

PRESS RELEASE

“THE FIFTH SIREN”: A PODCAST IN ENGLISH DEDICATED TO VENICE AND CLIMATE CHANGE, CONCEIVED BY THE CREATORS OF FILL - FESTIVAL OF ITALIAN LITERATURE IN LONDON

The five-episode series tells Venice through the emergencies that the city is experiencing

London, October 18th 2021 – In response to the pandemic, the creators of FILL (Festival of Italian Literature in London) have started their first English audio production. Produced and written by Marco Magini, Paolo Nelli, Giorgia Tolfo and Maddalena Vatti, with the support of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Londra and Banor Capital, the podcast The Fifth Siren comes out with its first episode on Monday 4th October 2021 (<https://www.thefifthsiren.com/>). Next episodes will follow weekly throughout the month.

When the high tide reaches Venice, there are four levels of siren that sound to warn the population of the threat level posed by the rising water. Yet there was no sound after the last siren, and nothing to prepare Venetians for the level of destruction that the storm would bring to town in November 2019.

From this void, The Fifth Siren emerged, to alert and explore what lies beyond the loudest alarm, and as an attempt to understand the new dangers we have to consider while facing an unknown future.

Venice, a place revered and mystified for its beauty and heritage, a timeless dream destination for tourists the world over, is the nexus where current global crises come together — environmental, cultural, social, and technological — giving us a vantage point from which to observe them.

In each episode, guests, including leading scientists, activists, scholars and writers explore the past, present and future of the city. The Fifth Siren is an ongoing conversation with the city, which, long ago, was a myth, and today is a cautionary tale to be told. The time is now. The message is here.

Guests includes:

Salvatore Settis, Andrea Segre, Guy Standing, Adam Lowe, Marigusta Lazzari, Markus Reyman, Karl Appuhn, Filippo de Vivo, Sophia Psarra, Rachel Armstrong, Alvisè Papa, Giovanni Pellegrini, Giacomo Salerno, Fantina Madricardo, Georg Umgiesser, Tommaso Cacciari, Solène Rivoal, Franco Schenkel... and many more.

Episode synopses:

Episode 1: Water. On November 13, 2019, an exceptionally high tide hits Venice, creating damage the city has not seen before. People’s homes and shops are destroyed, the power cuts off and the city plunges into a dark, desperate night, trying to rescue what it can. Could this have been foreseen?

Episode 2: Veniceland. Venice is a city full of possibilities, but it wears many disguises, disclosing only what it wants. For this very reason people are lured by its charm. Can its historical and cultural complexity survive the fate of becoming a playground for tourists?

Episode 3: Balance. Throughout its environmental history, Venice has always struggled to find a balance between the city's economic needs and the lagoon's delicate ecosystem. Is it even possible?

Episode 4: Memory. Venice is a living archive of historical memories, collected through centuries of trade and splendor. Not only records of Venetian history, but stories from the whole world can be found in the city's archives. Yet the greatest challenge the city is facing today is depopulation. Are the archives enough to rescue a disappearing city? And what memories can an empty city create?

Episode 5: Evolution. Under threat, and the only route for survival is change. In what way should the city transform? Is technology the contemporary religion that can ensure the future life of the city?

About FILL Productions: Marco Magini, Paolo Nelli, Giorgia Tolfo and Maddalena Vatti met in 2017, when they started working together on FILL: the Festival of Italian Literature in London. That year they sealed a successful partnership, while starting one of the most respected diaspora festivals of the last decade. With three sold-out editions under their belt — and 72 events — the festival became a real institution, for Italian and British festival-goers alike. In 2020 they decided they were ready for more: getting involved with new forms of storytelling and original productions. With a shared interest in the environmental crisis, cultural transformations, and cities, it felt natural to look at Venice. D.H Lawrence said, “You can’t say anything new about Venice,” yet, for the first time, it felt possible. And this is how The Fifth Siren was born. For more, visit <https://www.thefifthsiren.com/>.

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