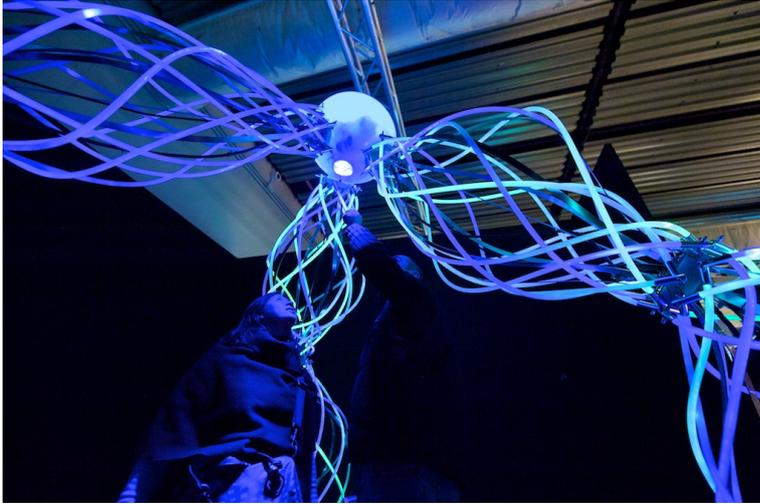


Contemporary art in Venice: The Biennale

Written by

Tuesday, 14 June 2011 12:52 - Last Updated Friday, 29 July 2011 11:38



DAY 1 – DEPARTURE

Depart the U.S on your overnight flight to Italy.

DAY 2 – ARRIVE VENICE • WELCOME DINNER

Arrive at Venice Marco Polo Airport, where you will be met by your Tour Manager and transferred by water taxi to your hotel. You will have time to settle in and rest, and to look out on the old center of this city, where canals serve as roads and all transport is on water or on foot.

Venice is Europe's largest urban car-free area. Venice is built on an archipelago of 118 islands formed by about 150 canals in the shallow Venetian Lagoon. Connecting the islands are about 400 bridges, including the "Bridge of Sighs" and the three that span the Grand Canal: the centuries-old Rialto and the more recent Scalzi and Accademia Bridges. The fourth, designed by Santiago Calatrava, is currently under construction. This city of water is a repository of centuries of art and architecture that magnificently blend East and West, a center of art created with glass, and home of the forward-looking Biennale.

In the evening, meet the group for a special Welcome Dinner at a restaurant near your hotel. Night at Hotel Metropole.

Note: The Hotel Metropole is located in the palazzo, which was formerly used as the chapter house of La Pieta church next door. Vivaldi lived here from 1704 to 1738 and was the violin and concert master of the church. Today the hotel is decorated in the Victorian style with many collections of curios.

DAY 3 – VENICE BIENNALE

Following breakfast at the hotel, enjoy a two-hour guided visit to the Biennale, and then use your day pass to explore the exhibits on your own. The Biennale is considered a "laboratory of

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culture,” committed to fostering innovation and experiment in all the arts. This year’s Biennale includes contemporary art exhibits at the pavilions in the Giardini di Castello, in the Arsenale, and at other sites around Venice, which your guide will help you locate. The Theater Festival will be underway as well, and after the schedule is announced we will send information so that those who wish may purchase tickets in advance.

Take a break for lunch on your own during your day at the biennale. Tonight rejoin your group for dinner at one of Venice’s many charming restaurants. Night at Hotel Metropole

Note: The Venice Biennale is a multidisciplinary festival held in odd-numbered years. Begun as an art exhibition in 1895, it was expanded with festivals of music, cinema and theater in the 1930s. Besides the art exhibits, which continue from June to November, the Festival features programs of contemporary and experimental theater, dance, music and architecture. While dance, music and architecture are presented in the fall, the theater festival will be underway during your trip in June. The film festival is held in even-numbered years, alternating with the Biennale.

DAY 4 – VENICE: ART IN SAN MARCO AND SAN GIORGIO DEI GRECI

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before leaving with your guide to view the paintings and mosaics within Venice’s magnificent churches. You will have a guided visit to the famed Basilica di San Marco (St. Mark’s Basilica), whose structure and rich mosaics remind the visitor of the wealth and power of the Venetian Republic and its close ties to Byzantium. Stand in one of the balconies—where four centuries ago the composer Giovanni Gabrieli arranged multiple brass choirs for his music—and view the walls encrusted with beautiful mosaics. You will also visit the San Marco Galleria and the Treasury. Then emerge onto the enormous Piazza San Marco, home to the Campanile (Bell tower), canopied shops, many visitors and more pigeons. It is a famed site in its own right, given weight by the Doge’s Palace and the unique face of the Basilica.

We will continue to San Giorgio dei Greci, located in the Castello District of Venice, also home to the Biennale Gardens and the Arsenale. The church, completed in 1573, served a Greek minority that was large and influential enough to win permission from the Pope to build an Orthodox Church. It was financed by a tax on all ships arriving from the countries to the east where Orthodox religions prevailed. Within this golden church are outstanding artworks in Byzantine styles, including a dome fresco of the Last Judgment and an iconostasis created by numerous artists and artisans, mostly from the island of Crete. We will also see the collection of icons in the church’s museum.

After lunch in a nearby restaurant, you will have the remainder of the day and the evening to explore Venice. You may want to ride the vaporetto (water bus) to the island of Murano to see the glass works, and take a side trip to colorful Burano. Take a vaporetto to Lido for a bike ride on some of the outer islands. You could visit the ghetto (named for the foundry, or ghetto, that operated in the district) where the Jews of Venice lived from 1516 to 1797. One may tour independently or with a guide from the Museo Comunita Ebraica. Or you can enjoy an afternoon in the heart of Venice strolling by the canals and perhaps enjoying a gondola ride.

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[You could arrange in advance to attend the theater or a concert this evening]. Night at Hotel Metropole.

DAY 5 – PADUA • SCROVEGNI CHAPEL

After breakfast, transfer by private motor launch to meet your motorcoach for an excursion to Padua. Situated in the geographical center of the Veneto, Padua is one of the most culturally and economically dynamic cities in the region. Inhabited centuries before Rome dominated the area, it became one of the most important cities in the region the Romans called Cisalpine Gaul. One of the first of Europe's universities was founded in Padua in 1222. The city retains some of its medieval quality, with a network of arcaded streets, piazze, and bridges over the River Bacchiglione. Arriving in Padua, you will meet your local guide and start your tour with a visit to the beautiful Scrovegni Chapel. Giotto's masterful frescoes, completed in 1305, depict episodes in the lives of Joachin and Anna, of Mary, and of Jesus. They are the most complete frescoes done by the mature Giotto and are beloved for embodying pathos and devotion in beautiful compositions of light and color.

After your visit to Scrovegni Chapel, have lunch together at a restaurant and then some time to see more of Padua. You could visit ornate 14th-century Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua, with Donatello's equestrian statue in front, or walk to the Botanical Garden. Take a look at the magnificent 19th-century Pedrocchi Café, which served as a meeting place for Stendahl, Byron, and other writers and artists from their generation to Dario Fo and beyond. We will return to Venice by coach and then motor launch, and you will have time to relax before meeting the group for dinner at a local restaurant. Night at Hotel Metropole.

DAY 6 – VENICE BIENNALE

Following breakfast, return to the Venice Biennale. As before, begin with a two-hour guided visit and then use your day pass to explore the galleries of your choice. Take a break to enjoy lunch on your own. In the evening, join your group for dinner in another of Venice's restaurants. Night at Hotel Metropole

DAY 7 - VICENZA AND THE PALLADIAN VILLAS OF THE VENETO

After breakfast, leave Venice by private motor launch and travel by coach to Vicenza. Today's excursion takes you to the architect Palladio's city of Vicenza and to the Palladian Villas of the Veneto.* Andrea Palladio is widely considered the most influential person in the history of Western architecture. His interpretation of the architectural principles of the ancients, embodied in his both his treatise and his villas, were innovative in the 16th century and remain powerful in our own time. His sense of right proportion, his dramatic exteriors and harmonious interiors, and the open relationship between structure and surroundings are axiomatic in much of western architecture. When you arrive in Vicenza, meet your local guide, who will lead a walking tour of Palladio's legacy. Then drive into the countryside to see two of the Palladian villas. Have lunch together at a restaurant and, after a little time on your own, return to Venice. Enjoy dinner and

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the evening on your own. [You could arrange in advance to attend the theater or a concert this evening]. Night at Hotel Metropole.

DAY 8 - VENICE: PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION IN AN 18TH-CENTURY PALAZZO

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before meeting your local guide for a visit to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. You may either walk or take a private motor launch. This collection is the most important in Italy for European and American art from the first half of the 20th century, including works of Picasso, Dali, Magritte, Brancusi and Pollock. It is located in Peggy Guggenheim's former home on the Grand Canal, the unfinished 18th-century Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, which also houses pieces from other collections and temporary exhibitions. Following your morning tour, enjoy lunch together in a restaurant; then enjoy one more afternoon in Venice on your own. Some of the churches house paintings by major artists; for example, in the Chiesa dei Frari are works of Titian, Giovanni Bellini and Donatello. If you are more inclined toward the avant-garde, the "Aperto" galleries of the Biennale may beckon, as may the intriguing streets, byways, shops and bridges of this mesmerizing city. Rejoin the group this evening at a typical Venetian restaurant for your Farewell Dinner. Night at Hotel Metropole.

DAY 9 – DEPART VENICE • RETURN TO U.S.

Check out of your hotel after breakfast. Transfer by private motor launch to Venice Marco Polo Airport for your return flight to the U.S.

*UNESCO World Heritage Site