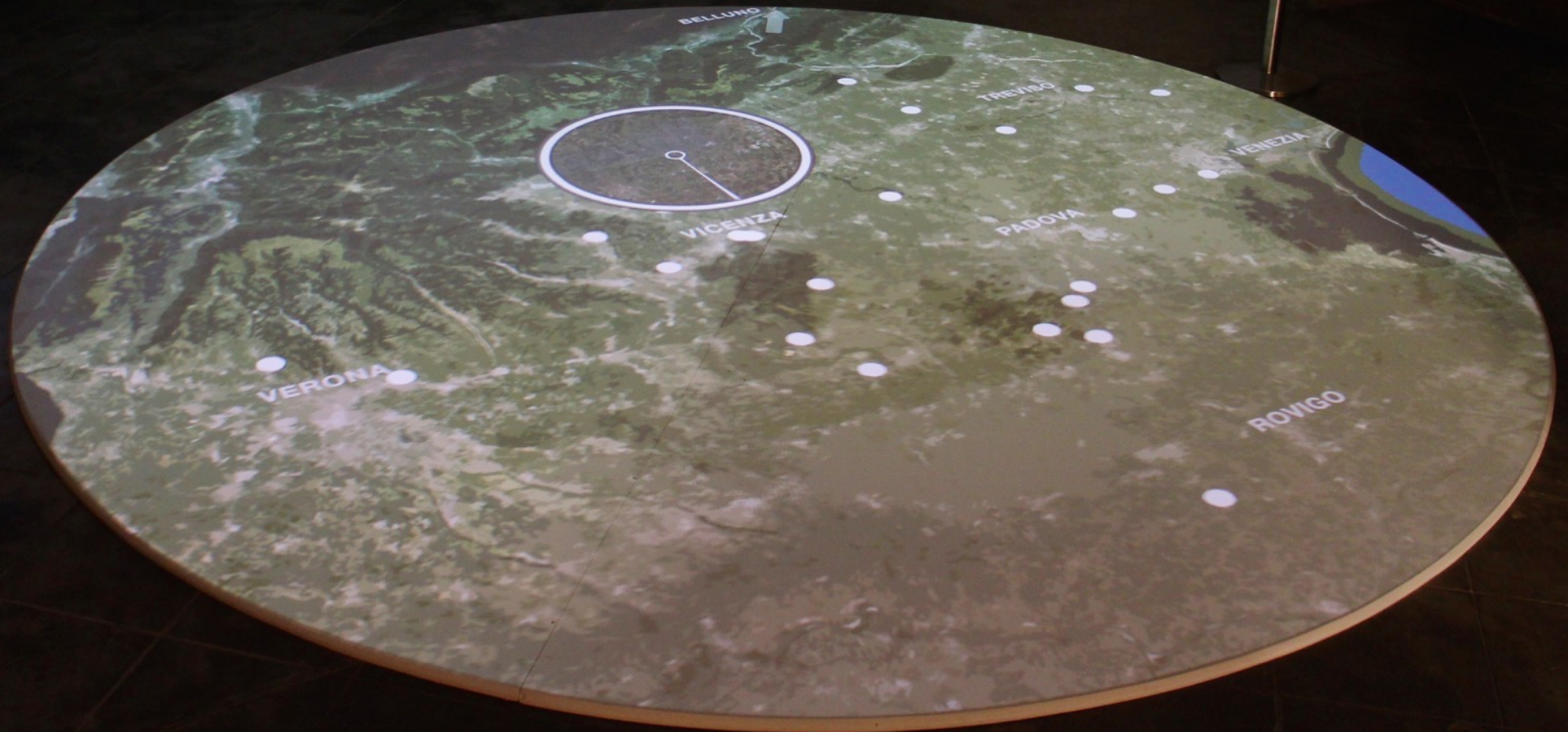Ville Venete, immersive interactive environment
by Andrea Santini & Francesca Sarah Toich (UBIK) ©2015

# Ville Venete, immersive interactive environment

by Andrea Santini & Francesca Sarah Toich (UBIK) ©2015

## Introduction

The permanent interactive installation was commissioned by The Veneto Region's Institute for the Villas in Veneto (I.R.V.V. link) in the context of Expo 2015, which attracted thousands of visitors to various areas in Northern Italy throughout the year. The Institute wanted to offer an engaging and immersive experience to promote awareness of the rich heritage of historic buildings and villas distributed across Veneto.

Villa Contarini in Piazzola sul Brenta (PD) - link - is one of the largest, most impressive and representative examples among the thousands of Villas that were built in Veneto mostly between the 16th and the 18th century as a result of the political and commercial success of the Venetian Republic know as the 'Serenissima'. Famous since its heyday as a cultural and entertainment centre and a venue for theatrical and musical productions, the Villa has been chosen as the location for some of the key events during Expo Veneto 2015 and as a venue for the permanent installation commissioned.

## The installation and the user experience.

This interactive installation, created by Andrea Santini & Francesca Sarah Toich (UBIK) for Villa Contarini near Padua, is designed to let users discover the Villas in Veneto through an exciting immersive experience where they can explore the region's architectural and cultural heritage.

The journey begins with an interactive floor-projected map of Veneto. Users can step in one at a time and explore the map with a virtual magnifying glass, which reveals details of the territory and the location of a selection of historic Villas that can be visited in the Region.

Positioning the lens on one of the villas marked on the map will activate short video documentaries on the panoramic screen. These are created with materials from Veneto Region's photographic archives and provide geographical and architectural information on the Villas, as well as insights on the culture, history, production and trade activities, customs and traditions of the territory. Each video features a 6 channel surround sound soundtrack based on local soundscape elements, traditional Baroque music, a voice commentary, as well as Italian and English subtitles.

While watching the videos users can move around freely or rest in the seating area provided. They can stop the videos at any time by stepping onto the stop position.

The interaction is intentionally simple and intuitive, allowing users to enjoy the experience and focus on navigation and content. Software and hardware implementations were developed in collaboration with the Italian firm *Nicefall Visual Support*. The user's skeleton and position is tracked by triangulating data from 3 Kinect-2 units to cover the 4 meter wide circular platform where the map is projected by 4 overhead HD short-throw projectors. The user positional data is processed through a custom software application and imported as TUIO packets into Ventuz, which manages the interactivity as well as the multimedia content playback on both floor and curved screen. The decision to use Ventuz for this project derived from the need to combine 4k movie clips with CGI graphics in a real-time environment to provide interactivity. Additionally, the mapping and warping features of Ventuz allowed to manage all 6 HD video outputs easily and without the need for additional software or hardware tools.

**The immersive interactive map-navigation concept**

The authors conceive this platform as a flexible format that can be adapted to a range of cultural, educational and commercial contents and contexts, providing a playful, immersive and insightful way of discovering the resources and point of interest that exist within a given area.

**The authors**

Established in Venice in 2007, UBIK *(link)* results from the collaboration between Francesca Sarah Toich, classically trained actress and writer, and Andrea Santini, digital media and sound artist. Their installations and performances are characterised by a theatrical quality and by a unique mix of tradition and innovation. Works have featured at galleries, museums and a festivals internationally including: Kernel Festival and Salone del Mobile (Milan), Science Festival (Genoa), A+A Gallery (Venice), MTF (Berlin), Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo), Victoria & Albert Museum (London) and the Centre Pompidou/ IRCAM (Paris). In 2015 UBIK has been commissioned a permanent large scale interactive installation for Veneto Region's 'Istituto Ville Venete' and had their first solo exhibition of Digital Artworks *(NYX - link).*

**Links**

Info page: *http://www.ubikteatro.com/UBIK/Ville_Venete.html*

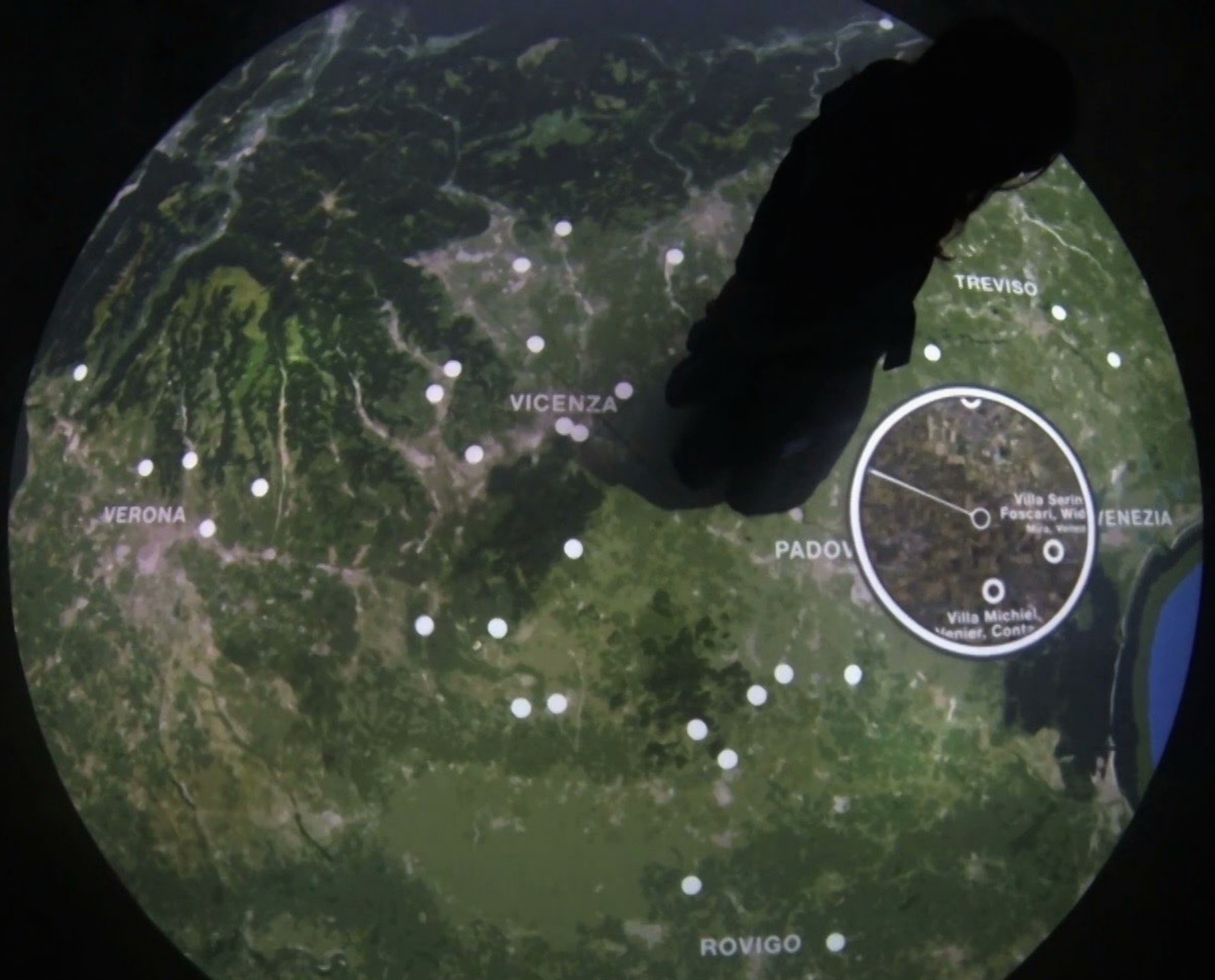Video: *https://vimeo.com/148596974*

**Info & Contacts**

email: info@ubikteatro.com

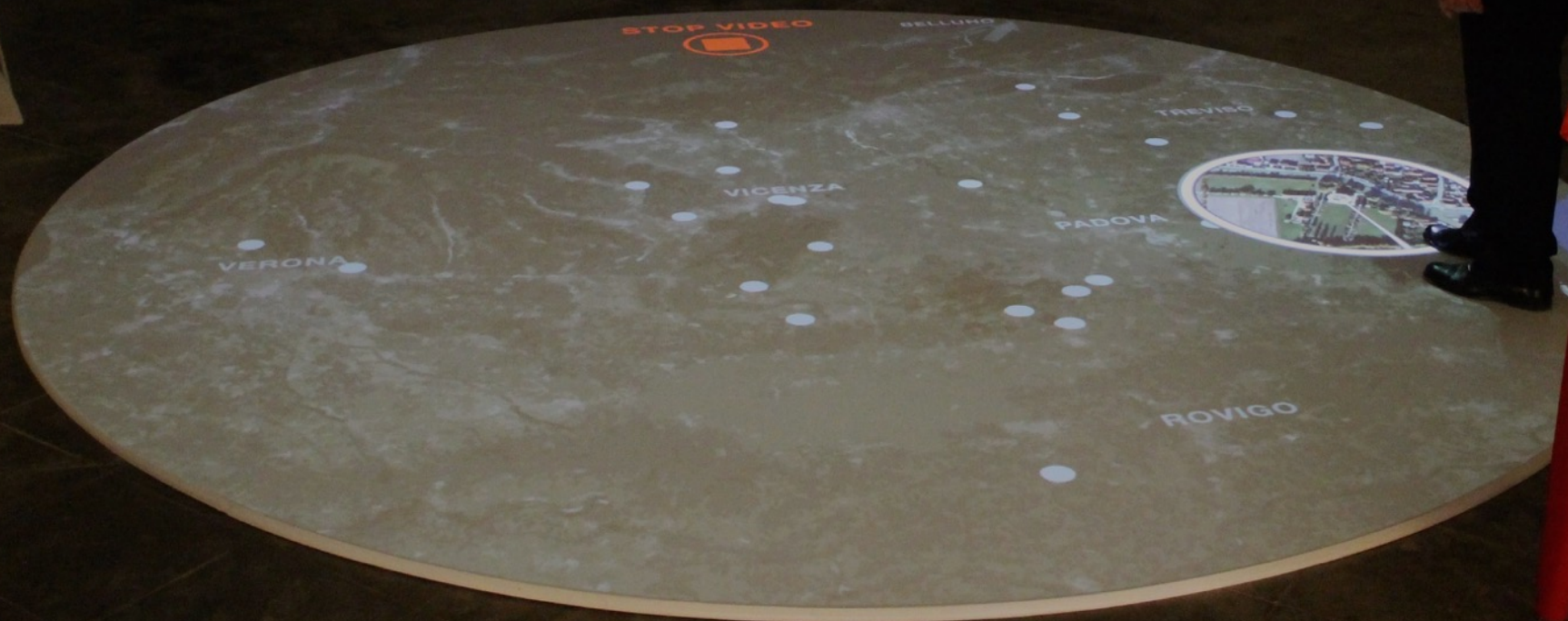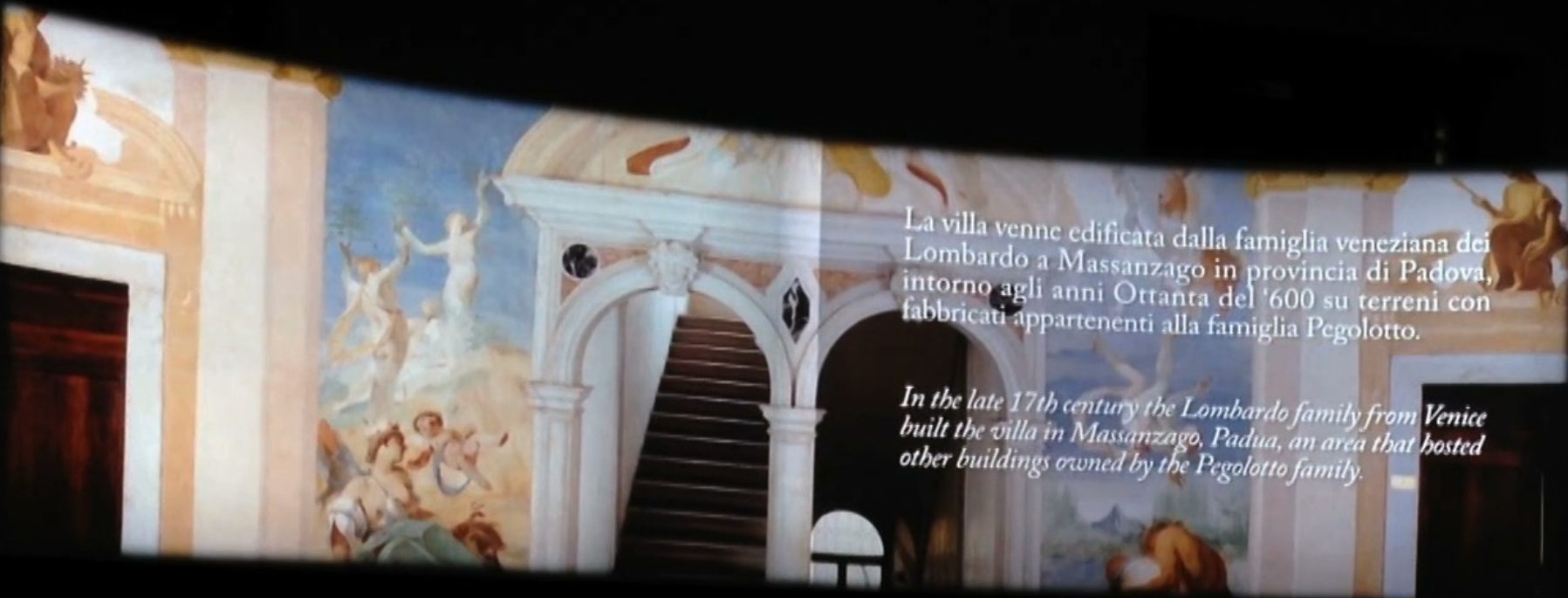web: www.ubikteatro.com

tel: +39 3479882954

La villa venne edificata dalla famiglia veneziana dei Lombardo a Massanzago in provincia di Padova, intorno agli anni Ottanta del '600 su terreni con fabbricati appartenenti alla famiglia Pegolotto.

*In the late 17th century the Lombardo family from Venice built the villa in Massanzago, Padua, an area that hosted other buildings owned by the Pegolotto family.*

Villa Barbaro dunque non è s
di Andrea Palladio e del Ver
abitata dai proprietari, al ce
azienda agricola i cui vini so
il mondo.

Villa Barbaro is thus not only
of Andrea Palladio and Vero
inhabited by its owners, the ce
company that exports its win

## Credits

*Interactive installation by:* Andrea Santini & Francesca Sarah Toich (UBIK) @2015

*Commissioned by:* Istituto Regionale Ville Venete

Chair - Giuliana Fontanella , Dir. Carlo Canato

*Production:* UBIK

*Concept and design:* Andrea Santini

*System and Programming:* NiceFall Visual Support (http://www.nicefall.com)

*Media server:* Ventuz

*Set-up:* UBIK & Falegnameria SuMisura

*Historical research and Texts:* Francesca Sarah Toich, Lele Piovene

*Audio & sound design:* Andrea Santini, David Caliaro

*Narration:* Francesca Sarah Toich, Lele Piovene

*Music:* ensemble Radio Antiqua, Pierpaolo Ciurlia (Sistro Barocco), the Baroque Music Library

*Documentary video contents:* archivio IRVV, Archivio Regione Veneto

*Video processing:* Fabio Ferrando, Andrea Santini

*Graphic processing for Google maps and landscape elements:*

Andrea Santini e Andrea Fincato

*Special thanks to:* Cristina Pistorello, Dragana Milosevic, Michele D'Alessandro, Caterina

Caneva Saccardo.