

## VESPER, No. 11 Miserabilia

Vesper. Journal of Architecture, Arts & Theory

Deadline: Mar 1, 2024

[www.iuav.it/vesperjournal-call](http://www.iuav.it/vesperjournal-call)

Università Iuav di Venezia

Miserabilia aims to focus on spaces and spectres of misery in imagination and reality.

Two assumptions underlie it: the removal of the space of existence of misery in the concrete and immaterial context of the West in favour of 'measurable conditions of poverty', and the presence of buildings in cities as evidence of a past in which poverty was a 'matter' of governance and planning.

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

At Iuav in Venice, the theme shaped studies that insisted either on the links between capitalist system, spatial configuration, and social production and control, or on the methods of managing imbalances and conflicts in the city (Astengo, Cacciari, Ceccarelli, De Carlo, Indovina, Secchi, et al.). The end of the 'political' season which envisioned remedial solutions with a view to the 'abolition of misery' coincided with the fading of the dialogue between the disciplines engaged in the pursuit of bringing it into focus.

In architecture, misery was the subject of specific observations in historical studies concerned with the massive structures that, by accommodating, educating, and controlling outcasts, compensated for the grandiose displays of power. In 1929 Le Corbusier designed the 'floating asylum' for the homeless in Paris; in 1933 the same architect created, with Jeanneret and always inside the French capital, the Cité de Refuge: a monument to misery. In 1986 Hejduk designed Abandoned Chapel: Housing for the Homeless for Bovisa, and in 1994 Vidler published *The Architectural Uncanny*, in which he emphasized the theme of vagabonds in Hejduk's work. In 2004, Clément in *Manifeste du tiers paysage* overturned the negative meaning attributed to the discarded space, showing it as a place rich in biological diversity. Photography keeps investigating the vitality of the 'zones' in which misery is the driving force for experimentation on public space.

In 2015 Branzi and De Lucchi curated 'The Aesthetics of Misery' exhibition in Milan, presenting an investigation into forms and scenes of misery. In 2022 in Munich 'Who's Next? Homelessness, Architecture and Cities' exhibited historical and contemporary architectural projects for the homeless. Deliberately removed from cities – consider 'hostile architecture' and anti-homeless devices – or associated with studies on the scarcity of resources and materials, misery has no space.

Scarcity today is, in the research of various making works in rich territories and cities, a language, often not associated with its content.

Full call and details available at:

<http://www.iuav.it/vesperjournal-call>

#### TIMELINE

Sections: Project, Essay, Journey, Archive, Tutorial, Translation, Fundamentals

Abstracts must be submitted by March 1, 2024

Abstracts acceptance notification by March 15, 2024

Papers submission by May 6, 2024

Sections: Tale

Papers submission by March 1, 2024

Papers acceptance notification by March 15, 2024

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/41021>>.