

On the Zattere, the twenty-year-old Emilio Vedova would watch the *burci*, or barges, depart, laden with his dreams, sketching them as they sailed along the shipping canal, the liquid street between the stones of the ZATTERE and of the Giudecca. This the place where he wished to be and he was to live there for fifty years with his wife Annabianca. Now he returns with his work to the huge MAGAZZINO DEL SALE, one of nine 14th-century salt warehouses, where his dialectic relationship with the world continues.

An enlightened initiative promoted by the Mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari, granted this space to the Fondazione Vedova as a permanent home for Emilio's works.

These are the very places that Vedova loved and hoped for, writing in the early 1990s, "*..I hope that the Foundation's Museum can be housed here. I mentioned this to my friend Renzo Piano, who I hope will collaborate. Piano –architect land/water- from Genoa to Osaka, from Amsterdam to Berlin.....to Venice?*"

Renzo Piano has conceived a project, born out of those distant dialogues, that maximizes and exalts the energy, the tension and the penetration of the Master in the architectural space (the *Absurdes Berliner Tagebuch, plurimi, dischi, binari*) through the movement of the works themselves. This dynamic project, carried out and directed by Maurizio Milan with the collaboration of Alessandro Traldi, Metalsistem and Iccem, has produced a high-tech mechanized robot system (almost like one of Leonardo's Machines) that frees the works from the walls.

Germano Celant, Chief Curator of the Foundation, has conceived and organized the warehouses as a space that will not only exhibit Emilio Vedova's works but will also show the work of international modern and contemporary artists in a continuous dialogue and encounter. Studio Systema and Studio Camuffo are in charge of communication and graphics. Fabrizio Gazzarri, the Foundation Director, draws upon over thirty years of work with the Maestro in carrying out the complex activity of coordinating all of the institutional aspects and tasks.

The inauguration of this space represents the fulfilment of Vedova's dream project, his desire for his role in contemporary art to live on in his beloved ZATTERE, the point of departure for his ideal infinite voyage into the Universe. But, in completing this task, the Foundation is also aware that it is participating in a sort of meta-cultural-urban plan involving a cohesive part of the city of Venice: as we travel along the Grand Canal in the direction of San Marco, we find ourselves surrounded by a concentrated interlacing of architecture and art of rare quality. Facing Palazzo Grassi is Cà Rezzonico followed by the Gallerie dell'Accademia with the Istituto Veneto in the neo-Gothic Palazzo Franchetti on the opposite bank; if you continue along the Accademia side you come to the Peggy Guggenheim Museum followed by Longhena's masterpiece, the Church

of the Salute, and the Old Customs House, now a contemporary art museum. Vedova's Space is like the outermost point of a complex geometric shape standing on the great shipping canal opposite Palladio's Redentore Church, just a stone's throw away from the School of Fine Arts where the Maestro taught. This extraordinary museum district dedicated to modern and contemporary art is just across the water from the area of San Marco and the Marciana Library which overlook the island of San Giorgio, home to the Cini Foundation, and the island of San Servolo, campus of the Venice International University: this magical journey ends at the Biennale gardens.

The Foundation's mission is not limited to the Magazzini del Sale exhibition project, and I would like to express my gratitude to all those who poured energy and passion into its realisation; it also involves studying complex personal and artistic connotations, painstaking research, analysis, cataloguing and archival work accompanied by cultural initiatives and relations with highly qualified national and international institutions.

Along with the exhibition space and Maestro's studio, or rather, workshop, the Foundation will create a centre for the restoration of contemporary art works and a school training young restorers as part of an initiative that will promote Venice as the ideal site for these highly specialized activities.

Alfredo Bianchini