



How to Do the 2017 Venice Biennale in One Weekend

DENIZENS OF THE ART JUNGLE

descend on Venice en masse for the vernissage of the Biennale Arte (May 10–12), a giddy, prosecco-fuelled ciao-fest

reserved for accredited media, galleristas, artists, and curators.

It's not impossible for outsiders to swing an invite to these frenzied preview days. But there's a lot to be said for visiting the Biennale during its long public-opening phase (May 13–November 26). Hotels have rooms; restaurants have tables; pavilion staffers have time. There is sure to be a spike in visitor numbers in mid-June, warns Fondation Beyeler

director and Art Basel Miami Beach founder Sam Keller: "Many art lovers from overseas like to combine their visit to Venice with Documenta in Kassel, Germany [opening June 10], and Art Basel in Switzerland [opening June 15]. This is known as the grand tour." Keller recommends visiting the Biennale "in the fall, when Venice is less hot, hyped, expensive, and crowded—September is perfect."

The Biennale splits into two main parts, and a 48-hour pass allows multiple entries to both. The first, divided between the Giardini and the Arsenale, is "Viva Arte Viva," the multiartist exhibition arranged by Centre Pompidou curator **Christine Macel**, who has promised that it will be "a passionate outcry for art and the state of the artist." Next come the national pavilions—85 this year—which spread from the Giardini's historic pavilions via the Arsenale's naval warehouses to rented palazzi scattered around the city. Art-world insiders are talking up the U.S. pavilion, where abstract painter **Mark Bradford** will present new work in tandem with a project involving Venetian prison inmates. Keller suggests looking in on "the Swiss pavilion, with artists

Carol Bove and **Teresa Hubbard** and **Alexander Birchler**, the Polish pavilion by **Sharon Lockhart**, and the Italian pavilion with **Roberto Cuoghi**."

Then there are the collateral events. This year's hot ticket is **Damien Hirst's** "Treasures from the Wreck of the Unbelievable," an exhibition of new work ten years in the making, which fills both of French luxury-goods magnate and art collector **François Pinault's** Venetian venues, Palazzo Grassi and Punta della Dogana.

When it all gets to be too much, two restaurants near the Arsenale beckon. CoVino is a small, lively farm-to-table bistro run by **Andrea Lorenzon**, son of a Venetian legend, bow-tied sommelier Mauro Lorenzon. Local is a little more fancy, but the ambience is relaxed, the wine militantly *naturale*—and chef **Matteo Tagliapietra** lays fusion fears to rest by proving that an eminently Venetian dish like risotto di gò (a small, sapid freshwater fish) really does benefit from the addition of nori seaweed and katsuobushi (dried and fermented smoked skipjack tuna). But compared with what you'll see in the Biennale, that's about as adventurous as boiling an egg. labiennale.org —Lee Marshall