



**LA VENEZIA
CHE NON SI VEDE**
Unveiling the Unseen



Catalonia in Venice
www.blind.wiki/venezia

 Institut
Ramon Llull
Llingua i cultura catalana

 Generalitat de Catalunya
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Catalonia in Venice 2017_La Venezia che non si vede

Collateral Event of the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

A project by Antoni Abad

Curated by Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés

Organized and produced by the Institut Ramon Llull

Cantieri Navali. Fondamenta Quintavalle, Castello 40. Venice

May 13th - November 26th, 2017 / Inauguration: May 11th, 5:30 p.m

The Institut Ramon Llull is participating in the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia with the project **La Venezia che non si vede / Unveiling the Unseen** by Antoni Abad, curated by Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés. The project is being presented at the Cantieri Navali de Castello from May 13th to November 26th. It is a sensorial interpretation of the city of canals, created in collaboration with people who are blind or visually impaired, a collective who uses their senses in a different and unique way. Through the shared exchange of both the experiences and difficulties of their daily lives, less obvious urban forms are revealed, allowing for a new map of public space to be drawn up that is usable by everyone.

Abad works with digital communities where mobile phones take on an important role as means of social communication. He is creating a locative sound map of Venice using the **BlindWiki app** - an app created for people who are blind, but usable by anyone with a smartphone. Impressions of any part of the city can be registered and published using the app and can be listened to at any moment. A true citizens' network that improves the services to the community, and that is becoming an **international network** to share experiences, stories and thoughts about all that is not visible.

The Catalan project for the Biennale Arte 2017 is a proposal to civil society: that research on collective intelligence seeks universal **accessibility** and suggest alternative ways to occupy public spaces, both physical and digital.

The **La Venezia che non si vede / Unveiling the Unseen** project is divided into four parts:

1. Creation of the new **BlindWiki app** dedicated to the event;
2. Setting up the exhibition space at Cantieri Navali - conceptualized by the Catalan graphic design studio, **Avanti-Avanti Studio** -who specializes in *Design for All-*, with *Universal Design* criteria for all the visitors - which will function as a reception and information area.
3. The **boat tour** that leaves from the dock located in front of the exhibition space. Guided by people who are blind, passengers explore the city aboard a rowboat *sampierota*, the traditional Venetian *voga* boat. (The tour lasts 20 minutes and is free for 4 passengers at a time.)
4. The **international seminar, “Cartographies of the Unseen”**, which will take place on **May 15th and 16th** and is being coordinated by Mario Ciaramitaro, researcher at the luav, and Roc Parés, co-curator of the Catalan project and a researcher at the Pompeu Fabra University, along with the participation of the artists, academics, activists, accessibility professionals and representatives from associations of people who are blind.



Created under the direction of Antoni Abad and developed by Matteo Sisti and AKX, the **BlindWiki** app is adapted to the needs of people who are blind and can be installed for free on any Android or iOS phone. The geolocated recordings started in February, and continued during the weekly expeditions coordinated by the artist in collaboration with **Valeria Bottalico**, an expert on art and accessibility. The primary participants of these mappings were **people who are blind alongside volunteers from community associations and students from the luav and Ca'Foscari University** in Venice.

In order to shed more light on the BlindWiki project, Abad also directed a documentary produced by Daniele Zoco, with subtitles in Italian and English as well as an audio description in Italian and English, which will be projected in the exhibition space.

The project also includes the publication of a **tactile comic with haut-relief** designs by **Max** (who is the cartoonist Francesc Capdevila, winner of the 2007 National Award for Comic in Spain). The drawings were created in collaboration with the participants who are blind, under the direction of Mery Cuesta, co-curator.

This will be the fifth time that the **Institut Ramon Llull** promotes Catalonia's presence in the Venice Art Biennale. The Institut Ramon Llull is a consortium formed by the governments of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands and Barcelona City Council to promote the Catalan language and culture internationally. The project by Antoni Abad, Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés was selected during a public competition by an independent jury, presided over by Xavier Antich.

The project is indebted to the collaboration of its **sponsors**: Colección Beep de Arte Electrónico – NewArtFoundation, el Dipartimento di Culture del Progetto de la Università luav di Venezia, Elisava – Escola Universitària de Disseny i Enginyeria de Barcelona, Fabulor and is accessible for people with intellectual disability thanks to Museo per Tutti, a project by Associazione l'Abilità Onlus Fondazione De Agostini. The complete list of participants and collaborators is available at: www.blind.wiki/venezia.

BIOGRAPHIES



Antoni Abad



Mery Cuesta



Roc Parés

MR. ANTONI ABAD - Artist Exhibitor

Born in Lleida, Spain in 1956. Lives and works in Barcelona, Spain.

www.blind.wiki

From 2004 to 2013 Abad devoted his activity to undertaking the www.megafone.net online communication projects based on publications from smartphones done by various at-risk groups in Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, United States, and the Algerian Sahara.

In October 2014 he began developing the BlindWiki project in the Spanish Academy in Rome, a prototype of an online citizen network conceived for people who are blind or visually impaired. Participants use smartphones to make geo-located audio recordings of their everyday experiences in the city. Through the BlindWiki application, the previously posted recordings are always accessible from mobile phones on the streets, reflecting the urban landscape as experienced by people with vision loss. The project promotes the collaborative creation of a sensorial public map to be extended to other cities. Various editions of the BlindWiki project were implemented in Sydney 2015, Berlin 2016 and Wrocław, Poland 2016.

His work has been presented at the following art biennials: Venice, Italy 1999; Lima, Peru 1999; Seville, Spain 2004 and 2008; Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil 2009; Curitiba, Brazil 2013 and Berlin, Germany 2016.

Among other venues, his work have been presented in Europe and the Americas, including the following: Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 1997 and 2008; Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, 1999; ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, 1999 and 2008; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2001; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2002; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2003 and 2014; PS1, New York, 2003; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, 2005; La Casa Encendida, Madrid, 2005; Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, 2006; Centro Cultural Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2007; Centre d'Art Contemporaine, Geneva, 2008; Matadero, Madrid 2014; Laboratorio de Arte Alameda, México DF 2014; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil 2015.

In 2006 he was awarded the Visual Arts National Prize of Catalonia and the Golden Nica Digital Communities of the Prix Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria.



MRS. MERY CUESTA - Curator

Born in Bilbao, Spain in 1975. Lives and works in Barcelona.

www.merycuesta.com

Cuesta is an art critic, exhibition curator, teacher and illustrator. Since 2002 she can regularly be found in the La Vanguardia newspaper writing an art criticism column. As a curator, Cuesta's projects address questions relative to the analysis of consumer culture, outsider art, pop culture and the critical dissection of the working mechanisms of contemporary art. The following exhibitions are worth mentioning: '*Quinquis de los 80: Cine, prensa y calle*' (CCCB, La Casa Encendida, Centro de Historia de Zaragoza i Alhóndiga de Bilbao), '*La mano izquierda de Cervantes*' (Instituto Cervantes – Karsi Sanat, Istanbul), and '*Bálsamo y fuga*' about artistic creation in prisons (Caixaforum). She is the Director of the Masters program in Illustration and Comics at Elisava – the Barcelona School of Engineering and Design. Mery Cuesta's work as a theorist, teacher and author in the world of illustration and comics centers around the fusion of comic language and cultural criticism. As an illustrator she has published various essay-style and culturally critical series and comic strips for magazines. Her illustrations have been exhibited in various galleries and she has published three albums.

MR. ROC PARÉS BURGUÈS - Curator

Born in Mexico City, Mexico in 1968. Lives and works in Barcelona, Catalonia.

<http://roc-pares.net>

An interactive communication artist and researcher, Pares' work is characterized by the poetic and critical experimentation with digital technologies, and has been presented and exhibited in festivals, art centers and museums in Europe, the Americas and Asia. Parés holds a PhD in Audiovisual Communication and a degree in Fine Arts. He is a Professor and Researcher in the Communication Department at the Pompeu Fabra University, and his research projects have been published by the British Computer Society, Academic Press, FECYT, Macba, and MIT Press, amongst others. He has launched pioneer platforms in electronic art, such as, for example, "Galeria Virtual" (1993-2000), dedicated to the development of virtual reality as an art form; 'Macba En Línea' (1995-1997), a pioneer platform for *net.art*; and M.A.L. (2011-2013), an art lab with smartphones. From 2010 to 2015 he was co-director of the Master's in Digital Arts, UPF. His commitment to an inter-disciplinary culture (which he defends for its anti-dogmatic potential and for its civilizing power), has led him to explore the intersections between art, science, technology and society.

INSTITUT RAMON LLULL

Catalonia in Venice 2017_ *La Venezia che non si vede* marks the Institut Ramon Llull's fifth appearance in the Collateral Events Of La Biennale Arte, coming soon after its third appearance at the International Architecture Exhibition.

The project by Antoni Abad, Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés was selected during a public competition by an independent jury, presided over by Xavier Antich.

The Institut Ramon Llull is a public consortium established in 2002 with the aim of promoting Catalan language and culture abroad. To this end, it aims to give international visibility to writers and artists, encourages artistic and cultural exchanges, and supports Catalan language and literature studies at universities. The Institut Ramon Llull is a consortium formed by the governments of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands and the Barcelona City Council.



BLINDWIKI APP www.blind.wiki

Created under the direction of Antoni Abad and developed by Matteo Sisti Sette and AKX, the BlindWiki mobile app is designed for the needs of blind people. It can be installed for free on any Android or iOS phone and allows the user to geo-localize any kind of impression – critical, emotional or orientational – through an audio file that is automatically shared with other users of the app.

Beginning in February 2017, with the help of students from the IUAV and Ca' Foscari universities and volunteers from local associations, a community of blind and visually-impaired people in Venice mapped the city using smartphones on a series of weekly tours coordinated by the artist together with art and accessibility expert Valeria Bottalico.

All of the geolocated contents produced were sent by the mobile app to the blind.wiki server, where they make up a map and a tag cloud that are accessible online and can be used at the exhibition on interactive tablets attached to a table and available to the public.

All these initiatives are designed to collectively build up a map of a Venice that is invisible both for the public of the Biennale and for most citizens, and that is being drawn up largely thanks to the contributions of Venice's blind and visually-impaired people and their carers. Even visitors to the Biennale and residents can help create this map with their audio contributions using the BlindWiki mobile app.

With BlindWiki, Antoni Abad is proposing a visionary perspective of data processing, replacing the usual visual input with a sensory one. The artist has pioneered working with a network and a context that allow him to generate, geo-locate and share sensory data. Abad's work makes the Catalan exhibition in Venice into an open centre, accessible to all. It becomes a place for meeting, sharing and experimenting with people of different social, functional and sensory conditions.

Abad works with digital communities for whom mobile phones play a key role as a means of social communication and to draw up a sound-based, geolocated map of Venice via the BlindWiki mobile app. In October 2014, at the Academy of Spain in Rome, he started developing the BlindWiki project, which was the prototype of an online network of citizens designed for blind or visually-impaired people. Participants use their smartphones to make geo-localized audio recordings and thus leave a trace of their experiences in the city. Through the BlindWiki mobile app, all of the recordings that have been made are fully accessible from phones and reflect the urban landscape as experienced by blind people. The project promotes the collaborative creation of a public sensory map that can also be extended to other cities. Several versions of BlindWiki have already been tried out – in Rome and Sydney in 2015 and in Berlin and the Polish city of Wrocław, in 2016.

Click here





BOAT TOUR

The *Catalonia in Venice 2017_La Venezia che non si vede* project takes place both inside and outside the exhibition space, floating along the canals surrounding the base camp at the Cantieri Navali. This is the focal point of an inclusive sensory journey: the water tour is led by blind people, and leaves from the pier outside the exhibition to explore the city aboard a so-called *sampierota*, a traditional Venetian rowing boat. A sensory experience to help you get to know the city in its most real and yet unknown dimension.

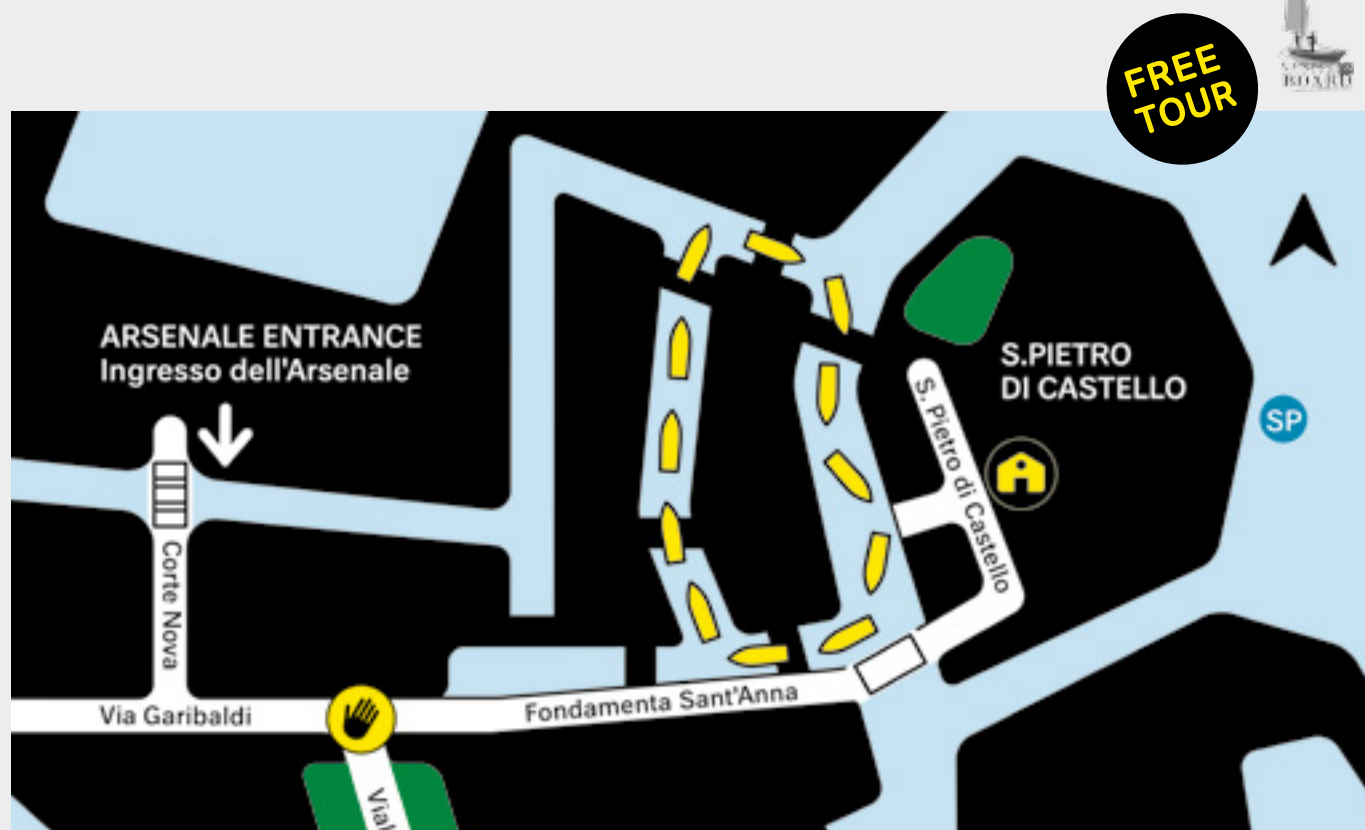
The tour is free for 4 passengers at a time; the duration of the tour is approximately 20 minutes.

For the project's artistic and conceptual features, the artist Antoni Abad chose the Venice On Board Association to create the boat tour: a sports club based in Cannaregio, it aims to promote and popularize the use of traditional boats and encourages people to learn rowing as a Venetian cultural heritage <http://www.veniceonboard.it/>

On the inauguration day, the boat tours will be taking place all day, while over the six months of opening the tours **will take place on Friday and Saturday afternoons (from 3 to 6 pm). During May and June there will also be tours in the morning (from 11 am to 2 pm). In July, August, September and October, on Saturdays from 6 to 8 pm.**

For further information please visit www.blind.wiki/venezia or call the mobile phone +39 342 5005393.

The tour schedule may change due to the weather or for organizational reasons.



CARTOGRAPHIES OF THE UNSEEN

International seminar
15 & 16 May 2017

IUAV University
Palazzo Badoer, Aula Tafuri
San Polo 2468
Venice

The international seminar *Cartographies of the Unseen*, produced by the Institut Ramon Llull with the support of Venice's Iuav University and Barcelona's Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), is to be held as part of *Catalonia in Venice 2017_La Venezia che non si vede*, a Collateral Event at the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. It will be the perfect opportunity to present the work carried out by the community of citizens, students and researchers which took part in the Venetian edition of the BlindWiki project.

The project takes its origins from the development of a digital platform onto which blind and visually-impaired citizens record geo-localized voice notes. By participating in the project, each person had the chance to explore Venice in an effort to translate the spaces, the architecture and the atmosphere into a collective narrative.

Cartographies of the Unseen seeks to be an opportunity to reflect on the dynamics activated by the project and on the city itself, in order to gain a more concrete understanding of what it is like for people with visual impairments.

Participants:

Antoni Abad, artist

Alessandro Trovato, Unione Italiana dei Ciechi e degli Ipovedenti

Valeria Bottalico, *Doppio senso: Percorsi tattili* at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection

Alex Dobaño, Avanti Avanti Studio

Frederic Font Corbera, Freesound, Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Valeria Tatano, Iuav Project Culture Department

Marleen Stikker, Waag Society

The international seminar *Cartographies of the Unseen* is produced by the Institut Ramon Llull with the collaboration Venice's Iuav University Barcelona's Pompeu Fabra University (UPF).



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DIGIDOC
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i Comunicació Interactiva

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Università Iuav
di Venezia



PUBLICATION

The publication accompanying Catalonia in Venice 2017_ *La Venezia che non si vede / Unveiling the Unseen* is a 60-page volume with **theoretical texts** together with a **tactile cartoon strip** by the famous Catalan artist **Max**.

The publication was designed using Universal Design criteria so that anyone can access the content, whether they are blind, visually impaired, or sighted. This was made possible thanks to a combination of various accessibility resources such as Braille, large high-contrast fonts and downloading a PDF file accessible via QR code or from www.blind.wiki/venezia.

The concept of Max's tactile cartoon script entitled **A boat Tour / Tour in barca** has the same universal vocation. This pioneering experience in the field of cartoon strips suggests the translation of its expressive conventions (cartoons, comics, narrative resources) into a language of touch that can be understood by everyone across the visual spectrum. Max took his inspiration for the story from a boat tour through a narrow canal close to Catalonia in Venice 2017_ *La Venezia che non si vede / Unveiling the Unseen* led by the young blind person **Giulia Oblach**. With his comic strips, Max transmits the sensations he experienced on this trip through graphics and tactility.

The publication – which has the same title as the project – was created for two printing systems: ink for the texts and resin relief for the drawings and braille. It was designed by the Catalan studio **Avanti-Avanti Studio** and printed by **Vanguard Grafic S.A.** The publication will be made available to the public at the Venice Biennale bookshops.

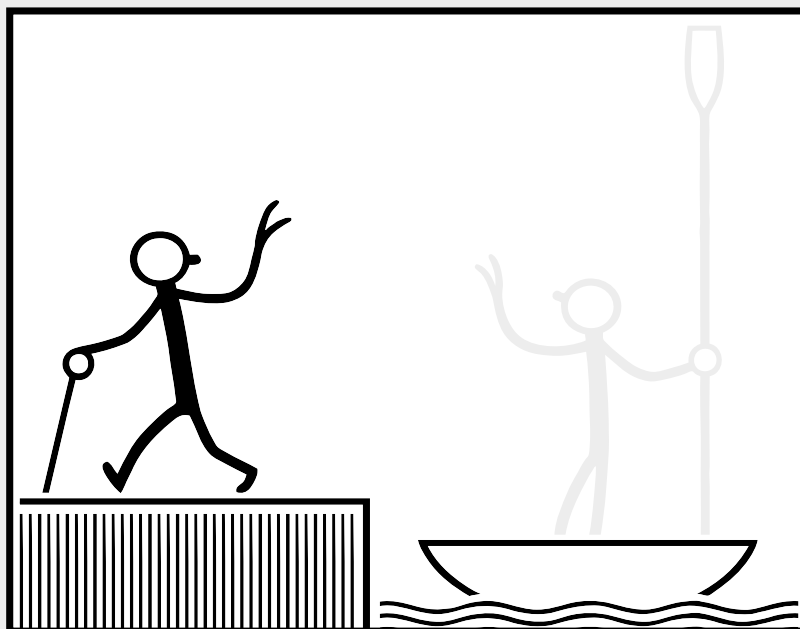
MAX - Francesc Capdevila

Barcelona, 1956.

<http://max-elblog.blogspot.com.es/>

www.maxbardin.com

Author and illustrator of comic books, with thirty comic books published since he began work on the magazine *El Víbora* in the 1980s. His awards include the Catalan Comic Book Prize in 2007 and the Grand Prize of the Comic Salon in 2000. His latest book is *El tríptico de los encantados*, a comic book dedicated to the work of Hieronymus Bosch and commissioned by the Prado Museum in Madrid. He currently publishes a weekly strip in *Babelia*, the cultural supplement to *El País* daily newspaper. He has lived on the island of Mallorca since 1984.



A project by: Antoni Abad

Special thanks to all participants: Anna Ammirati, Inessa Baldin, Flavia Banchi, Mattia Bordolotto, Simone Boso, Romane Bourgeois, Elena Brescacin, Valentina Caccamo, Miriam Calabrese, Luigi Carabuzza, Luca Casella, Cristina Faraon, Laura Ficotto, Francesco Fratta, Irene Fratta, Martina Fusaro, Piergiorgio Longagnani, Andrea de Lorenzo, Martina Manzari, Chiara Mazza, Guglielmo Messina, Giulia Oblach, Antonio Pozzana, Tobia della Puppa, Stefano Rossetti, Anna Maria Salariace, Alberto Scatto Vio, Emanuele Serpe, Felice Tagliaferri, Marta Toti, Alessandro Trovato, Rossana Zambon.

BlindWiki is a collaborative project that grows thanks to the contributions of volunteers. The updated list can be found at www.blind.wiki/venezia

Curated by: Mery Cuesta and Roc Parés

Organization and production: Institut Ramon Llull

Cartoonist: Max

Mapping expedition's coordination: Valeria Bottalico

Research and Seminar coordination: Mario Ciaramitaro

Design: Avanti-Avanti Studio

Video: Danto Productions

Exhibition set up: Art %

BlindWiki web and app development: Matteo Sisti Sette e AKX Development

Thanks to: Ernest Ameller, Tamara Andruszkiewicz, Francesc Aragall, Associació Catalana per a la Integració del Cec, Associació Discapacitat Visual Catalunya, Alberto Balletti, Alessandra Ballotta, Giulia Bencini, Llorenç Blasi, Luciano Domenicali, Bernat Franquesa, Fundació Ulls del Món, Paolo Garbolino, Dimas García, Miquel Giner, Istituto dei Ciechi di Milano, Sandra Martin, Albert Morales, ONCE Barcelona, Shaun Pilgrem, Paolo Rosso, Sala Blu Stazione Santa Lucia, Sala Consiliare di San Lorenzo, Scoleta dei Calegheri, Angela Vettese e Giuseppe Vigolo.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Opening: 11 May at 5:30 pm.

Open from 13 May to 26 November, from 10 am to 6 pm.

Closed on Mondays (except 15 May, 30 October, 14 November and 20 November)

Address

BASE CAMP Cantieri Navali (Naval Shipyards), Fondamenta Quintavalle, Castello 40 (Venice)
VAPORETTO 1 & 2 – Giardini stop

Guided free boat tours

Information and schedule - www.blind.wiki/venezia / +39 342 5005393

www.blind.wiki/venezia

Facebook: @cataloniainvenice

Instagram: @cataloniainvenice

Twitter: @irllull - @blind_wiki

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/blindwiki/albums/>

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