



Pellestrina, Slender Island
Photographs by Anton Giulio Onofri

a project by Cristiana Collu and Olga Strada
with a text by Giovanni Montanaro

24 September - 6 October 2026
Fondazione Querini Stampalia

24 September - 4 November 2026
Galleria 200C Giudecca

Opening

24 September, 12 noon
Fondazione Querini Stampalia

24 September, 6 pm
Galleria 200C

Pellestrina takes centre stage in an exhibition presented by Fondazione Querini Stampalia and Galleria 200C Giudecca, running from 24 September to 4 November 2026.

A slender strip of land and sand that both joins and divides the lagoon landscape, Pellestrina becomes, through Anton Giulio Onofri's photographs, a way of bringing different places in the city into dialogue. Here, the island reveals itself through the light, colours and silence that shape its rhythm, returning the landscape to its most essential dimension.

Pellestrina, Slender Island, a project curated by Cristiana Collu and Olga Strada, unfolds across two venues: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, with five photographs made during the winter season, and Galleria 200C on Giudecca, where the story continues through images of summer. Bringing this visual journey together and extending it is a text by Giovanni Montanaro, written for the occasion, which accompanies the photographs and, through words, evokes the complexity and shifting nature of the island.

In winter, in the photographs at Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Pellestrina seems to narrow until it becomes a slender bone reaching out towards the sea. Arriving from the Lido, the journey is one of gradual subtraction: houses, businesses, roads and human presence slowly thin out; the noise fades and, towards Ca' Roman, the landscape seems to yield space back to vegetation, animals and the wind. It is an intimate, almost suspended island, where the sea becomes the point towards which everything tends and nature feels closer, more solitary. In summer, in the photographs shown at Galleria 200C on Giudecca, it emerges as a small world in motion: the suddenly brighter colours of the houses, the bell towers, boats at their moorings, voices, everyday gestures. The island opens to the slow murmur of the afternoons, the scents of the lagoon and the sense of community that winter had concealed. Yet here too, behind the brightness and colour, remains the trace of water and the destruction it can bring, the presence of the Murazzi sea walls that protect the island, and the awareness of a territory that is constantly exposed and must be safeguarded.

It is this passage from winter's sparseness to summer's vitality that reveals Pellestrina in its entirety: not two different islands, but two possibilities of the same place. Onofri moves through

both, allowing atmosphere - the very breath of the island - to transform the landscape without ever erasing its deeper nature.

Looking at Pellestrina reawakens a memory the photographer has explored before. The project enters into an ideal dialogue with *Roma città chiusa*, the work created during the Covid emergency, when Onofri travelled as far as the sea at Ostia to record the surreal suspension of a world suddenly emptied of people.

In Pellestrina, that experience returns in another form. No longer the exceptional state of the pandemic, but the possibility of rediscovering, within the ordinary life of an island, a time outside time: a slower, elemental, almost biological rhythm in which the gaze can finally come to rest and feel part of the landscape. This condition emerges most powerfully in winter. As our presence recedes, what usually remains at the margins comes back into view. Flora and fauna seem to reclaim the spaces we have colonised; for a moment, the landscape appears released from the measure we impose upon it.

This apparent harmony carries with it a more unsettling awareness: the fragility of the balance between humankind and nature, and our difficulty in recognising limits.

On this shifting edge of Venice, photography becomes a space for listening. Onofri records what happens when our presence recedes, allowing a reality we normally pass through without seeing to emerge.

The images are unhurried, yet they hold a deep tension. They speak of Pellestrina's vulnerability and, through it, of the archipelago as a whole.

The island becomes a lens through which to look at Venice: a city built upon a fragile balance between land and water, nature and human intervention, permanence and transformation. Onofri's photographs restore to this landscape a dimension that is at once intimate and collective. Each image seems to tune the gaze to a slower frequency, inviting us to be present, to recognise what changes and what endures.

Pellestrina; Giudecca, where part of this photographic exhibition is shown; and Castello, the sestiere in which the Foundation is based, thus become stages along a single itinerary - cultural geographies through which to explore new forms of presence, exchange and participation.

Anton Giulio Onofri was born in Rome in 1959. An author and director for Mediaset, Rai and Sky Classica, he has made films and photographic features for the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome, the Quadriennale di Roma, and other public and private cultural institutions. During the 2020 lockdown,

the Galleria Nazionale in Rome commissioned his photographic project *Roma città chiusa*. In 2021 he created *A casa di Hans*, a photographic exploration of composer Hans Werner Henze's legendary home in the Castelli Romani, before it was cleared following his death. In 2022, the Musei Civici di Pesaro presented *PU.Ra*, a photographic exhibition on the Rationalist architecture of Pesaro and Urbino. The architecture magazine *Panteon* commissioned him to create the entire photographic portfolio for its year-end issue devoted to the Roman locations of Pier Paolo Pasolini's books and films. Also in 2022 came *Non mi troverai*, a series of photographs taken in artist Gian Maria Tosatti's Naples home, exhibited at Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in Rome, Mudima in Milan (2023), and Spazio Bianco in Pesaro (2024-25). In 2024, he was among the 40 finalists of the Terna Photography Competition, and his work was exhibited at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome. For ArtsLife he regularly writes a column on cinema, *La Bussola di Ago*.

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Venues

Fondazione Querini Stampalia e Galleria 200C Giudecca

Dates

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24 September, 12 noon
Fondazione Querini Stampalia

24 September, 6 pm
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Opening hours

Fondazione Querini Stampalia
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am-6 pm; last admission 5.30 pm

Galleria 200C Giudecca
Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 11 am-6 pm

Admission to the exhibition is free at both venues

Addresses

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