

Evocative TRIESTE

**A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE LAST
JOURNEY OF FRANZ FERDINAND**

Graphic novel created by

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In collaboration with

Accademia di Fumetto di Trieste

From an idea by

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as part of the project **“Grande Guerra, l’anno fatale.
Giovani a confronto sui giornali dell’estate 1914”**

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Like a dream, a boy of today speaks with the world of yesterday

To remember, share, intrigue: these are the aims of the exhibit “Evocative Trieste”, organised by the cultural Association “Radici&Futuro” as part of the project “Grande Guerra, l’anno fatale. Giovani a confronto sui giornali dell’estate 1914” (Great War, the fatal year. Youths on the newspapers of the summer 1914). The project, which strives to involve mainly young people (though it does include people who are... not so young anymore), continues on the path, started in 2013, meant to involve schools from Friuli Venezia Giulia and other Italian regions and European countries during the years spanning the Hundred-year Anniversary of the Great War.

But what is it that should be remembered? An important episode that, on 2 July 1914, brought history right to Trieste and sparked a series of tragic events which would tear the city apart, causing wounds to this day not completely healed. That day, a still Austro-Hungarian Trieste was crossed by the solemn funeral procession carrying the remains of Archduke Franz Ferdinand – heir to the Austrian throne – and his wife, Sophie of Hohenberg, assassinated a couple of days before in Sarajevo. The procession moved from the Rive (the group of streets overlooking the sea), where their remains arrived on board the *Viribus Unitis*, and passed through the city until it reached the Railway Station, where it left for Vienna. Its silent, shocked crowd was the first to feel the fear, dis-

may and incredulity which heralded the catastrophe that would be the Great War.

The exhibit also aims at sharing, but how? Resorting to a comic strip, a kind of visual language which is both recognised and loved by adults and appeals to what young people like and know in this age ruled by images. Indeed, the strips in the exhibit were drawn by two youths: Laura Bologna, newly graduated cartoonist from the Scuola internazionale di Comics of Padua, and Francesco Zardini, who recently achieved his degree in History and is an enthusiastic pupil at the Accademia di fumetto di Trieste.

Laura and Francesco bring us along in a sort of reinterpretation of the route the funeral procession travelled through Trieste. Their story has a dreamlike quality, though that is the very reason it enables us to travel through time and lose ourselves in original flights of fancy.

Starting from the cover, we are thrown into the heart of the city, in piazza Unità d’Italia, where some gentle gusts of Bora wind scatter about leaves and photos of bygone days. It is a hot summer. In the attic of his house on the Rive, a modern-day boy looks through his grandmother’s boxes and finds some old newspapers and family pictures, dating back to when Franz Joseph ruled over the area. He leaves his home carrying the pictures with him and in front of the City Hall – where the Italian and European flag are waving – he is strangely upset:

suddenly, he finds himself in the middle of a square with a garden, where the people around him speak different languages, and a boy his age, but dressed in a completely different way, invites him along Franz Ferdinand’s funeral procession.

The hearses carrying the remains of the heir to the throne and his wife, just arrived by ship, go past the renowned Caffè degli Specchi, cross piazza della Borsa, move up the Corso and turn at the corner with the “Ohler” shops. After arriving in piazza sant’Antonio, they move on to the current piazza Oberdan, where once the Great Barracks stood, and they finally reach the Railway Station, where the story ends and the mystery is revealed.

We also said that the exhibit aims at intriguing visitors. But why? Because they should be left wanting to know more. The comic intentionally provides many hints intended to arise interest and promote a deeper study of Trieste and its area, where evidence of the First World War can be found still to this day.

This is what drives the last part of the exhibit. A small collection of pictures explains and brings up-to-date the references to places and situations mentioned in the comic, while the maps drawn by Laura Bologna illustrate the itineraries the young men and women taking part in the project wrote on the basis of the route the remains of the imperial couple travelled, from Sarajevo to the castle in Artstetten.