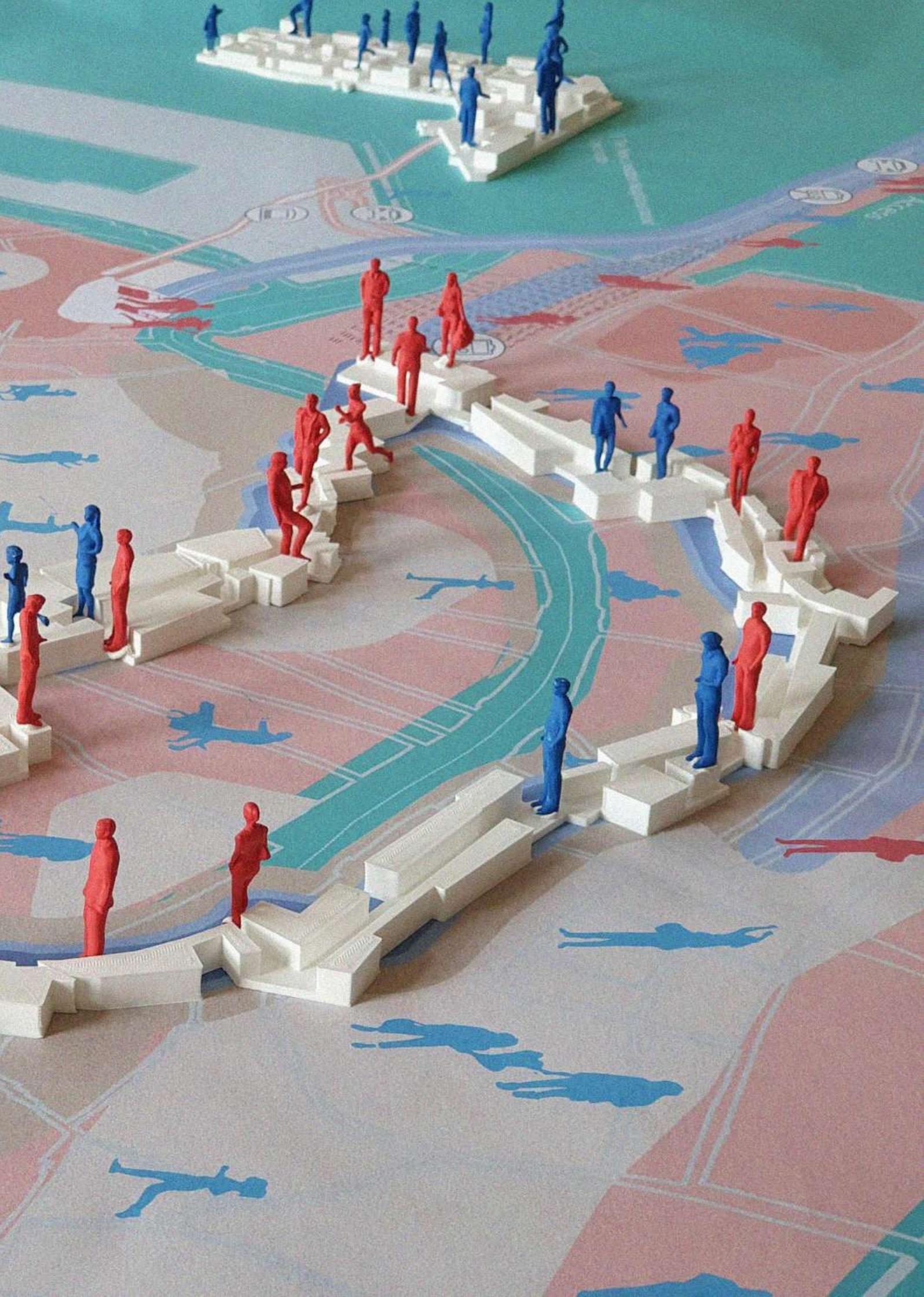


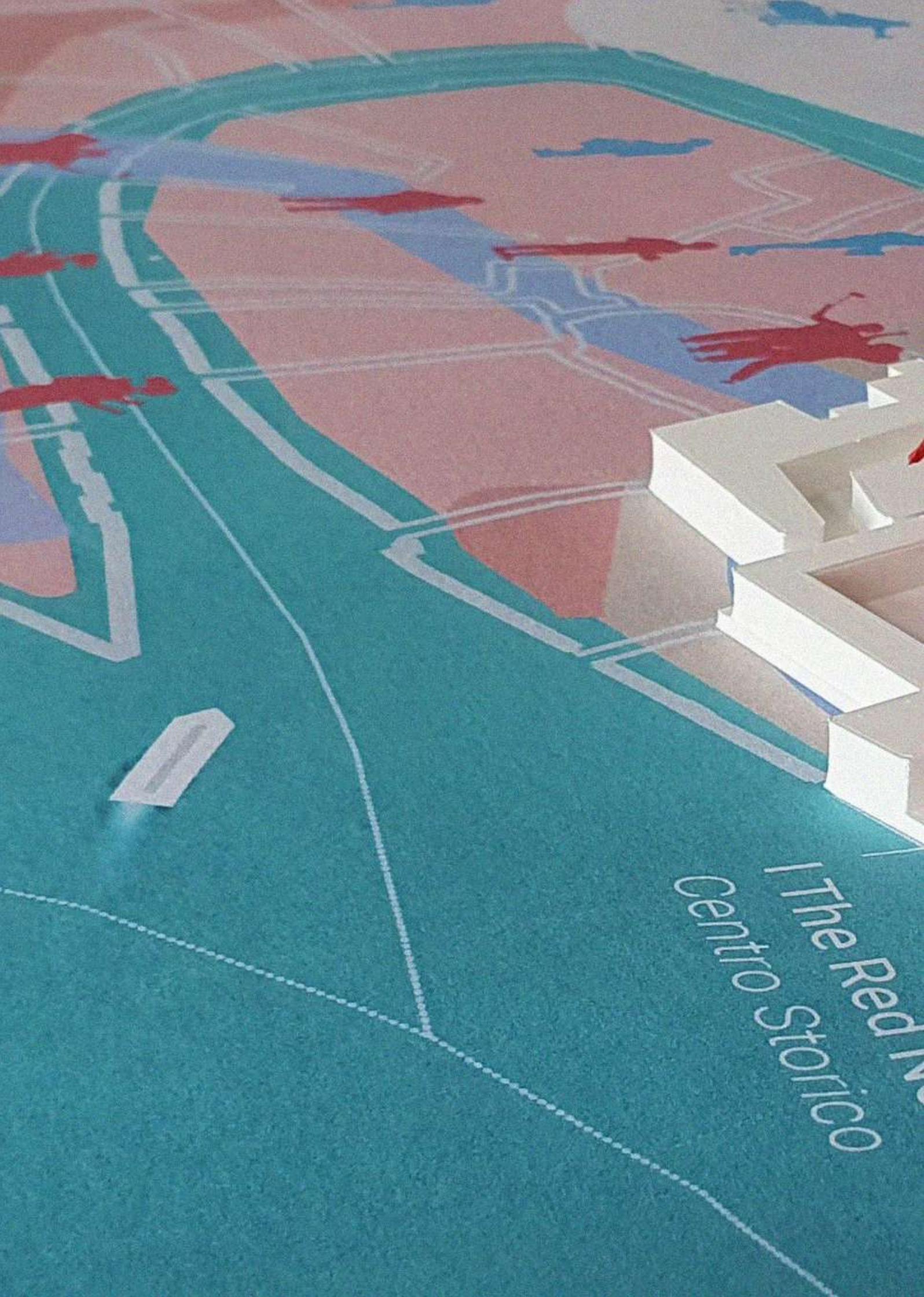
the locals



locals + travellers







The Red  
Storico  
Centro



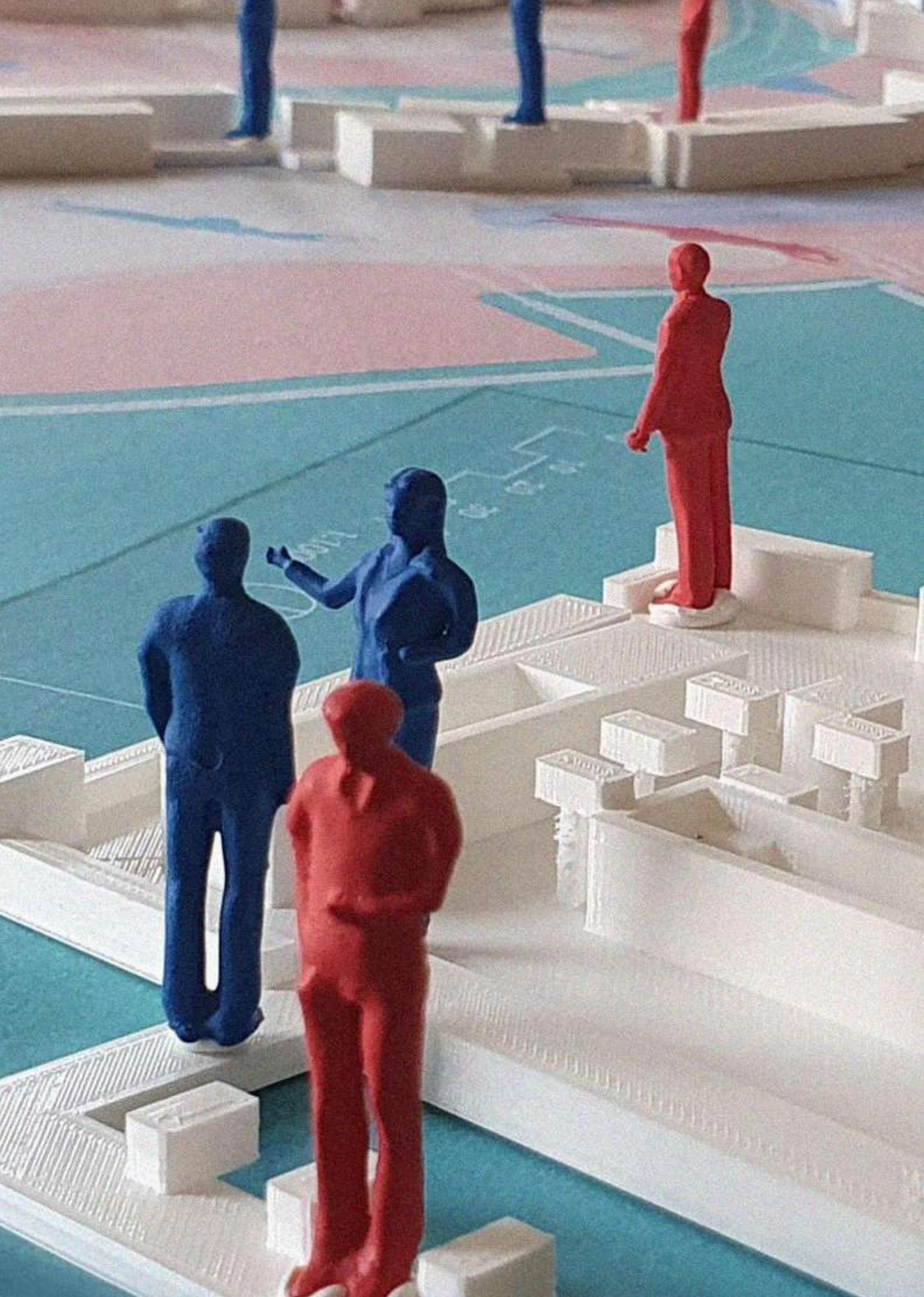
Necklace

II The New Liveable Neighbourhood

Tronchetto









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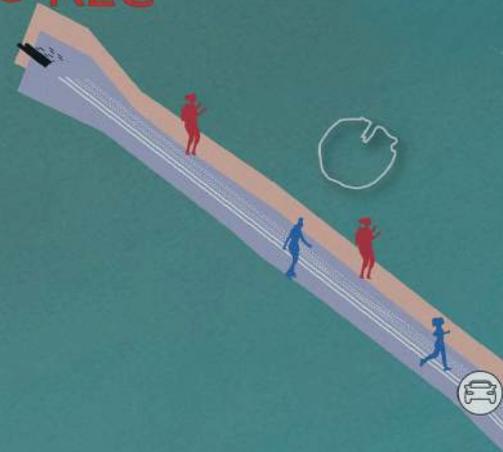
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● REC



tourists



locals



locals + travellers