

For immediate release

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EVENT PHOTOS ARE IN THE PRESS KIT: www.freeassangeroma.it/6

An artistic happening in Perugia to celebrate Julian Assange

Activists for Assange held a press conference this morning (Friday, 19 April) at the iconic (but now abandoned) newspaper kiosk at Porta Pesa, Perugia, to launch the "off" events that they will be offering during the Journalism Festival in the Umbrian town (#ijf24, 17-21 April).

One of those 'off' events took place during the conference itself: an artistic-editorial happening, curated by Liberi Edizioni. Nicola Agrisano, a Neapolitan visual artist and activist with the FreeAssangeNapoli group, papered over the abandoned newsstand with a dozen enlarged front pages describing Assange's work and taken from an imaginary newspaper, 'Liberi'.

On the sidewalk next to the kiosk, artist Chiara Bettella spread a canvas strip 6 by 10 feet (the size of Julian's tiny cell in his London prison) with a radiant portrait of the Australian publisher, finally liberated.

The night before, Agrisano had papered over the abandoned newsstand in Viale Centova 112, Perugia. "Although these newsstands have been in disuse for some time, in the past they were lively meeting places for the people of the neighbourhood, who read and commented on the front pages of the newspapers that the newsagents put on display," Agrisano explained. "This installation of mine wants to bring that magical moment back, for locals and for the participants at the Festival; it will get them chatting together for a few moments about the Assange case."

"Most of all," Agrisano concluded, "I want to involve the journalists participating in #ijf24 since, among the hundreds of sessions at the Festival, there is not one about Julian or WikiLeaks, the site he created and which revolutionised the profession of investigative journalist. I consider this a scandal."

Tomorrow (20 April, 5.30 p.m.), the *Activists for Assange at #ijf24* will hold a session at the ANPI headquarters in Via del Cortone 19; the title is: 'Stop the war on journalism: free Julian Assange'. Speakers will be Vincenzo Vita, journalist for Il Manifesto and Articolo 21; Sara Chessa, independent journalist, author of the book 'Distuggere Assange - Per farla finita con la libertà d'informazione', Ed. Castelvecchi; Tina Marinari, Coordinator of the campaigns for a free and independent press promoted by Amnesty International Italia; Mauro Volpi, Constitutionalist and expert on the Assange case. Gianni Magini of AllertaMedia will moderate. They will ask what it means to be a journalist and explain why Assange meets their criteria.

During the session, a film will be shown of the 2010 Ted Talk in which Julian explains the meaning of his mission. This will be followed by a video greeting from Stella Moris Assange, Julian's wife, and an excerpt from the speech she gave at the University of Perugia last month when she received, for her husband, the Federico Caffè Prize for Journalism at the Service of People.

Lastly, today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, *Activists for Assange* will continue their leafleting at the entrance to the dozen or so venues hosting the #ijf24 conferences. The activists' base camp is in Piazza IV Novembre in front of the Palazzo dei Priori; their flyer can be seen here: www.freeassangeroma.it/6

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