

Arrigo heads to Miami show after Artivism Lion win

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VENICE — The underwater series that won Maltese photographer Kurt Arrigo the Artivism Lion in Venice is heading to the United States. His work travels to Art Miami's Aqua Art fair in December 2026, extending the reach of a show built around ocean preservation.

Arrigo received the Artivism Lion, the top prize of the fourth Artivism Awards, on June 6, 2026, at the Yacht Club Venezia and was followed by a three-week exhibition on ocean preservation held during Venice Climate Week. The Artivism Lion trophy, a Murano glass sculpture by the master glassmaker Massimiliano Schiavon, has been since honoured in his photographic series *The Blue Thread*.

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Founded in 2020, the Artivism Awards gather artists whose work engages directly with urgent environmental and social issues. His underwater photography series next travels next to Art Miami Fairs' Aqua Art show in December.

The project began with a 10-day sailing passage aboard the yacht Kyalami, an 80-meter carbon sailing vessel designed by Germán Frers. Departing from Malta's Grand Harbour, the voyage carried Arrigo, scientists from the University of Malta, art patron Frits Cornelis Thieme and the Can 7 artist residency program across the Mediterranean to Venice, stopping in Dubrovnik along the way. Artists Alexandra Mas and Sarah Olson also sailed aboard the Kyalami, observing the sea firsthand before translating the experience into their own works.

"It is very interesting to observe how, in the case of Kurt Arrigo and other artists and photographers,

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/arrigo-wins-artivism-lion-heads-to-miami-show/

some contemporary art practices today consist of environmental observation, scientific voyage, the lived experience of nature, from which the work is born", art critic Brunella Buscicchio told Italy Now: "In 2022 I visited an exhibition in Canada, at the Ottawa Art Gallery, where the artists Leslie Reid and Robert Kautuk had made a research journey into the Arctic and documented the melting ice through a series of aerial photographs."

"From sea to sky, art explores the world," she added.



The Artivism Awards invite (Credits: Artivism Award)

Nine artists, one horizon

The resulting exhibition, Ocean Preservation Awareness, ran at Yacht Club Venezia from June 5 to June 28 and grouped nine artists into three chapters, scientific, militant and contemplative. Arrigo's underwater series The Blue Thread and Joanna Adams's The Future Is Wild, developed over decades with Stanford University, the University of Leeds and London's Natural History Museum, anchored the scientific chapter.

Dodi Reifenberg, the third edition's winner, built Deep from ocean collected plastic waste, while Lilo M. R. Hansen and Vera van Leeuwen addressed offshore labor and Mediterranean mythology respectively in the militant chapter. Sarah Olson, Alexandra Mas and Lavenair carried the contemplative chapter, working with tidal pigments, ink drawings and unedited analog photography of the Mediterranean.

From Venice to Miami

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Arrigo’s Artivism Lion win, awarded by gallerist and jury founder Peter Hopkins, secures his work a place at Art Miami Fairs’ Aqua Art this December. Proceeds from his limited editions go entirely to the One Ocean Foundation, a marine conservation group, supporting its seagrass restoration programs, while the exhibition’s other artists direct 25% of their proceeds to marine research carried out with Heritage Malta’s Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit.

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