

TRAVEL

Everything art and interiors lovers will want to see at the Venice Biennale

As the 60th Biennale d'Arte opens, Fiona McKenzie Johnston rounds up the must-see pavilions, associated exhibitions, and more

By Fiona McKenzie Johnston

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“There is a glorious City in the Sea,” wrote the poet Samuel Rogers in the 18th century, before going on to describe [Venice](#)’s dreamlike beauty. Time has not dimmed the effect of the architecture that sees classical meet Venetian gothic meet Byzantine and Moorish influences, or the colours – the swoon-worthy and somehow inimitable palette of pink, terracotta, and muted mustard offset by the milky-green lagoon-fed canals and brightly banded briccoles. The interiors are

no less lovely – though they can be harder to find your way into. But, with the [60th Biennale Arte](#) currently taking place across the city, there's opportunity. Thanks to various excellent shows and presentations of world-class art, we're simultaneously given extraordinary access to the city's deconsecrated but exquisitely frescoed churches, the principal floors of grand palazzos with their painted ceilings (including one where *The Talented Mr Ripley* was filmed), and even the private garden that inspired Henry James's *The Aspern Papers*, where banks of irises nestle against ancient stone balustrades. Alongside are new boutiques and galleries that you won't want to miss – and of course, there's the Biennale itself, with its sprawling exhibition and many and varied pavilions. It's almost impossible to see it all – so here's our pick of what to prioritise.

New shops and galleries: Lo Studio – Nadja Romain and Giberto Venezia



Nadja Romain, who lives in Venice and is co-curator of the earlier mentioned Osman Yousefzada exhibition, has also just opened a permanent gallery space on the Dorsoduro entitled [Lo Studio – Nadja Romain](#), with a mission to create “a dialogue between art, architecture, design and craft.” Currently, it's showing work by fellow Venetian resident Irene Cattaneo, who takes meteorological conditions (such as clouds) and charmingly transforms them into deeply covetable lights, a basin, vases, and more – and the creative duo Bloko, who are presenting a new vision for the future of the floating city, via furniture.

Then, on the Rialto Bridge, is the [Giberto Venezia](#) shop, carrying the exquisite glass designs of Giberto Arrivabene Valenti Gonzaga, all made by hand on the neighbouring island of Murano: there are glasses, jugs, vases, photograph frames – and the chicest light switches you have ever seen. Giberto's wife is the irrefutably elegant [Bianca Arrivabene](#), and two of their children, Viola and Vera, are behind the swiftly-becoming-cult shoe brand [ViBi Venezia](#). Giberto and Bianca live on the top floor of the Palazzo Papadopoli on the Grand Canal, while the rest of the building is given over to the Aman Venice - it's a very nice place to go for a drink, or even dinner.

lostudio-nadjaromain.com / giberto.it