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At the Venice Biennale, a Fleet of 50 Red Sailboats Will Take Aim at Climate Change



BY FRIEZE NEWS DESK

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The artwork on the Venice waterfront will serve as a reminder that the city's waterways could soon endanger its existence



Melissa McGill, *Red Regatta* (Coppa del Presidente della Repubblica), 2018, artist's rendering. Courtesy: the artist and Magazzino Italian Art Foundation

50 blood-red sailboats will be installed on the Venice waterfront to remind visitors to the city of the threat of rising sea levels, it has been announced.

Due to be installed in May to time with the opening of the 58th Venice Biennale, the installation by artist Melissa McGill will include around 50 traditional Italian *vela al terzo* sailboats. The piece, which is not part of the official biennial programme, is titled *Red Regatta*. Each sailboat will be fitted with a unique red sail, hand-painted by the artist in her studio.

In an interview with *ArtNews* <<http://www.artnews.com/2019/01/25/years-venice-biennale-blood-red-regattas-will-remind-attendees-citys-environmental-threats/>> , McGill said the piece aims to remind visitors of the city's troubled relationship with the water that surrounds it: 'It represents all that red can reference in a city like Venice . . . red has that urgency,' she said. '[Venetians] travel by water, but it's being taken by water. I have personally seen this city change in my lifetime dramatically.'

While the piece references a regatta in its title, McGill explains that the event will not be a competitive one: 'It's more of a presentation. Basically, we are presenting these regattas as a way to bring together all these local boat owners with these beautiful traditional boats.'

The project is a collaborative one, involving the Magazzino Italian Art Foundation as well as over 250 Venetians, including sailors, artisans and art students.

Red Regatta will be on display from May through November and will culminate in four regatta events: two in May and one in June and September respectively.
