

Vesper. Rivista di architettura, arti e teoria | Journal of Architecture, Arts & Theory

Vesper No. 6 Magic (Date of publication May 2022)

Call for abstracts and Call for papers

Primitive man knew no separate worlds of vision and of fact. He knew one world in which both were continually present within in the pattern of every-day experience. And when he carved and painted the wall of his cave or the side of a cliff, no frames or borders cut off his work of art from space or life – the same space, the same life that flowed around his animals, his demons and himself.

Frederick J. Kiesler, *Note on Designing the Gallery*, 20 October 1942

From archaic *hybris* to modern rationalism, mankind has tried to escape the inevitability of fate, the dictates of a superior will. Now it has the suspicion, the anguish of having done nothing more than follow, in the lucid schemes of its projects, the obscure design of fate: like one who flees from an enemy and when he no longer feels his footsteps behind him, and deludes himself that he is safe, finds himself in front of a forced passage and can no longer avoid it.

Giulio Carlo Argan, *Progetto e destino*, 1965

The point is: if I succeed in designing a mysterious building which could stir your emotions would you not think that your emotion in seen those building which you believe to be well-known arises from the same degree of mysteriousness? In fact I would like to take you to unknown regions only in order to make you realize that your journey is in an equally unknown region... and from here the next step will be the abandoning of all illusions of acting only according to reason, following scales and hierarchies, using formal models (which I can show you are only magic formulas that your witch-doctors have insidiously murmured in your ears while you slept...).

And beyond all illusion, we could try to build a reality for ourselves in which all ceremonies and rites are exclusively ours and could perhaps be very quickly forgotten.

Superstudio, *Ceremony*, 1973

The real world lives and coexists with the oneiric, the surreal, with dreams, symbols, myths, fairy tales, magic. If that which is concrete can appear clear, measurable, objective, and rational, there is something, however, that sometimes escapes us. A vast bibliography and an immensity of works have for centuries been chasing that fleeting something, that trail, that intangible element that can alter reality. Rites of crossing space; mysteries that yield inalienable temporal depths to scenes; architectures tattooed with symbols or based on figures and forms capable of building connections; cities whose meaning and significance are not

limited to the realm of objectivity: magic is the impalpable connection between reality and something *other*, it is the search for a possibility in the existing.

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1499) by Francesco Colonna is the story of a dream. Inside the paper space of the book, Polifilo finds his beloved Polia by passing a series of initiatory tests: his oneiric journey is full of pitfalls and wonders, surprises and nightmares, classical ruins and gardens of delight, fantastic architectures. In the sphere of mysticism take shape Paul Scheerbart's *Glass Architecture* (1914) – a book attempting a dream narrative – and his two volumes dealing with magic and fantasy themes *Lesabendio* and *The Perpetual Motion Machine: The Story of an Invention*; the same aura surrounds Bruno Taut's visions underlying his *Stadtkrone* (the crown of the city) theory of 1919, advocating the need for every city to have a symbolic building with an imposing scale and a clear expressionist style, in the wake of the ideas developed by the Glass Chain group.

In 1940 Carlo Mollino transformed a flat in Turin into his personal, domestic mausoleum. Having marginalized the issue of living conditions, the architect gave shape and space to a 'magical shelter of eternity' (as Fulvio Ferrari describes it) loaded with symbols from ancient Egypt lined up to accompany him on his second journey.

Magic Architecture (1941-1947) by Frederick Kiesler has remained unpublished: the work retraces the history of architecture delineating its magical origins, focusing on ancient founding rites of artifacts and cities, and devoting equal attention to spaces designed by animals. In his text, Kiesler postulates that 'Magic architecture is every-man's architecture, an architecture that can mediate between dream and reality while addressing the urgent problems of human existence following a period of global devastation'.

In 1962, Eugenio Battisti's *L'Antirinascimento* was published: another work aimed at overturning history, giving way to the fantastic, the marvellous, the irregular, the occult and folklore as the other (dark) side of the Renaissance.

Italy itself can be 'legendary, mysterious, unusual, fantastic' if we follow the indications given in *Guida all'Italia* (1971) by Mario Spagnol and Giovenale Santi, that is, looking for 'prehistoric and anti-historical stories, bizarre fairy tales, absurd myths, regional follies, remnants of millenary cosmogonies, relics of archaic life, profound and aberrant remainders'.

In the magazine "Psicon", directed by Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, Marcello Fagiolo and Eugenio Battisti, and published from 1974 to 1977, we read of wonders exhumed from ancient worlds, colossal architectures, symbolisms and mysteries, esoteric cities, Masonic lodges. Already the titles of the monographic issues of the magazine – *Architecture and Solar Symbolism; From Expressionism to Rationalism; Architecture and Culture of the Enlightenment; Latin America: the Colonial Cities; The 'Colossal' Style in Architecture; The 'Wonders' of the World; The Italian City of the Sixteenth Century* – propose a focus on worlds and times that feel like lateral roots of contemporary reality.

In his foreword to *10 immagini per Venezia*, Francesco Dal Co writes: 'The uniqueness of Venice is both physical (its resistance, its decadence) and spiritual (its duplicitous appearances). Its unrepeatable magic

enhances the intimate subjectivity of any impulse that leads to undertake the trip to Venice, because Venice is essentially a destination for travellers. Even historically and physically, Venice defends the spell that makes unspeakable but not unreal, for that matter, the fundamental co-belonging of the things that compose it and the events that occur in it'.

In 2011 Peter Zumthor designed the Steilneset Memorial in Vardø in Norway: these are two buildings next to each other that are considerably different in size, with an installation by Louise Bourgeois housed in the smaller one. A memorial to the victims of the witchcraft trials who were accused of practicing magic, the enigmatic work features shapes and characteristics that are far removed from the rules of rationality and of the city as a system. A 125-meter-long, irregular walkable tube in glass fibre membrane hangs from a wooden structure reminiscent of a medieval machine, while its non-identical twin is a small regular volume. Architecture is an admittedly incidental presence that comes from a parallel universe but at the same time can be attacked by the changing existing environment, often covered in snow; inside it houses a dark world shaped around ritual and the reference to the inexplicable.

In 2017 the Italian Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition in Venice hosted *The Magical World* curated by Cecilia Alemani: a triptych made up of the works of Roberto Cuoghi, Adelita Husni-Bey, and Giorgio Andreotta Calò supplemented with a book, black on all sides; both the triptych and the book reiterated the renewed confidence in the transformative power of imagination. The discourse, set up in space, started with a process of production and decomposition of bodies, continued with the video story of a group of people sitting in a circle interrogating cards to grasp the possible fates of the world, and ended with a mirroring structure that turned the pavilion space upside down.

Finally, or as an incipit, a shot by Letizia Battaglia portrayed men dressed up as fairies in an asylum, mistaking – with melancholy and hope – insanity for a party, or perhaps just staring at the mixture of reality and magic.

Vesper No. 6 Magic

Call for abstracts by September 5, 2021

Project. A contribution that establishes a close relationship between a set of images/drawings and a critical text investigating the underlying reasons for a realised project.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 3 images.

Final contribution: maximum 3000 words, maximum 10 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Essay. A scientific essay with footnotes, bibliography and iconography.

Call for abstracts: maximum 700 words, maximum 2 images, selected bibliography.

Final contribution: maximum 4500 word (text, bibliography and footnotes), maximum 7 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Journey. A written or visual report describing a real or imaginary journey and its development through time and/or space.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words or maximum 3 images with captions.

Final contribution: text of maximum 1500 words and maximum 3 images or a visual storyboard with up to 10 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings). The images submitted must be produced by the author or used with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Archive. A selection of archival materials presented along with their sources and a comment.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 4 images.

Final contribution: maximum 1500 words, maximum 10 images with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Tutorial. A sequence of images and texts intended as a brief manual for performing practices and/or operations.

Call for abstracts: maximum 400 words, maximum 4 images.

Final contribution: maximum 15 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings) with a text of maximum 1200 words. The images submitted must be produced by the author who must be the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Translation. Unpublished translation of a document in any language, to be published in Italian and English along with a critical review.

Call for abstracts: Text proposed for translation, critical review (maximum 400 words), 1 image.

Final contribution: Text proposed for translation: maximum of 1500 words, critical review: maximum 1200 words, 3 images with written permission of the copyright holder and preferably scans of the original document with written permission of the copyright holder (deadline September 5, 2021).

Vesper No. 6 Magic

Call for papers by September 5, 2021

Tale. A narrative text (without footnotes or bibliography) or a visual narrative.

Call for papers: maximum 1500 words or a selection of 10 images (illustrations, photographs, drawings). The images submitted must be produced by the author who must be the copyright holder.

Dictionary. Each issue of the journal hosts three entries in Italian and three entries in English to compile an ongoing dictionary. Each text deals critically with the definition of a term strictly related to the theme of issue. The dictionary in “Vesper” No. 6 includes letters: **F, E, D** for Italian, and **P, Q, R** for English. The initial letter of the term must correspond to one of these letters and must be written in its own belonging language.

Call for papers: an opening image (with caption and written permission of the copyright holder), the text and a short bibliography, for a total of 1000 words.

Timeline

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

Abstracts must be submitted by September 5, 2021

Abstracts acceptance notification by September 15, 2021

Papers submission by November 5, 2021

Papers acceptance notification by November 25, 2021

Sections: Tale, Dictionary

Papers submission by September 5, 2021

Papers acceptance notification by September 15, 2021

Publication of Vesper No. 6, May 2022

Guidelines for the submission of abstracts by September 5, 2021

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

Abstracts must contain: title; name of author(s), affiliation, e-mail address and a short bio-bibliographical profile; selected section; five keywords; text according to the guidelines for each different type of contribution and/or images with captions. File name: Vesper6_abstract_Last Name. Abstracts can be submitted either in Italian or in English. Abstracts must be submitted as .pdf via e-mail to: pard.iride@iuav.it. E-mail subject: Vesper 6 Call for abstract / Last name.

Guidelines for the submission of papers by November 5, 2021

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

Papers must contain: title; name of author(s), affiliation, e-mail address and a short bio-bibliographical profile; selected section; five keywords; summary of 150 words (for on-line publication); text according to

the guidelines for each different type of contribution and/or images with captions. File name:

Vesper6_paper_Last Name. Papers can be submitted either in Italian or in English and must follow the journal's editorial guidelines, which can be downloaded at the following link: [Download link](#). Papers must be submitted as .pdf and .docx via e-mail to: pard.iride@iuav.it. E-mail subject: Call for paper Vesper 6 / Last name.

Guidelines for the submission of papers by September 5, 2021

Sections: Tale, Dictionary

Papers must contain: title; name of author(s), affiliation, e-mail address and a short bio-bibliographical profile; selected section; five keywords; summary of 150 words (for on-line publication); text according to the guidelines for each different type of contribution and/or images with captions. File name:

Vesper6_paper_Last Name. Papers can be submitted either in Italian or in English and must follow the journal's editorial guidelines, which can be downloaded at the following link: [Download link](#). Papers must be submitted as .pdf and .docx via e-mail to: pard.iride@iuav.it. E-mail subject: Call for paper Vesper 6 / Last name.