Traditional Chinese ceremony to mark the foundation laying of the Chinese Garden in the tradition of Suzhou on the island of San servolo



On march 12, 2010, on the Island of San Servolo in Venice, a ceremony was held to mark the beginning of the work for the installation of a Chinese garden in the Suzhou tradition. The ceremony was attended by Francesca Zaccariotto, president of the Province of Venice, Umberto Vattani, president of Venice International University, Samuel Kung, president of the Museum of Contemporary Arts (MoCA) in Shanghai, the designer of the garden Master Ye Fang Progettista, Raffaele Speranzon, assessor responsible for culture with the Province of Venice, and many others.

The idea initiated through relations which Ambassador Umberto Vattani, President of Venice International University, forged with local authorities in Suzhou in view of creating on the Island of San Servolo in Venice a garden similar to those he had admired during his visits to China, which had also fascinated Marco Polo centuries before, and have since been recognized by Unesco as part of the World Heritage.

In September 2008, Ambassador Umberto Vattani invited Master Ye Fang, an artist and philosopher from Suzhou who has recreated a garden in the traditional style of his home town in his own house in Suzhou, to visit the Island of San Servolo in order to study the possibility of recreating a similar wonder in Venice, as a symbol of the twin cities of Venice and Suzhou. Master Ye Fang found the setting ideal and was happy to start designing a garden for the island.

During 2009 there were several site visits and relations with China were consolidated, so much so that the MoCA in Shanghai offered to hold, as a sign of recognition, an important exhibition of major contemporary Chinese artists entitled " A Gift to Marco Polo ", which was organized in collaboration with MoCA Shanghai, Institutions of Chinart, and held on the premises of Venice International University on the Island of San Servolo, as a part of the 53rd Venice Biennale Art Exhibition.

On march 12, 2010, during the official ceremocy, work was started by the symbolic foundation laying, in order to "create a Garden that will not only represent the friendship between the two cities but will also enhance the heritage of the Island of San Servolo - president Francesca Zaccariotto declared - as if two nations were enclosed on one island".

"Marco Polo himself - said artist Master Ye Fang presenting his design for the garden - mentioned the city of Suzhou and likened it to paradise on earth". "The garden must contain all the natural elements - the President of MoCA Shanghai, Mr. Samuel Kung, added - water, mountains, plants, in a representation of the harmony of Creation".