



CITY, CIVILITY AND CAPITALISM

Circolo Società dell'Unione di Venezia
March 29th 2019





It is hard to imagine a city more suitable for a seminar on “City, Civility and Capitalism” than Venice. In 1960 the English writer Jan Morris wrote: “Venice stands, as she loves to tell you, on the frontiers of east and west, half-way between the setting and the rising sun. Goethe calls her ‘the market-place of the Morning and the Evening lands’. Certainly no city on earth gives a more immediate impression of symmetry and unity, or seems more patently born to greatness.”

This seminar will explore how architecture, urban design and trade historically and today have contributed to civility and political order. The first panel examines civility as a concept and its role in both political organisation and in economic relations between citizens in Renaissance Italy. The second panel will turn our focus to the cities of today and how we can create urban environments where the individual can flourish. Can townscape and good manners create happiness and what part does architecture play in creating civilised societies?

We will end the day by investigating the future of capitalism and trade and its effects on both the modern city and on our communities. What will happen to our trading system in the post-Brexit international order and what will the next step of the digital revolution mean for capitalism as we know it? Can civility prevail in a world of disruption?

PROGRAMME

- 13:00 Kurt Almqvist, President, Ax:son Johnson Foundation
13:05 Moderator: Ulf Wickbom
- City, Civility and Capitalism – A historical Perspective*
- 13:10 Maurizio Viroli: The City as a Political Order and Urban Design
13:25 Erica Benner: On Civility
13:40 Antony Molho: Rich and Poor in Renaissance Florence
13:55 Discussion
14:15 Coffee Break
- The City and “New Urbanism”*
- 14:45 John Simpson: A Language for Civic Expression
15:00 Anne Fairfax: Townscape, Good Manners and GNH
(Gross National Happiness)
15:15 Nicholas Boys Smith: Each Charter’d Street – Chaos and
Commerce, Civility and Control in the European City
15:30 Discussion
15:50 Coffee Break
- The Future of Capitalism*
- 16:20 Yolande Barnes: Capitalism and Culture – Changes that Herald
the 5th Age of Cities
16:35 Juliet Samuel: How Brexit Could Shake up the Global
Trading System
16:50 Kjell A Nordström: Capitalism 2.0 – was Karl Marx right?
17:05 Discussion
17:30 Drink
18:30 Dinner

SPEAKERS

Yolande Barnes

Professor of real estate, University College London, The Bartlett Real Estate Institute, UK

Erica Benner

Writer, Germany

Nicholas Boys Smith

Director, Create Streets Ltd., UK

Anne Fairfax

Architect, Fairfax and Sammons Architects, USA

Antony Molho

Professor Emeritus, The European University Institute and Brown University, Italy

Kjell A Nordström

Economist and Writer, Dr.

Member of the Board, Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation, Sweden

Juliet Samuel

Columnist, The Telegraph, UK

John Simpson

John Simpson Architects, UK

Maurizio Viroli

Professor, University of Texas at Austin, USA

ORGANISATION

President: Kurt Almqvist

Project Leaders: Mattias Hessérus

Project Advisors: John Adamson and John Simpson

Project Coordinator: Magdalena Bujak

Staff: Erik Ramsgård



AXEL AND MARGARET AX:SON JOHNSON FOUNDATION

STUREPLAN 3, 103 75 STOCKHOLM

TEL: 08 788 50 50 | FAX: 08 788 50 60 | WWW.AXSONJOHNSONFOUNDATION.ORG