

ARTEART PRIZE LAGUNA 13.14

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FUTURE CENTRE

SPECIAL PRIZE

INNOVATIVE INTERACTIVE TOUR ON TELECOM ITALIA'S FUTURE CENTRE

The Telecom Italia Future Centre, specialized in New Media and Communication Technologies, is located in Venice in the ancient convent of San Salvador, few steps away from Rialto Bridge. The spaces are often used for scientific and technological meetings, shows and temporary exhibition, visible for free all year long.

The centre was founded with the aim to identify new business opportunities for telecommunications, as a continuation with the Economics Study Centre of San Salvador.

HISTORY OF THE COMPLEX OF SAN SALVADOR

The Monastery of San Salvador stands in the heart of Venice at Rialto, one of the oldest centres of Venetian island life, where the first inhabitants, having fled from the mainland, centered their commercial activities. Rialto was therefore the most important centre of the new community, since the eleventh century. Rialto, with the famous bridge and market became the main trading centre of the city, while San Marco was the political and institutional centre.

The history of the monastery of San Salvador is closely tied to the Church and to the field homonymous, which together constitute the complex of San Salvador. Its origins date up to 633, but the construction begun only in 1167.

The chronicles tell that Pope Alexander III, having fled to Venice pursued by Federico Barbarossa, found refuge in the lobby of the church of San Salvador, which was consecrated by him as well, giving also instructions for a monastery to be built beside it. Over the centuries, the complex underwent many changes and restorations: in the early years of the sixteenth century it lost its ancient Byzantine gothic look to hire his new Renaissance style. The works to the church are finished within the 1534, while the monastery ones are dated between 1540 and 1564; the facade was ended in 1663 by Giuseppe Sardi, also author of the facade of St. Theodore's Great School.

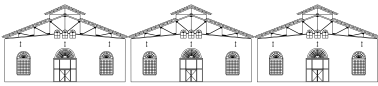
In 1810, Napoleon suppressed the convent: the ancient manuscripts and a large part of the sculptured furnishings, ended up missing and the spaces were used as a military dormitory. Extremely abandoned, the building was entrusted to TELVE Telephone Company, who restored it in 1925. Its central location in the city and the size of the Refectory made him particularly suited for making the first telephone exchange in Venice.

During the '60s Sip was founded it became the fourth telecommunication network in Europe and the sixth in the world and in 1984, the society, in collaboration with Fondazione Cini of Venice, promoted an international meeting entitled "Towards the new computer science civilisation".

From that moment on, the construction seat San Salvador was set up and it ended in 1988, marking a new historical transformation: the change from the technical electromechanic exchange to the new automatic switchboard AXE (digital electronic autoswitch).

In the mid-80s was begun an extensive restoration, aimed to bring to light and safeguard the artistic treasures of the building, and, at the same time, to make a center for advanced research in the field of Information and Communication Technologies. During the restoration, the artistic treasures of the complex were recovered and exposed. At first, the San Salvador Studies Centre was established and, after the switch from Sip to Telecom Italia, it became the Telecom Italia Future Centre.





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THE TELECOM ITALIA FUTURE CENTRE

Telecom Italia Future Centre is placed in the former convent of San Salvador in Venice, a very beautiful building equipped with modern infrastructures. It is an international "multicultural and multiskilled" community composed by people physically present in the spaces of the Future Centre (core) and by the group of the Future Centre Community, that works in a virtual way. The "core" has the aim to analyze and understand the role of telecommunications, the possible business models and the link between the actors, value chains, and social impact, starting from concrete theories of technological evolution.



THE SPACES

THE CLOISTERS

Just cross the threshold to discover the treasure that hides: those cloisters "both richly ornate of columns with carvings and other beauties" which Francesco Sansovino in the sixteenth century knew well and now welcome visitors in one of the most spacious and private areas, open to the public, in the heart of Venice.

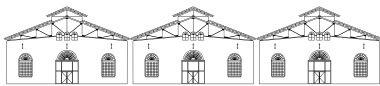
The cloisters that today we can admire are those built in the period 1540-1564, and were restored in 1985 by Telecom Italia. One of the cloisters is a nearly square, dominated by a central well, with a spacious high porch that runs on all four sides. The columns, robust and very high, resting on a low parapet, hold a Doric capital and elegant arches.

In the cloister overlook many windows in perfect symmetry, perfectly aligned, which create that evocative atmosphere of "Venetian square".

Walking along the porch we are unconsciously pushed over the second cloister, larger than the first one and with a rectangular shape and the porch on three sides. The fourth side, to the south, is replaced by the fronted exterior of the Refectory. This place has an excellent acoustics and is more refined under architectural and artistic point of view: the arcades create strong perspectives together with the entrance door the first cloister and the monumental staircase. The capitals are decorated with acanthus leaves and knucklebones, and on the facades, where each floor is highlighted by a strong stone cornice and decorative bands in monochrome. In particular, The decorative band on the second floor is the most interesting: in front of drapes conformed to festoon are alternated ancient vases, masks, sphinxes with sea creatures and birds.

The uniqueness the complex of St. Salvador is denoted also by the compenetration of spaces with the adjacent canonical, whose windows overlook the second cloister, dominated by the bell tower of the church of San Salvador.





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THE LOBBY CHAPTER

What we can admire today in the Lobby Chapter is, in particular, the monumental stone portal that leads to the Renaissance Refectory and the original door carved in walnut by the French carver Rizzardo from Roan.

The variety of the design of chandeliers and ornamental cartouches containing the holy figures carved on the doors qualifies this product as one of the first examples of Venetian mannerist decoration, which reflects patterns of the school of Fontainebleau. In the three central sections are represented allegorical scenes on important steps of human civilization progress: the fire discovery, the writing invention, and then an obscure allusion, probably, the invention of telephone. In this room, Telecom Italia has also installed a small museum that traces the evolution of telephone over the past 100 years.



THE REFECTORY

The Refectory (place exclusively "private"), a monumental space of 25.6 x 8.6 meters long and 7.35 meters high, which overlooks the second cloister. The construction should be dated to the period of the great Renaissance "factory", and its entrance is a rich stone portal, which becomes more rigorous in the interior, with the inscription "Silentium" and the fresco of the "Lavender feet".

The fresco of the "Supper at Emmaus" symbolically dominates the table of the prior. By his side was the lectern from where a young canon recited the psalms that would be echoed throughout the room.

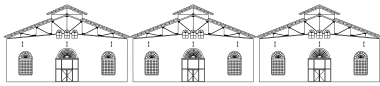
The Refectory was restored respecting classic configuration with opposing benches, with the central table where sat the abbot of the order. Each station is equipped with a monitor and a video conferencing system that allows everyone to interact with the central table of the speakers and do surveys just in time.

This represents an important example of how to combine the past with the future, the legacy of history with the potential of technology.



THE FRESCOED VAULT OF THE REFECTORY

The vault is characterized by a rich decoration made by stuccos and frescoes inspired to classical themes. The roof is an example of stucco coffered vault in Venetian style: it has 5 octagonal sections of big dimensions disposed along the central axis; sixteen long ovals placed in the middle of the main fields and two bigger ovals in the short sides of the room. In the sections illustrate episodes of the Old and the New Testament with eucharistics themes.



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THE "CAVANA"

The name comes from the Latin "cavea", cave, and it was the water access inside of Venetian palaces. A sort of closed watery shelter, where gondolas with "felze" could take refuge as in a confidential and secure harbor.

The gradual undergrounding of channels, reusing of spaces, combined with the high cost of maintenance, have gradually reduced the number of cavane of Venice.

The channel that overlooks the cavana of San Salvador is one of the most popular for tourist gondolas, into the required path between San Marco and Rialto. It may be considered a kind of window on the channel from where you can look at the gondolas sail and listen to voices and serenades of the gondoliers.

