

NUR/LIGHT

Afghan notes

by Monika Bulaj

Photographic exhibition - 5 August to 1 October

Loggia Foscara - Palazzo Ducale

Sponsor: Montura

Inauguration and press conference - 5 August at 12:00

Sala del Piovego - Palazzo Ducale

On 5 August at 12 noon, the photographic exhibition “Nur/Light - Afghan notes”, by Monika Bulaj will be inaugurated in the Sala del Piovego. The photographer and artist Monika Bulaj and the Venice City Alderman for Youth and Peace Policies, Gianfranco Bettin, will be present at the inauguration.

The exhibition - which will be on view in the Loggia Foscara of the Palazzo Ducale from 5 August to 1 October (entrance free) - is the extraordinary documentation of one woman’s travels in war-torn Afghanistan. Travelling entirely on her own – by bus or hitchhiking, on horseback and yak, often wearing a *burka*, the artist went in search of what the international media rarely show: secret rituals, magic, transhumance, fanaticism, traditional singing, sacredness, drugs, contraband and poverty - and a fascinating female universe.

Monika Bulaj is a documentary photographer/writer who has published numerous reportages on the outer confines of faith and belief, and on nomadic and disinherited peoples in Europe, Asia and Africa. She was born in Warsaw, where she studied Polish philology, and lives in Trieste.

The exhibition is promoted by the Aldermanship for Youth and Peace Policies, in collaboration with the Government Office for the Protection of the Architecture and Urban Reality of Venice and its Lagoon. It is supported by the Civic Museums Foundation and Emergency, and is sponsored by Montura.

In the words of **Gianfranco Bettin**, City Alderman for Youth and Peace Policies: “Monika’s work reveals another Afghanistan, which is often hidden by stereotypes or masked by prejudices: that of Afghan women. Through images which capture their subjects at their most authentic and with an intense use of colours and lighting, her photos tell a tale of war and its atrocities. The impact of her work thus also reflects the opposition to any form of violence which our administration and Venice, as a City for Peace, promotes and supports through its official policies”.

According to Superintendent **Renata Codello** : “The Government Office for the Protection of the Architecture and Urban Reality of Venice and its Lagoon renews its attention for artists and forms of artistic communication that provide, through works of excellence, a special focus on and sensitivity to contemporary cultural and artistic contexts. The honour of presenting Monika Bulaj’s photographs in this specific setting, thus goes hand in hand with our constant commitment to enhancing Palazzo Ducale through exhibitions of the very first order, such as “Nur/Light”, and making such events accessible to as wide a public as possible”.

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