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How will we sit together?

Venice Biennale of Architecture, 2021

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How will we sit together?

Venice Biennale of Architecture, 2021



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Venice, Merchants & Theatre <i>Rebeka Vidrih & Martina Malesič</i>	2
Venice & Death <i>Fátima Pombo</i>	10
Venice & War <i>Ana María Fernández García</i>	18
Venice, Myths & Mystery <i>Anna Marie Fisker</i>	26
10 Chairs <i>Hans Thyge Raunkjær</i>	34
Map	38
List of Figures	40

How will we sit together **- 4 Unique Places in Venice - 4 Unique Chairs**

In relation to the assignment for the workshop in Venice 2021, we have decided to focus on 4 specific locations which involve 4 artists/architects and part of the extremely interesting cultural history of Venice.

The aim of the specific Intellectual Output, which is the base of the workshop, is to design and develop course modules, which will provide the students with further knowledge, skills and competencies within the industrial design and engineering field corresponding to history, culture, philosophy and the execution of a project in public built on a foundation of shared cultural heritage.

This is why the Partner Universities each have been writing an essay related to the 4 Unique Places in Venice that we have chosen to work with, and we hope all of you will enjoy reading them.

Furthermore, the aim of the workshop is to give the students insights into various product configurations with the use of both traditional and new manufacturing processes and materials and learn to create new combinations in an integrated and multidisciplinary process. Our Partner Hans Thyge & Co. has therefore chosen 10 CHAIRS that you will be transforming in groups within the theme: HOW WILL WE SIT TOGETHER in combination with the 4 Unique Places presented in this small booklet.

We expect that at the official Session at the Architecture Biennale on Friday 17. September there will be a positive impact on the process of creating development and modernisation of educational institutions, and at the same time a unique result of a learning-rich workshop.

Welcome to the CRAFT Workshop in Venice 2021!

Anna Marie Fisker
Project Leader CRAFT

Venice, Merchants & Theatre

Rebeka Vidrih & Martina Malešič



III. 2. Punta della Dogana with Santa Maria della Salute church behind it.

Punta della Dogana da Mar

At the point where the largest two Venetian canals, the Grand Canal and the Giudecca Canal, meet, a custom house was built in the 15th century. Previously, the goods that arrived in Venice, in this great mediaeval mercantile hub, were evaluated for customs duties in Castello, near the entrance to the ship-building facilities of Arsenale. But the goods were brought into the city in such great quantities that the existing Custom House could not handle them all. Therefore it was decided in 1414 to establish two new customs posts: one for the goods arriving from the Italian mainland and another one for the goods arriving by the seaborne trade. The first, the Dogana da Terra, was relocated to the financial and commercial centre of Rialto, whereas the other, the Dogana da Mar, was moved to the tip of the island of Dorsoduro where the salt warehouses stood. Those vast mediaeval warehouses, triangular in plan due to the terrain, were rebuilt first in 1525 and then again in the 17th century in the present form.

The competition for the new building organised in 1675 by the Venetian state was won by Giuseppe Benoni, closely beating much more famous Baldassare Longhena, whose magnificent Baroque church of Santa Maria della Salute was now being completed just nearby. Lower and simpler, the new Dogana da Mar was built between 1678 and 1682. Its rusticated exterior culminates in a prominent colonnaded loggia, which emphasises the tip of the Dorsoduro island and marks the entrance point into the Grand Canal. The loggia is crowned by two bronze Atlas figures, carrying a giant ball of the Earth, on top of which stands the figure of Fortune. The Fortune figure turns in compliance with the winds, thus indicating their direction as well as symbolising the mutability or fickleness of the fortune itself. The Dogana da Mar complements the great buildings of the Piazza



Ill. 3. Loggia of Punta della Dogana.

and the Piazzetta di San Marco just across the canal. Together with Palazzo Ducale, Campanile di San Marco, Biblioteca Marciana and La Zecca, it further defines and ultimately designates the confines of Bacino di San Marco, the basin in front of the city's political and spiritual heart, the primary arrival point into the city.

The building was renovated in the 19th century and continued to function as a customs house until the 1980s. Thereafter it was abandoned. The plans to turn it into apartments or a hotel all failed. Finally the Venice city council decided to transform it into a contemporary art space and signed an agreement with the French billionaire and art collector François Pinault. To that end, in 2008–2009 the building was restored by Japanese architect Tadao Ando. Dogana da Mar's exterior was renovated without alterations or additions, but inside the many partition walls that were added over the centuries were removed to restore the building to its original form, exposing the brick walls and the woodwork of the roof. In Ando's own words, »the Punta

della Dogana building features a simple and rational structure«, its interior triangular space »is divided into long rectangles by a series of parallel walls«. In its centre, a box made from characteristically smooth concrete is inserted, reminiscent of courtyards within great Venetian palaces. In June 2009 Punta della Dogana gallery was opened to the public; together with Palazzo Grassi, the other Venetian venue, opened in 2006, and just opened Bourse de Commerce in Paris it is one of the three exhibition spaces for the Pinault Collection.

Ill. 4. Atlas figures with the Earth and Fortuna on top of Punta della Dogana.



Punta della Dogana was also the location where The Theatre of the World (Il Teatro del Mondo) was anchored on the 11th of November in 1979 for the Theatre/Architecture Biennale. The floating structure of the theatre was designed by Aldo Rossi, an Italian architect and designer who is considered one of the founders of the Neo-Rationalist movement known as “La Tendenza.”

The idea of the Biennale was to recall the floating theatres which were characteristic of Venice in the 18th century. Through his many drawings, Rossi analysed and condensed the Venetian identity, its physical, geographic, architectural and mythical reality. The construction in it many references converge: primitive, proto-renaissance Florentine kiosks, renaissance theatres, Elizabethan theatres, lighthouse architecture and especially 18th century Venetian architecture, known for its floating structures built for Carnival (ephemeral stage sets inserted into the moving landscape of the city). Thus, it is the typology of the city that creates the scenario.

Ill. 5. Piazza and Piazzetta di San Marco with Punta della Dogana.



Ill. 6. Il Teatro del Mondo on its way to Punta della Dogana.

Constructed in the Fusina shipyards, the Theatre was towed across to Venice by tugboat. The building was erected over steel beams, welded together to form a raft. Its total height was 25m. It consisted of a cuboid 9.5 x 9.5 m by 11m in height, which supports an octagon 6m high. The top of the cuboid gave access to a balcony with views of the Giudecca and San Marco, almost on a level with the statue of fortune which stands on the Customs House. The tubular steel structure was panelled with wood, both inside and out. It consists of a central stage at the sides with galleries, with the capacity for 400 people

After the end of the Biennale, the structure was sailed by tugboat across the Adriatic, visiting Dubrovnik and other ports along the coast. It was dismantled in 1981.

Parigi Armchair

Aldo Rossi envisioned and designed the Parigi chair for the Italian furniture maker Unifor in 1980, around the same time as he designed the world theatre previously described. The armchair and its functionality is tailored to the needs of the contemporary office environment, according to Aldo Rossi, as a domestic space for working. Thus, the armchair is capable of adapting to both living and working environments.

By first sight, the armchair reminds of a rigid wood chair, but the chair is actually experienced as soft and comfortable. It is made from a unique geometrically aluminum tube construction, painted black, polstered by a self-supporting seat and back made from foam. The seating is masterfully completed by a red lacquered finish, resulting in the Parigi Chair being an iconic piece of Italian design.

The chair is tilted, which creates a subtle tension, both for the observer, and the inhabitator.

“Perhaps it is snobbery but the more I see the world, the more I feel being a citizen of it and the more I want to go back to the old way of things”

- Aldo Rossi¹

1. <https://www.unifor.it/en/office-furniture/parigi>



III. 7. Parigi Armchair and Aldo Rossi

Venice & Death

Fátima Pombo



Ill. 8. San Michele Island, the Venice Cemetery.

Venice and the Death. The Cemetery Island and the Courtyards designed by David Chipperfield

The San Michele Island, for a long time occupied by a monastery of Camaldolese monks, a monastic order founded by Saint Romuald, became known as the Venice Cemetery. 'In 1469, the monks asked Mauro Codussi to build the Chiesa di San Michele in Isola next to their monastery. The result was one of the first renaissance buildings in Venice. It has a big dome and a large statue of an angel above the entrance. The white façade is made of Istrian stone. The Capella Emiliana, designed by Guglielmo dei Grigi, was added in 1530. The monastery of San Michele has been used by the Camaldolese monks and later by the Franciscan order. It even served as a prison for a while.'¹ was appointed to design there a cemetery when, under the French occupation, it was forbidden to bury anywhere on the principal islands because it was considered unsanitary. But till 1837 the Island of the Venetian Cemetery was divided by a narrow 'canale' in two islands, the San Michele Island and the San Cristoforo della Pace Island. The intensification of demands to bury in the cemetery led to fill in the 'canale' and to the unification of the two islands. The identification of the island caught the name of San Michele. (Ill. 8).

Still today the island houses the main cemetery of the city which is in use and has been chosen as the last address by many known people, Italians and foreigners, all admirers or lovers of Venice. There are buried, among others, Ezra Pound, Igor Stravinsky, Sergej Diaghilev, Josef Brodsky, Frederick Rolfe, Christian Doppler, Catherine Bagration, Zoran Mušič, Luigi Nono, Giacinto Gallina, Giulio Lorenzetti, Pier Luigi Penso, Cesco Baseggio, Virgilio Guidi, Emilio Vedova.



Ill. 9. Black concrete colonnades in one of the courtyards lined with rows of burial recesses.

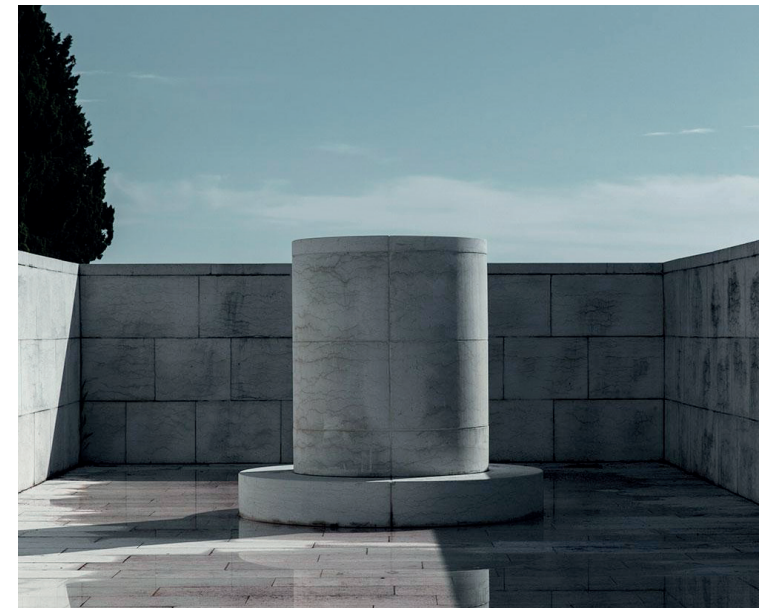
Venice and the death are also celebrated by art. Probably *Der Tod in Venedig* written by Thomas Mann and published in 1912 is, regarding the subject, the most honoured piece of art that also inspired other masterpieces as the film *Morte a Venezia* (1971) by Luchino Visconti, the opera in two acts *Death in Venice* (first performed in 1973) by Benjamin Britten or stage adaptations as, for example, the ballet *Death in Venice* (2018) by Valentina Turcu.

Thomas Mann was a lover of Lido and Venezia and had visited the city many times with his wife Katja Mann, usually staying at *Hôtel des Bains*. From the short story, which plot is famous and even considered semiautobiographical, what matters for this text's purpose is the meticulous Mann's prose while describing

the arrival of the death to Venice. It is interesting to underline the symbolic fact that the protagonist of the novel, Gustav von Aschenbach, decides to travel to Venice while walking by a cemetery in Munich. The trip to Venice is neither bright nor solar. The sky is grey, rainy and humid. In the first morning, the putrid smell of water is saddening and discouraging. Eros, however, is able to play the powerful role of ensuring ignorance of all the dangerous signs of an outbreak of cholera. Aschenbach stays! Thanatos wins the game.

If Venice is intriguing and mysterious, San Michele Island is the most mysterious of all islands of the Venetian lagoon, keeping the secrets of the burial ground surrounded by long and high wave-lapped walls and cypress trees. The cemetery is divided in sections and used by different religions but the Jewish and Muslims, who

Ill. 10. The Ossuary in Istrian stone.



have their cemeteries respectively at Lido and at Marghera. In 1998 David Chipperfield Architects (DCA) won a competition for improving the cemetery with extension and facilities, namely by adding new columbaria, a chapel and a crematorium. After some bureaucratic delays, the work started in 2004 and some part is already completed. Chipperfield intended to connect again the interior of the cemetery with its romantic exterior that over the years, with the pressure of space and intense use, has been lost. The design was based upon blind walls enclosing rectangular courtyards underlining the sensation of intimacy and privacy. ‘The Courtyard of the Four Evangelists was completed in 2007 and its design – being internally subdivided into smaller courtyards of different sizes, with basalt walls and pavement inlaid with text from the four gospels – served as a prototype for the subsequent courtyards on the site.’ (Ill. 9)

In 2017 was finished an ossuary in white Istrian stone (Ill. 10) and The Courtyard of the Three Archangels (Ill. 11) as well as a

Ill. 11. *The Courtyard of the Three Archangels.*



Ill. 12. *New Trees in the Island.*

service building in red brick.

Also new trees have been planted in balance with the cypress trees of the Island (Ill. 12)

The design intervention of David Chipperfield is a new chapter in the relationship between Venice and the death. The architect’s project offers a sense of harmony between the lagoon, the layers of the Island’s history, and the sense of mourning peacefully in a beautiful and spiritual place.

1. <https://www.theveniceinsider.com/san-michele-cemetery-venice/>. *The Venetian Architect Gian Antonio Selva (1751-1819)*

Piana Chair

Piana is a chair made in 100% recyclable polypropylene reinforced with fibreglass, rotating around a single axis for public or home use indoors and outdoors. In six different colours with a matt finish it matches the scenery of a dining room, a meeting room, a kitchen, a terrace or a garden. It appears in a delicate and light form but it is robust, resistant, utilitarian, comfortable, minimalistic and environmentally friendly. The chair folds completely flat, it is stackable and easily can be leaned against a wall or hanging on a wall hook to spare space as it is shown in Ill. 13.

The British architect David Chipperfield designed the chair for Alessi in 2011 and describes it in his professional site underlining that ‘the visual language of the object is a simple statement about its function and role, giving the chair a timeless quality’¹. In Ill. 13 is also to observe the drawings of Chipperfield that illustrate Piana from different perspectives. Ill. 13 displays the chair in all colours as a piece of art in a brilliant and vivid Alessi showcase in a Milan’s busy street. The sculptural configuration of Piana’s exhibition in a white room with big windows was a creative initiative that, in effect, drew the public’s attention. Piana chair also attracted the interest of the Museum of Modern Art in New York that has chosen it to integrate its collection.

1. https://davidchipperfield.com/project/piana_folding_chair



Ill. 13. The chair is hanging on the wall



Ill. 14. The chair has been produced in several colours



Venice & War

Ana María Fernández García

Ill. 15. The Partisan woman

The Monument to the Partisan Woman

When Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978) thought about the location of the Venice Female Partisan Monument he wanted to create a new dock that entered the lagoon in front of the Biennale. He devised a kind of concrete and stone blocks of varying heights that emerged from the water. They function as living elements that are affected by the natural rhythm of the tides and by the changing perception of the spectators who observe them, both from land and from the water. It is a true symbiosis between geometry, construction, and nature.

The sculpture by Augusto Murer (1922-1985) was the result of a competition organized in 1964 by the Venice City Council to replace the piece of the Woman Partisan (work of Leonacillo Leonardi) destroyed by a fascist bomb in 1961. Murer sculpted a bronze statue of a handcuffed woman, with an unhinged face reflecting suffering and fear. The work exemplifies the role of women in the fall of fascism in Italy.

Scarpa's starting point was to avoid placing sculptures in open spaces in Venice because, in his opinion, they were an attack on the formal urban structure. Moreover, since it was a reclining sculpture, visibility was difficult. That is why he placed the sculpture at the water's edge, without a podium, on the boundary between the land and the water in the Fondamenta of the Giardini di Castello.

The Fondamenta are stretches of street that surround canals or rivers in Venice. They are piers with stone steps leading down to the water to facilitate the docking of boats and the loading and unloading of passengers and goods. Thus, the project was configured as a dock of 83 concrete and Istrian stone prisms, with a square section, which are staggered at different levels.



Ill. 16. Stoneblocks in various heights emerge from the water.

In Scarpa's initial project, the bronze sculpture rested on a copper-clad concrete platform. The work initially floated and varied its position to always remain at water level, and the stepped blocks allowed passersby to approach the sculpture.

However, with its installation in 1968, the monument was altered by closing the space to passers-by for safety reasons, with a bannister and a shrub garden. The sculpture was then fixed to the block and was therefore submerged during high tides. In coincidence with the centenary of Carlo Scarpa's birth in 2009, the Municipality restored it to its former aspect.

Despite its apparent modernity, Scarpa's intervention is rooted in the construction history of Venice. Traditional Venetian



Ill. 17. The sculpture appear as a symbiosis between geometry, construction and nature

construction was carried out on wooden piles, logs nailed at a height that formed an artificial network like this monument. The geometric system of concrete blocks imitates the fondamenta and the materials (concrete, stone, copper and bronze) generate a patina characteristic of Venice, which arises from the interaction between water, salt, dirt and algae.



Ill. 18. The harbourfront by Giardini with the Monument to the Partisan Woman in front

618 Chair

Carlo Scarpa (1906, Venice, Italy–1978, Sendai, Japan) was an Italian designer and architect influenced by the materials, landscape, Venetian and Japanese cultures, and Modernism. His architecture is related to history and pays attention to the minimum details and the integration of ancient crafts within modern aesthetic.

In 1964, Carlo Scarpa looked up the meaning of the word “furniture” in the Crusca vocabulary and in the etymological dictionary of Battisti, under this heading there was the definition: “provide for what is necessary”. Battisti adds that “furniture” means “to take care”.

This was the starting point for the design of this chair for Meritalia. An armchair with a solid wood structure covered in leather, particularly comfortable and with a minimalist look. An almost square plan of 57 x 55 cm, rests with four vertical elements of a height of 45 cm. From the structure of the seat a particular backrest rises from the center that seems to rotate in itself to wrap the customer’s back. In this chair the harmonic geometries of Carlo Scarpa peek out, where simple forms are combined with pure functionalism.



Ill. 19. A pair of 618 Chairs



Venice, Myths & Mystery

Anna Marie Fisker

Ill. 20. Statue of a griffin at St Mark's Basilica in Venice

Ruskin, Dragons and other Monsters – Entering part of the magic and the myths of Venice

“I took a seat at the Café Florian, savouring the ices, listening to the music, chatting with an acquaintance. No traveller can forget the immense mass of tables and chairs which advances like a promontory into the smooth lake of the square”.

Henry James (James, 1995).

The San Mark Square is one of the most beautiful and perfect places in the world. Passing, you cannot help admiring the Venetian flag with the Lion fluttering in the breeze from the Adriatic on their flagpoles in front of Saint Mark's Basilica. However, before each of you get too overwhelmed by the exquisite buildings and the distinguished legacy of art and unique renaissance culture we will be heading to Caffé Florian¹.

With Antonio Rizzo's Giants' Staircase and the two marble statues by Sansovino depicting Mars and Neptune behind us, we must make sure to pass beside, NOT between, the two large granite columns in the Square of San Marco with the statue of San Teodoro and the Venetian Lion.

Both St. George and San Teodoro are famous dragon slayers and scenes of the saints defeating dragons are portrayed in mosaics, paintings, reliefs and sculpture many places in Venice. Be aware that some of the dragons are unusual looking, like a squishy crocodile, a long-necked goose, or monsters made up of head, legs, wings and tail from different animals.

St. Theodore, a 4th-century Roman soldier and champion of Christianity, was the first patron saint of Venice, even before St.



Ill. 21. Southern front of the Basilica di San Marco, from the loggia of the Palazzo Ducale

Mark. According to legend, St. Theodore fought and vanquished a dragon, aided by the Christian cross. The statue of St. Theodore stands on top of the western column in the Square of San Marco, and gazing at the figure of Saint Theodore and dragon up close, it is evident that St. Theodore holds a shield with a cross in his right hand, a spear in his left hand. He confidently stands on top of an unhappy scaly dragon - resembling a crocodile.

Another patron saint of Venice, St. George is famous throughout Europe. In the middle Ages, Crusaders brought back the legend of St. George, who slays a dragon and saves a princess. In the legend, to appease a dragon threatening the kingdom, a maiden, the king's daughter, is offered. Just as the princess is about to be

gobbled up by the dragon, Saint George rides by and vanquishes the dragon².

In my article "Dragons are everywhere in Venice - Stories, Myths, Legends and Fairy Tales as tools for reflection in teaching", I point out the legend about how once in the very depths of the Venice lagoon there lived a mysterious dragon. A dragon that feared no man, except the gondolier. Just as the celebrated story of how Saint George, whose legend dates back to the 5th-century, vanquished a dragon and rescued a princess with a spear, the gondolier's oar was a permanent threat to the Venetian underwater dragon. Whilst the dragon might sometimes get

Ill. 22. Columns of San Marco and San Teodoro – The two columns in Piazza San Marco, Venice. They comprise the Column of the Lion and the Column of San Teodoro



angry - its breath causing the mists that envelopes the lagoon – it never rose to the surface because of the incessant to and fro of the gondoliers. Maybe it is still there?

And there is more. John Ruskin³ the famous English writer, painter and art critic, and a major figure in the nineteenth-century international art scene also knew about the beasts of Venice⁴. He often made sketches of griffins. You must observe that a griffin is often portrayed without wings, or a wingless eagle-headed lion is identified as a griffin⁵.

So, be aware. Dragons are everywhere in Venice⁶. And stories, myths, legends and fairy tales are waiting to be discover and found. I personally have been chasing the Venetian adventure since I was very young.

1. *Caffè Florian, an essential presence under the Procuratie Nuove in St Mark's Square, is considered the oldest Café in Europe, a symbol of the city of Venice. It was opened on 29th December 1720 by Floriano Francesconi as "Alla Venezia Trionfante" (Triumphant Venice), although the clientele subsequently rechristened it "Caffè Florian" in honour of its owner.*

2. *The story is painted by the famous Italian Renaissance artist Carpaccio and housed in the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. In the painting, St. George is portrayed while riding a horse above a wide background, his lance piercing the dragon's head.*

3. *John Ruskin, 1819-1900.*

4. *John Ruskin had a deep attachment to Venice to which he dedicated his most famous literary work: The Stones of Venice - Le Pietre di Venezia, a study of the city's architecture and a hymn to its beauty, uniqueness and fragility.*

III. 23. John Ruskin, Studio of Carpaccio, San George and the Dragon



5. *In his work "Modern Painters" John Ruskin state: "Remember, first, the griffin, through part lion and part eagle, has the united power of both. He is not merely a bit of lion and a bit of eagle, but whole lion, incorporate with whole eagle. So when we really see one, we may be quite sure we shall not find him wanting in anything necessary to the might either of beast or bird". (Chapter VIII: Of the true ideal: Thirdly, Grottesque, §14 (Ruskin 1988).*

6. *If you want to study more, you can visit the Church of Santa Maria e San Donato. It is a religious edifice located in Murano, here, you find large bones behind the altar said to be the bones of a dragon slain by another Saint. Yes, it is true, behind the altar there are four rib bones, hanging from wires, the bones are each more than 1 meter long. According to legend, these are bones of the dragon slain by St. Donatus in Greece.*

III. 24. Caffé Florian



Ruskin's Chair

It can be difficult to categorise John Ruskin, for his influence extended profoundly into such diverse areas as architecture, literature and social philosophy.

The Arts and Crafts movement emerged during the late Victorian period in England, its designers sought to improve standards of decorative design, to create environments in which beautiful and fine workmanship governed. Ruskin's writings on architecture did much to foster the Victorian Gothic Revival, advocating medieval architecture as a model for honest craftsmanship and quality materials. Ruskin's persuasive rhetoric influenced the movement's figurehead William Morris.

Ruskin's home Brantwood was a magnet for famous figures in the literary and art worlds, the 30 acres of gardens that surround his house, included the Professor's Garden, where Ruskin grew native fruits and flowers. Ruskin created different garden "rooms" as a kind of living laboratory to experiment with his ideas on social and environmental philosophy, from a fern garden to a medieval herb area.

One garden highlight is 'Ruskin's Chair', a seat made from local slate. The chair does not face the garden itself but rather it faces a small stream where a waterfall tumbles down the hillside.



Ill. 25. Ruskin's Chair

10 Chairs

Hans Thyge Raunkjær



Ill. 26. Chair Model 14

CHAIR MODEL 14

Michael Thonet
1859



Ill. 27. Chair Model 330

CHAIR MODEL 330

Jean Prouve
1902



Ill. 28. Hill House Chair

HILL HOUSE CHAIR

Charles Mackintosh
1904



Ill. 29. Standard Chair

STANDARD CHAIR

Jean Prouve
1934



Ill. 30. Chair for Johnson & Son

CHAIR FOR JOHNSON & SON

Frank Lloyd Wright
1936



**DIAMOND MODEL
421LU**
Harry Bertoia
1950 - 1952

Ill. 31. Diamond Model 421LU



FIRST CHAIR
Michele De Lucchi
1983

Ill. 34. First Chair



**ANT CHAIR
MODEL 3100**
Arne Jacobsen
1951 - 1952

Ill. 32. Ant Chair model 3100



W.W. CHAIR
Philippe Starck
1990

Ill. 35. W.W. Chair



AFRICA CHAIR
Carlo Scarpa
1975

Ill. 33. Africa Chair

Venice Map



Venice & Death

Combo 1

Arsenale 2

Giardini 3

Venice, Myths & Mystery

Venice, Merchants & Theatre

Venice & War

List of Figures

Cover: Photo: Elias Melvin Christiansen

III. 1: Photo: Elias Melvin Christiansen

Venice, Merchants & Theatre

III. 2: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a4/0_Venise%2C_Canal_della_Giudecca%2C_Dogana%2C_Santa_Maria_della_Salute_et_Canal_Grande.JPG

III. 3: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c5/Dogana_da_mar%2C_Venice_006.jpg

III. 4: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/Bernardo_Falconi_-_Statua_della_Fortuna_-_Punta_della_Dogana_-_Venezia.jpg

III. 5: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/60/Markusplatz_Aug_2020_13.jpg

III. 6: <https://en.wikiarquitectura.com/email-abbiati-abbiati-2/>

III. 7: <https://www.fondazionealdorossi.org/biografia/>

Venice & Death

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III. 13: <https://www.brandjam.it/en/alessi-licensing-by-design-2/>

III. 14: http://mocoloco.com/vote/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/alessi_lamm_piani_chair0021.jpg

Venice & War

III. 15: https://stephenvaradyarchittraveller.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/venezia-alla-particiana-memorial-venice-by-carlo-scarpa-09_stephen-varady-photo-c2a9.jpg?w=1536

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III. 20: Statue of a griffin at St Mark's Basilica in Venice

III. 21: Southern front of the Basilica di San Marco, from the loggia of the Palazzo Ducale. Drawing by John Ruskin, 1851. Private collection. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

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III. 23: JOHN RUSKIN, Studio of Carpaccio, San George and the Dragon", 1874. Sheffield, Museums Sheffield, Collection of the Guild of St George

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Map

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