

PALLADIO IN CHINA

*THE FIRST EXHIBITION IN CHINA ON THE
ARCHITECTURE OF ANDREA PALLADIO*

THE INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED

In the framework of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Italy and China, the Embassy of Italy in Beijing and the Italian Cultural Institute in Beijing promote the first major exhibition in China dedicated to Andrea Palladio, the genius who reshaped Western architecture.

This exhibition represents an absolute first in China by introducing Palladio's architecture to the Chinese broader public for the first time. The scientific project is curated by some of the Italian key institutions in this field: the International Center for the Study of Andrea Palladio's Architecture (CISA); the Polytechnic University of Turin, and the Treccani Institute of the Italian Encyclopedia.



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di Torino**

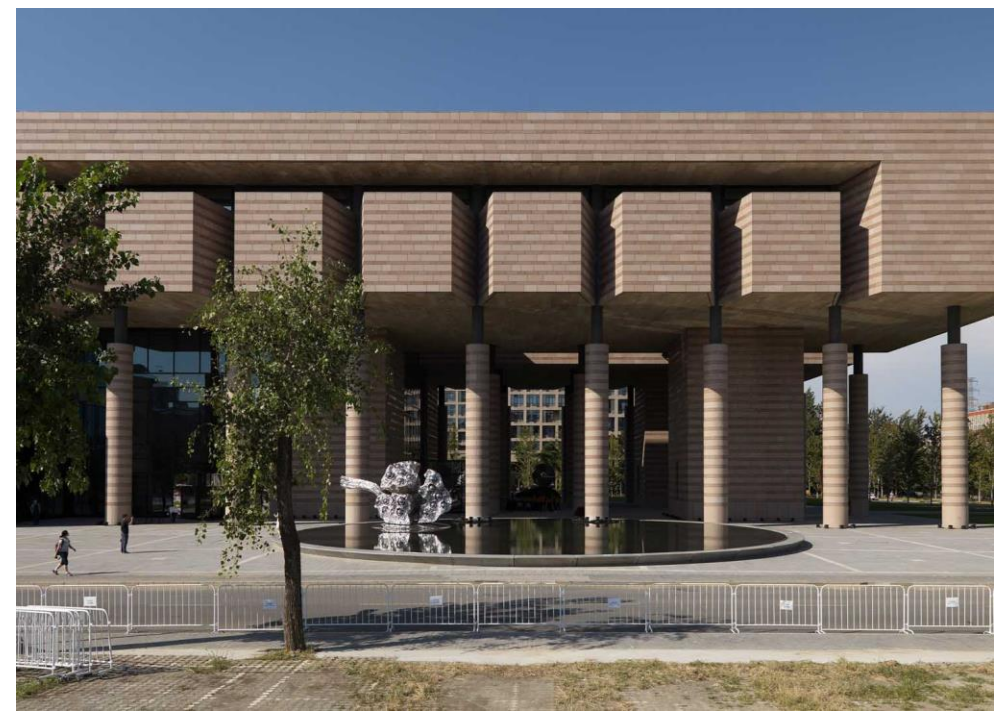


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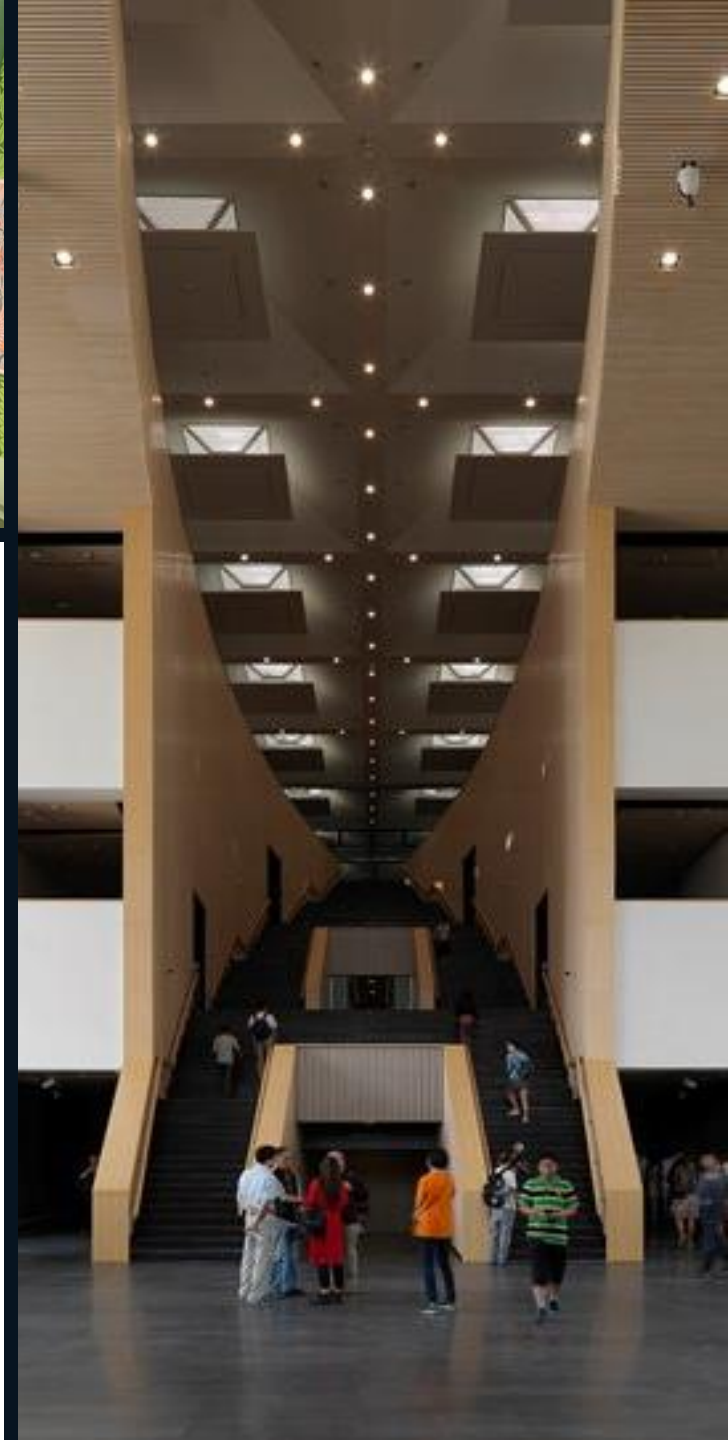


THE HOSTING MUSEUM

The exhibition is scheduled to open in Beijing in the last quarter of 2025 and will travel in 2026 to other venues in mainland China and Hong Kong.



The opening of the exhibition will take place in Beijing at the Tsinghua University Art Museum, a breathtaking architectural masterpiece designed by Mario Botta. This venue stands as a bridge between past and present, towering in the vicinity of the Tsinghua School of Architecture, where the academic study of architectural history first began in China. Notably, in this institution was accomplished the translation of Andrea Palladio's seminal work *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* into Chinese, first published in 2015. Thus 2025 also marks the 10th anniversary of this remarkable academic achievement, representing a significant tribute to the enduring dialogue between Eastern and Western architectural traditions.



THE EXHIBITION PROJECT_ two exhibitions, one show

The exhibition unfolds as a dynamic dialogue between past and future, East and West through an innovative and multidisciplinary curatorial approach. Visitors will undertake a dual experience of intellectual and sensory journeys discovering how different architectural traditions can converge, evolve, and inspire. Lois Conner's photographic project weaves these two realms together, providing a privileged perspective on the extraordinary architecture of Andrea Palladio.

Andrea Palladio 1508–1580: The Architect who reshaped the canon of Western Architecture

The historical section delves into the life and legacy of Andrea Palladio, not only as a visionary architect of his time but also as a figure whose influence extended through centuries. Here, Palladio's outstanding vision will be dialoguing with architects of later eras, each reinterpreting his principles in unique and creative ways.

Chinese Voices on Palladio

The contemporary section presents a vibrant and immersive experience. The voices of Chinese architects echo through the space — captured in video interviews and audible comments — engaging in a deep commentary on Palladio's architectural language. Their perspectives bridge cultures, exploring the resonances between Palladian ideals and the rich heritage of Chinese architectural thought, reimagining how both these traditions might shape the future.

ANDREA PALLADIO 1508–1580

The Architect who reshaped the canon of Western Architecture



Narrative strategies

The exhibition is organized on three narrative levels:

- Original works of Palladio (1508-1580) and his time: drawings, maps, books, paintings, sculptures, coins and artworks, integrated with contemporary materials: physical and digital models, infographics, multimedia.
- Lois Conner's narrative: the great photographer's authoritative look at Palladio's works in their contemporary context.
- Teleportation capsules: immersive environments located along the exhibition itinerary through moving colour images, provide the visitors with a vivid experience of key segments of the narrative.

The narrative of the historical exhibition

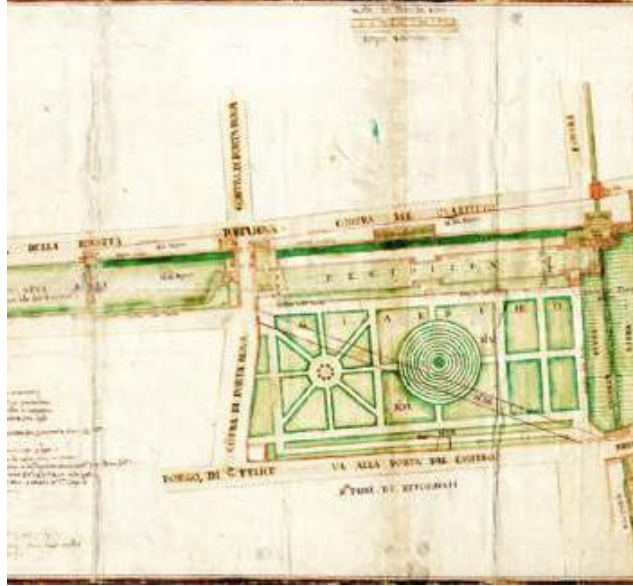
1- The exhibition begins with a **presentation of the Republic of Venice**: its territorial expansion, political and administrative structure, military power, productive capacity and commercial networks.





2- It continues with a **presentation of the Venetian mainland** and the great plan of transformation of its territory in the 16th century: **the life in the countryside and Palladio's invention of the villa** are presented in relation to antiquity and the new needs of agriculture.

The life and dwellings of the peasants are represented in the paintings and engravings of Jacopo Bassano (1510-1592), along with a selection of ancient agricultural tools already exhibited in the London exhibition "Andrea Palladio 1508-1580: The Portico and the Farmyard".



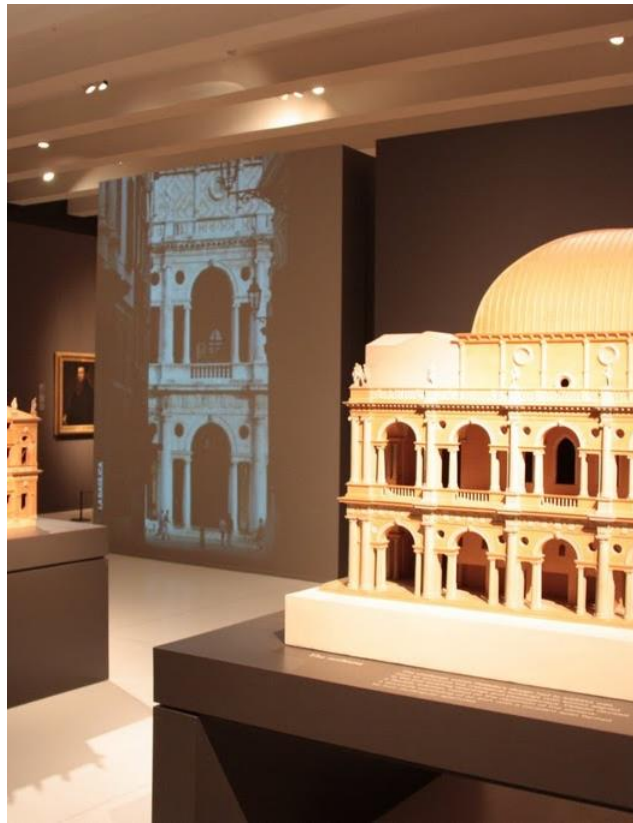
3- It then moves on to the urban context: with Palladio's projects for Vicenza...

Vicenza became part of the Venetian Republic in 1404. It was a small but rich and dynamic city in terms of production and trade: the aristocratic families produced and traded all over Europe, especially silk. Thus they decided to transform the city with new public and private buildings inspired by the great ancient Roman architecture.

The old city hall was redesigned by Palladio as a basilica of ancient Rome. The Venetian governors responded with an equally monumental and stylistically innovative Captain's Loggia.

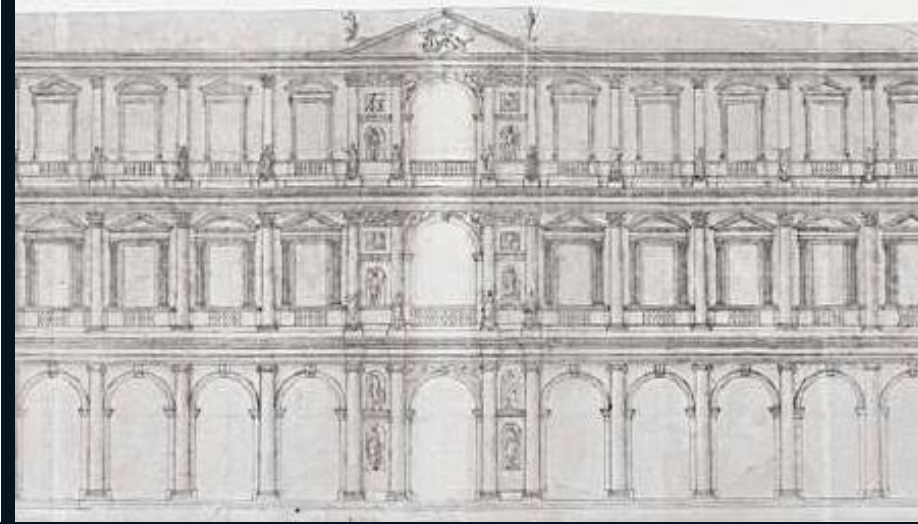
Piazza dei Signori became the square of the 'new Romans' of Vicenza

A 'teleportation capsule' dedicated to the Olympic Theatre also shows some local nobles portrayed as ancient Romans: the protagonists of the businesses and trades that made the city rich in the 16th century.



4- Palladio and Venice

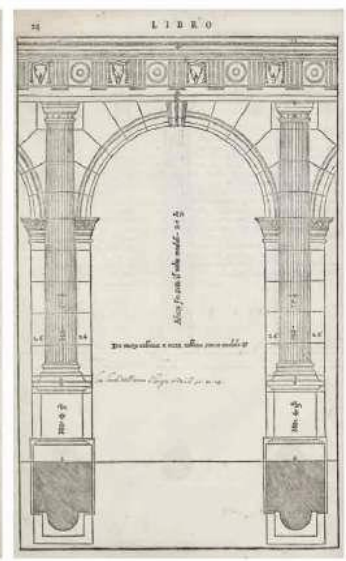
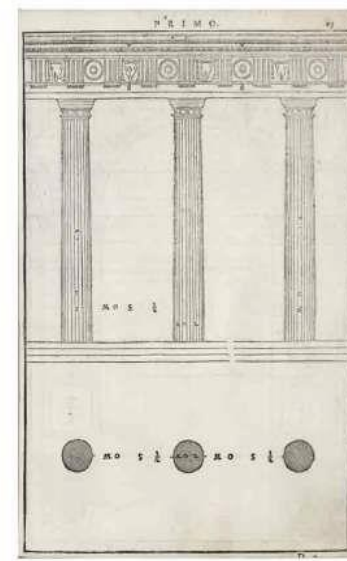
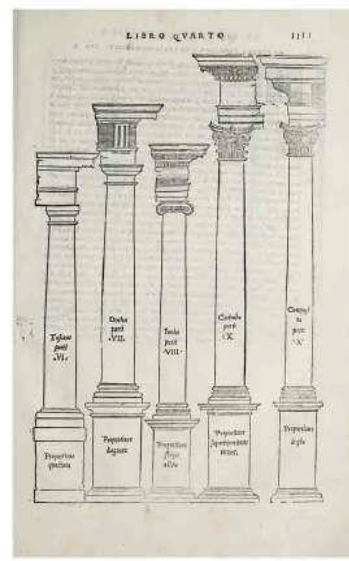
Supported by his patrons, Palladio's work in Venice was represented by the design of two church façades – San Pietro di Castello and San Francesco della Vigna – and reached its climax with the two grandiose projects for the church and convent of San Giorgio Maggiore and the Church of the Redentore.



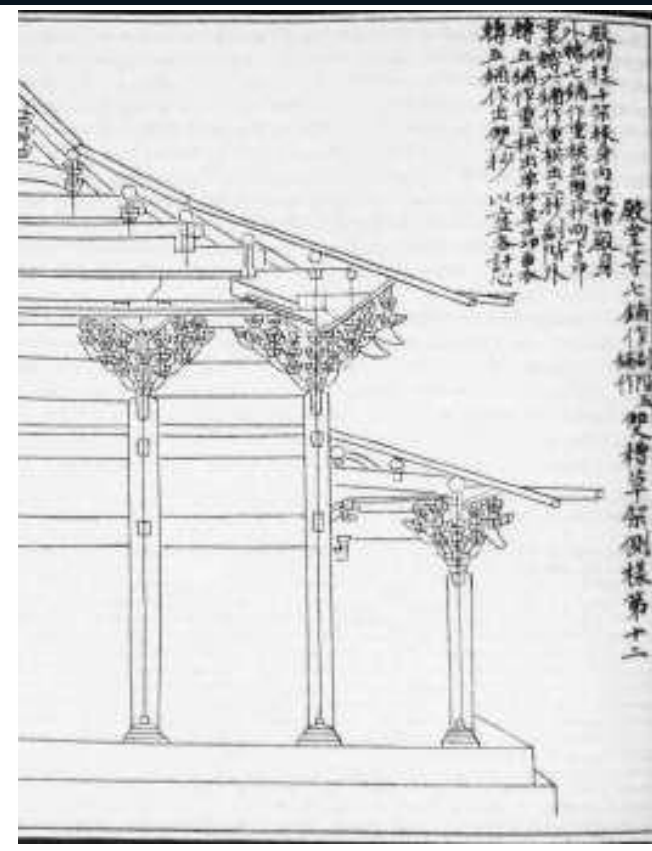
Palladio designed three utopias for Venice: the Rialto Bridge, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, the Doge's Palace



5- Finally, this section analyses Palladio's architectural system and focuses on its legacy up to the 20th century.



Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola (1507-1573) and Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) were the first architects to recognise the power of printed paper as a vehicle for their vision of the architectural orders. The exhibition presents their different conceptions of the orders, a truly Renaissance invention. This section also explores the possible parallel between Li Jie's treatise on wooden construction techniques, 'Yingzao Fashi' (XI-XII sec. d.C.), and that of Vitruvius (I sec. a.C.).



ANDREA PALLADIO 1508–1580.

THE ARCHITECT WHO RESHAPED THE CANON OF WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

The scientific committee of the exhibition:

Donata Battilotti, Former Full Professor of History of Architecture, University of Udine

Guido Beltramini, Director of the CISA Andrea Palladio, Vicenza

Marta Boscolo Marchi, Director of the Oriental Art Museum in Venice

Howard Burns, Professor Emeritus of History of Architecture, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa

Francesca Dal Lago, Scholar of Chinese Art History

Edoardo Demo, Full Professor of Economic History, University of Verona

Daniele Ferrara, Director of the National Museums of the Veneto Region – Ministry of Culture

Antonio Foscari, Former Associate Professor of History of Architecture, Iuav University of Venice

Marco Gaiani, Full Professor of Digital Humanities, University of Bologna

Gianmario Guidarelli, Associate Professor of History of Architecture, University of Padua

Deborah Howard, Former Full Professor of Architectural History, University of Cambridge

Fernando Marías, Professor Emeritus of History of Art, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

Paola Marini, President of the International Private Committees for the Safeguarding of Venice

Walter Panciera, Full Professor of Modern History, University of Padua

Susanna Pasquali, Associate Professor of History of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome

Damiana Lucia Paternò, Official, Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape

Mario Piana, Former Full Professor of History of Architecture, Iuav University of Venice

Andrea Rosignoli, Superintendent of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape

Vitale Zanchettin, Superintendent of Architectural Heritage, Vatican Museums

CHINESE VOICES ON PALLADIO

Concept

In «Chinese voices on Palladio», the contemporary section of the 2025 Palladian exhibition project, a group of internationally renowned Chinese architects question and respond to the work and theoretical positions of Andrea Palladio. By encouraging personal reflections within an intense dialogue with Palladio's original vision, the exhibition aims at defining the boundaries of a cross-cultural dialogue between past and present, East and West.

The exhibition plans to address the links between Palladio and Chinese architectural culture, by focusing on the interactions, connecting the Renaissance architect's message to the contemporary practice and history of architecture in China.

This itinerary will bring the visitors to the heart of XXI-century architectural culture. The voices of the interviewed architects, along with significant visual artifacts (drawings, sketchbooks, models), will encourage visitors to reflect on Palladio's work and its value as a contemporary paradigm.

The spatial concept

The contemporary section of the first-ever Palladio exhibition in China offers a dynamic and immersive space where the voices of contemporary Chinese architects take center stage. Architecture becomes a discourse, bridging Western and Eastern architectural cultures through a visual and auditory experience focusing on Palladio's enduring legacy. Large, suspended umbrellas serve as metaphorical canopies of thought, under which the insights and inspirations of selected architects unfold. Video interviews and spoken reflections resonate through the space, forming a layered conversation on Palladio's architectural language and possible connections with Chinese architectural traditions.

Each architect's perspective materializes into a physical installation — models, drawings, plans, or conceptual structures. These individual installations, standing as distinct yet interconnected voices beneath the umbrellas, create an immersive and circular itinerary.

Visitors are invited to navigate this landscape of ideas, engaging with a dialogue that extends beyond the exhibition, fostering new debates and envisioning the future of Palladian principles in contemporary China. This space aims to activate a conversation in which Eastern and Western history and modernity converge, shaping a living and evolving architectural discourse.

The voices and installations of the architects will also be placed in dialogue with the photography of Lois Conner, whose images of Palladio's architecture are the outcome of a project specifically developed for this exhibition.

CONTEMPORARY CHINESE ARCHITECTS INVOLVED

ZHANG Li, Architect, Dean of the Tsinghua University
School of Architecture

WANG Hui (Urbanus)

<http://www.urbanus.com.cn/profile/?lang=en>

DONG Gong (Vector Architects)

<https://www.vectorarchitects.com/en/office>

ZHU Pei (Studio Zhu Pei)

<http://www.studiozhupei.com/en/>

HE Jianxiang, JIANG Jing (O-Office)

<http://www.o-officearch.com/>

XU Haohao, FENG Jiang (Urban Elephant)

<https://labued.com/gy>

NERI Lyndon, Rossana HU (Neri and Hu)

<https://www.neriandhu.com/en>

Yung Ho Chang (Atelier Feichang Jianzhu)

<https://www.fcjz.com/us>

HUA Li (TAO)

<https://www.t-a-o.cn/office>

LI Xinggang (China Architecture Design & Research Group)

<https://cadg.com.cn/en/about/>

LI Han (Drawing Architecture Studio)

<http://www.d-a-s.cn/en/das.php>

CHINESE VOICES ON PALLADIO

The curatorial team

Michele Bonino, Director and full professor, Politecnico di Torino

Pierre-Alain Croset, Full professor Politecnico di Milano

Qing Feng , Full professor, Tsinghua University

Li Luke, Associate Professor, Tsinghua University

Edoardo Piccoli, Associate professor, Politecnico di Torino

Giorgia Cestaro, Researcher, Politecnico di Torino

LOIS CONNER

Lois Conner is known for her large-scale panoramic photographs relating to a global landscape. Her pictures are characterized by their narrative sweep, a sense of place, and their implicit attention to history and culture. Many of her projects have an arc of decades, including her work in New York, in China, on the Navajo Reservation, and in the American West.

Carrying her 7"x17", 8"x10" and "11x14" cameras by bicycle, boat, cart, or thrown over her shoulder, she navigates the land slowly. Her photographs allow the viewer to approach the landscape with a more cumulative perspective. Although human presence is not explicit in all of her photographs, it is subtly implied in a way that allows the world to be believably rescaled.

Conner has been awarded numerous grants, including a Pollock-Krasner Award for Artists (2020), a grant from Robert Rosenkranz (2019); Carol and Sol Lewitt's Artist-in-Residence Fellowship in Praiano, Italy (2010, 2011); Anonymous Was a Woman fellowship (2007), as well as grants from the Guggenheim Foundation (1984), New York State Council on the Arts (1983) and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1979).

Conner has been teaching photography for over thirty-five years, including more than a decade at the Yale University School of Art. Other venues include Princeton University, Sarah Lawrence College, Cooper Union, Bard College, Stanford University, the New School, Fordham University, and the School of Visual Arts. She taught at The China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, China in the winter of 2003, and the fall of 2019, and is currently teaching at The Penumbra Foundation in New York City, and in the fall, at Queens College.



Lois Conner spent some months in Vicenza and Venice, capturing the most iconic Palladian architectures through her lens and privileged perspective. She will create platinum prints of these landmarks, adding an unpublished, site-specific photographic project to enrich the exhibition.

Her work will become also an editorial project by Treccani.



"My subject is landscape as culture. What I am trying to reveal through photography in a deliberate, yet subtle way is a sense of history. I want my photographs to describe the relationship to both the tangible and the imagined, to fact and fiction."











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- Invitations to exclusive side events for your guests;
- One or more limited edition prints of the exhibited works, numbered and personally signed by renowned American photographer Lois Conner;
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