



ITALY

# SILENCE

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Sesto San Giovanni (Milan). Revellers dance during a silent disco night at Carroponte: the "silent disco" is a novel way to enjoy music while respecting the silence.

## **SILENCE**

### **Admired and scorned, desired and damned**

The University of Ferrara's anechoic chamber is perhaps the quietest place in the world. Derived from Greek, the word anechoic literally means "free of echo". Entering the chamber is an almost mystical experience: sound doesn't reverberate and those who enter gradually lose their equilibrium as the initial euphoria transforms into an eerie sensation of disorientation.

Silence has always triggered contradictory sentiments all over the world and in every culture. Over the course of history it has been lauded as both "magical" (near to Godliness, according to the Benedictine monks) but it has also been branded as spectral and distressing. In Italy at the height of the coronavirus, the unbearable silence has been broken by singing and music from neighbouring balconies.

Nevertheless, when there isn't silence, people will do anything to find it, like those who choose isolated places to live or cars that are soundproofed, trains with their silent carriages, or the spas that offer relaxation involving complete sensorial deprivation therapies. We've tried to tell these stories through photography, bearing in mind the words of Miles Davis: "The real music is the silence, all the notes are doing is framing this silence". Silence is everywhere, and the sounds of the world are framing it.





Teolo (Padua), the monks of the Praglia Abbey observe a strict silence at specific times and during lunch and dinner. Silence, in fact, is an important feature of the Rule of Saint Benedict.





Brescia, Marta and Ludovico meditate in the Chapel of Silence, in the hills of Botticino Mattina. The chapel was designed by a group of architects from Brescia (Associates) for the association I Fuori Onda, which helps disabled youngsters through the project "L'Orlo del Bosco" (The edge of the woods).





Milan, San Raffaele Hospital, Ear, Nose and Throat department, Alessandro Tumminello, who was born deaf in both ears, is having his cochlear implant activated. Often when patients like Alessandro hear sounds for the first time, understandably, they are overcome with emotion.





Florence, the Floating Flo wellness centre offers floatation therapy, a relaxation and regeneration treatment that takes place in a space created to ensure a "sensorial deprivation in which silence plays an important role."





Lago Santo (Parma, Italy), the woods of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines are also a destination for those in search of silence.





Parma, at an Under 18 rugby match a minute's silence is observed to remember Mario Percudani, the honorary president of Rugby Parma.





Milan, toddlers sleep in a calm and silent space at the BabyLife nursery in Milan's CityLife district.





Milan, Lucky Music Network, Joe De Tursi tries out a Yamaha SLG 200s SILENT GUITAR, ideal for practising without making a noise.





Linate, noise management and the search for quiet are complex issues in the areas bordering airports. Here people play football and do gymnastics at a sports centre next to the airport runway.





Milan, a young woman works in a soundproof box at the Le Park co-working space and recording studio.





Parma, the Palatina library, silence is strictly observed in the consultation areas.





Milan, at the San Raffaele Hospital Dr. Lucia Piccioni is performing an operation to insert a cochlear implant into a deaf patient.





Milan, the diaries and notebooks of Stefano Raimondi, poet, philosopher and founder of the Accademia del Silenzio (Academy of Silence).





Members of the Lombardy Regional Environmental Protection Agency (ARPA) carry out an inspection using a sound level meter and spectrum analyser in Regoledo di Cosio, in Valtellina.





Malpensa, noise management and the search for quiet are complex issues in the areas bordering airports. Here in the neighbourhood of Case Nuove next to Milan's Malpensa airport, many homes lie abandoned because of the noise problems.





Milan, a woman walks along the Naviglio Grande: known as a bustling and noisy venue for early evening drinks, during the coronavirus emergency it has fallen silent.





The Somadida Nature Reserve (Auronzo di Cadore, Belluno), forestry guard Stefano Azzalini wears ear defenders as he cuts down a fir tree damaged by a violent gust of wind in 2018.





Between Milan and Bologna, passengers on a Trenitalia train: the company has introduced designated "silent carriages" on its Frecciarossa trains where travellers are not to speak loudly or use mobile phones (as indicated clearly on the signs on the seats and doors).





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