



Italian Pavilion, La Biennale

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Howard and Victoria

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Venice Biennale ~ Something for Everyone

If your travel plans include a visit to Venice between now and November 22, 2015, you are in for a visual feast in the form of *La Biennale Venezia*, the 56th edition of the world-renowned contemporary art exhibition that is held every two years in *La Serenissima*.

During the Biennale, Venice puts her best foot forward as the city comes alive with activity in every corner. While the main exhibitions are located in the historic pavilions at the *Giardini* and in the *Arsenale*, both located in the *Castello* district, there are multiple national pavilions and collateral exhibitions scattered throughout the city.



Navigating the Biennale

Now that the jam-packed, party-heavy, art world people-watching days of the *Vernissage* opening period in early May have passed, the city has settled into a comfortable groove that allows visitors an opportunity to see some pretty interesting art as well as fabulous interiors that are generally shut tight to the public. There are several ways to take part in the Biennale activities and exhibitions. The good news is that you don't even need to love contemporary art to enjoy the experience.

For more than a century, the Venice

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Six Tips for A Perfect Italian Honeymoon

My wife Victoria and I got married at the beginning of the year, but waited until March to leave our chilly hometown of Washington, DC for Italy's warmer climes. We'd both visited the country before, and built our itinerary around Tuscany and Venice, where neither of us had been. We tried to follow a few simple rules:

#1 Keep an open schedule.

We could have stopped in Bologna for *tortellini in brodo*, but we had just 10 days and needed to set limits. Our way of remaining flexible was to fix on certain cities, but make last-minute hotel reservations, a benefit of traveling in the off season.

#2 Try something everyone does—and something no one does.

Everyone has recommendations about what to do in Italy. We took some (a Venetian gondola ride, a bus tour of Milan) and scrapped others in favor of our own preferences. Taking a dawn tour of the Venice fish market was

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136 artists are participating in *La Biennale*.

Founded in 1895, La Biennale has been avant-garde in the promotion of new artistic trends and the organization of international contemporary arts events in accordance with a unique multidisciplinary model.

Biennale has been one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the world. Founded in 1895, it has been avant-garde in the promotion of new artistic trends and the organization of international contemporary arts events in accordance with a unique multidisciplinary model.

The 56th edition this year was curated by Nigerian-born *Okwui Enwezor*, a curator, art critic, editor and writer. He titled this year's exhibition, *All the World's Futures*, and you will see the title plastered on everything from a *vaporetto* to the side of a building. Each edition has a different curator, publicly announced about 18 months in advance by the Biennale organization.

Eighty-nine national participants are exhibited in the historic pavilions at the Giardini, in the Arsenale and throughout the city of Venice. The countries participating for the first time in the exhibition are Grenada, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique and Seychelles.

Additionally, there are 44 collateral events at locations throughout Venice, which are approved by the curator of the international exhibition and promoted by non-profit national and

international institutions. That is a lot of art to take in during one visit!

The most obvious way to experience the Biennale is to purchase a ticket and go through the Giardini and Arsenale venues. Regular tickets cost 25€ and allow for one entry into each venue. It should be noted that these do not need to be used on the same day. For those who might want to come back again, a special 30€ ticket allows for multiple entrances into each venue over a consecutive two-day period.

As it can be overwhelming taking in so much art, the two-day pass is an excellent compromise so that one has the option of returning at another time. For those who might be in Venice longer, an 80€ pass will last until the close of the exhibition in November and allow for unlimited entry into both venues.

Collateral Exhibitions

After viewing the exhibitions in the Giardini and the Arsenale, the collateral events around the city are plentiful! These are often free of charge and are an excellent way to enjoy the Biennale. Not all of the collateral exhibitions run through the November close date, so if there is something

specific you have your heart set on seeing, do some advance homework to verify that it will still be on view during your stay.

The choice of what to see and where to go is certainly overwhelming as there are endless possibilities. Where does one start? To begin with, the Biennale website — www.labiennale.org — is extremely informative and an excellent way to get a good overview. Also,

now that the opening days have passed, there are many articles online about top things to see at the Biennale. Everyone online has an opinion, which



Vaporetto advertising Biennale



Australian Pavilion

More than 400,000 people are

is helpful if you need guidance on what to see.

If contemporary art is not your thing, you can still enjoy the Biennale on your own terms. Going through the main exhibitions is not for everyone nor do all visitors have a full day or two to dedicate to seeing them. So while contemporary art may not be on your immediate radar, by paying attention to the collateral events around town, one can see some art as well as palace interiors that are not usually accessible.

For example, it's always a lovely walk from the *Punta della Dogana* up along the *Zattere*. There are no fewer than seven exhibitions along that stretch of Venice; seven new spaces to enter and look around. It has been said before that the palace interiors are sometimes more interesting than the art. It's so hard to compete with Venice!

These exhibitions can be found effortlessly. As you stroll through Venice, look for the posters and banners that are everywhere, even hung from balconies on the Grand Canal or propped up on the street close to the entrances. The posters and banners are a tip-off that something is inside. Once you have seen a few, you will start to notice them throughout the city. While these exhibitions are generally free to the public, you will note that they do close on Monday, which is the Biennale's weekly closing day.

International Pavilions

Some highlights that should not be missed are the pavilions for the United

States, Japan, Australia, Armenia, and the Doug Argue Exhibition. Should you arrive in Venice via the airport, you will already have a chance to see your first Biennale exhibition, "Secret Power" by Simon Denny, which is on display in the arrivals area. This is the first time an artist has exhibited inside Venice's Marco Polo Airport. His exhibition continues in Venice at the Marciana Library in *Piazza San Marco*.



Secret Power at Marco Polo Airport

The United States is represented by Joan Jonas, 78, who began her artistic career as a sculptor in the 1960s before moving into performance art

and becoming an early adapter to video in the 1970s. Her multimedia, site-specific installation, *They Come to Us without a Word*, encompasses video, performance, installation, sound, text, and drawing and has been called a "triumph" by the *The New York Times's* art critic Roberta Smith.

Jonas spent all spring living in Venice and bringing her vision to completion by being on-site every day, leaving no detail to chance. Since 1968, her practice has explored ways of seeing, the rhythms of ritual, and the authority of objects and gestures. Jonas's exhibition received an honorable mention from the Biennale jury. She will return to Venice this summer to give three live performances at the *Teatro Piccolo Arsenale* on July 20, 21 and 22.

The Japanese Pavilion is literally a sea of yarn with the installation, *The Key in*

the Hand by *Chiharu Shiota*. The artist solicited thousands of keys from the public to create the work. Upon entering the pavilion, the visitor is confronted with a large-scale web of red yarn that almost fills the entire space of the pavilion. Attached to the end of each piece of yarn is a key.



Japanese Pavilion

The artist's idea for the use of the keys came about because keys are used to protect

valuable things like homes, assets and our own personal safety. The warmth of our hands embraces these keys as

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Kathleen A. McCabe
Editor in Chief and Publisher

Executive Editor: Bethanne Patrick
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Editorial feedback is welcome.
E-mail: kathy@dreamofitaly.com

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expected to attend *La Biennale*.

unforgettable (even if we both needed a *doppio* to get going), and choosing to drive through Tuscany instead of taking a tour was, too.

We had a private tour and lunch at *Fattoria di Montecchio*, (www.fattoriamontecchio.com) a vineyard that also grows olives and sells honey, and then slowly made our way to San Gimignano, and finished up in Siena. Thank goodness for the Garmin GPS we'd rented with the car!

By taking our own trip in our own

time we found that we were able to notice things that weren't necessarily famous, but that we loved: A woman riding a bicycle laden with empty wine bottles, an abandoned building that might have been a church, a school, or a barn. All that, a beautiful Tuscan sunset, and we were still able to return to our Florence hotel by 10 p.m.

#3 Seek out special local foods.

In Venice, we decided to try *Osteria La Bottega ai Promessi Sposi* in *Cannaregio* (Calle dell'Oca; 39-0412-412747). I ordered the local raw scampi, straight from the Adriatic and served whole. Victoria thinks it was the best thing she ate on her trip—sweet and slightly briny and dressed with just a touch of olive oil and salt. The main course was bigoli pasta in salsa, a thick spaghetti cooked in a reduction of anchovies and onions. These Venetian dishes are not found in Tuscany, and sampling them together made the trip even more special.

In Siena, at *La Taverna di San Giuseppe*

(Via Giovanni Duprè, 132; 39 0577 42286; www.tavernasangiuseppe.it), we ate wild boar braised in milk and finished in wine, the epitome of slow cooking, a meal we could never cook for ourselves; ditto the flash-fried sardines and calamari we discovered at little cafes, so fresh and light that they didn't need anything other than a sprinkling of salt. Seeking out new foods enhanced our feeling of having new experiences, together.

#4 Know when you want to be tourists and when to be newlyweds.

When Victoria and I flew into Milan on a redeye, we were groggy from jetlag and our room wasn't ready. Instead of trying to make things instantly celebratory, we got some espresso and took a bus to see *La Scala* and *The Last Supper*; I had signed us up for a first-day tour so that we could doze while the driver negotiated Fashion Week crowds.

Once we'd seen Da Vinci's masterpiece at *Santa Maria delle Grazie*, we were ready to take off on our own. That afternoon of browsing through print shops and grazing at street stands and cafes was the perfect way to kick off the honeymoon phase of our trip. Similarly, when we were ready to head home, we tried to soften the re-entry by enjoying a picnic of our favorite Italian foods at the airport. We even brought back a small can of good Italian coffee and some favorite biscotti for our first at-home breakfast.



Howard in Siena

#5 Throw away your map.

Give yourself plenty of time to wander. Victoria and I spent hours wandering around Venice and Florence, not sure where we were going but not caring because we had nowhere

to go. Italy is the perfect destination for this "time out of time" feeling you want on a honeymoon, due both to its urban planning and its people. No one will rush you or force you to follow a certain set of directions.

One evening in Venice, while walking down an alleyway, we came upon a beautiful, rustic restaurant, *Osteria Antica Adelaide* (Calle Priuli Racheta; 39-041-5232629; www.anticaadelaide.it). We each sipped an Aperol spritz and sampled their *cicchetti*. I asked the woman behind the bar about a tub on the counter; she explained it was the local wine, and gave me a small pour from an attached tube for just one euro. We returned for dinner the next night.

#6 Get friendly.

Every local we met was polite and gracious, and every tourist was, too, because who could be in a bad mood while in Italy? Our host at the

Venetian bar typifies the Italian ease with visitors that makes everyone around a table happy.

On our final night in Florence, we ate at a cozy trattoria of no more than 35 seats. (*Trattoria Sostanza*, Via del Porcellana, 25/R; 39- 055-212691). We shared our corner table with a



Victoria at Uffizi



View from Florence hotel

Many consider Venice Italy's

European couple, and over our *bistecca alla fiorentina*, butter chicken, fava beans, and broccoli rabe we chattered the evening away in complete harmony. We'll probably never see them again, but we'd never be as relaxed at home as we all were while on holiday, open to a conversation with strangers about a country we

were all thrilled to be touring.

We may, in fact, never be as completely relaxed again. Victoria and I highly recommend that all newlyweds consider an Italian honeymoon. Actually, we highly recommend that all couples consider an Italian getaway—using our tips, it

might just feel like a second honeymoon.

—Howard Yoon

Howard Yoon is a literary agent at the Ross Yoon Agency in Washington, DC.

Howard and Victoria's Honeymoon Itinerary

Day One:

Arrive in Milan

- Arrived at *LaDimORA Residence* (Via Vetere, 1; 39-0258 -111122; www.oradimora.com; Rates: 167 to 287€ per night). We picked LaDimORA because it was convenient and well-recommended; it wasn't particularly romantic.
- Walked along the 4th-century Corinthian columns of *Colonne di San Lorenzo*.
- Took guided tour of *La Scala* and *The Last Supper* (booked through www.viator.com).
- Ate fried anchovies at a stall near *Porta Ticinese*.

Day Two:

Venice

- Arrived by high speed train, drizzly day.
- Checked into our hotel, *Palazzo Abedessa*, and upgraded to a suite (Calle Priuli, Cannaregio, 4011; 39-041-2413784, www.abadessa.com; 245 to 500€ per night). A colleague recommended this romantic hotel which was in a fantastic location.
- Wandered along the streets and watched the sun set in *Piazza San Marco*.
- Had aperitif and a *fritto misto* platter at *La Panocia D'Oro* (Cannaregio, 4371, 30121 39-041-2411542).

Day Three:

Venice

- Walked along the Rialto bridge, ate *linguine alla vongole al fresco* with a view of the *Rialto*.

- Wandered along the streets of Venice, stopped at Peggy Guggenheim Museum.
- Had an aperitif at *Osterica Antica Adelaide* followed by dinner at *Osteria La Bottega ai Promessi Sposi*.

Day Four:

Venice/Florence

- Checked out the Rialto market in the morning, then headed to the train station to catch a train to Florence.
- Checked into hotel *Antica Torre di Via Tornabuoni* (Via dei Tornabuoni 1; 39 055 062 0288, www.tornabuoni1.com; 335 to 1150€ per night). This hotel was beautiful and romantic and we upgraded to a room with a view of the *Duomo*.
- Wandered around the city and stopped at *Eataly* (Via dei Martelli, 22) to buy food to eat in our room.

Day Five:

Florence

- Tour of the *Accademia* to see David. (www.viator.com)
- Lunch at *La Giostra* (Borgo Pinti, 12; 39-055-241341; www.ristorantelagiostra.com)
- Tour of the *Uffizi*. (www.viator.com)

Day Six:

Tuscany

- Rented car and drove to Chianti for wine tour and lunch, then to San Gimignano and finally to Siena for dinner at *La Taverna di San Giuseppe*.

Day Seven:

Florence

- Visited the *Mercato Centrale*, ate lunch at *Trattoria Vecchio Mercato* inside (Piazza del Mercato Centrale, 12/13R; www.mercatocentrale.it)

Day Eight:

Florence

- Visited the *Duomo* and climbed *Giotto's Campanile* for a view of Florence.
- We spent the afternoon on the rooftop of our hotel, which has a view of the *Duomo*.

Day Nine:

Bologna

- Took the train to Bologna.
- Ate street food and visited the pasta store *Paolo Atti & Figli* (Via Caprarie, 7; www.paoloatti.com)
- Dined at the open food market, bought *parmigiano*, *mortadella* and sausage at Ceccarelli (www.amedeoceccarelli.it)
- Took the last train from Bologna to Milan, checked into the same Milan accommodations.

Day 10 :

Return home

1€ = \$1.14 at press time

most romantic destination.

Lake Garda on Two Wheels

M I'm not a cyclist, but I am playing one in Italy.

While I've ridden a bike before, and been quite happy doing it, I've never approached the status of someone who will drop a few thousand dollars on a carbon frame, or happily debate different types of special bike shoes, or "clips." But as a significant birthday looms I decide that zipping through Italian countryside on wheels will be just the right sort of active tourism for me.



past pedestrians, I notice that most of them are bundled up and leaning forward against the chill—which, given that's in the high 70s, isn't chilly at all to me.

Of course, they're still out there, and I can see why: The beauty of this, Italy's largest lake, is overwhelming.

It's bigger than, yet overshadowed by, Lake Como—unfairly,

I think, for an expanse that begins in the north surrounded by pine trees that give way first to olive trees, then lemon trees, on its southernmost shores. Fifty miles long and 11 miles at its widest point, Lake Garda includes every type of scenery you could want: mountains, forests, quaint towns and beaches.

Although I'm taking an active vacation, I'm not roughing it: Home base every day is the well-appointed *Enjoy Garda Hotel* in *Peschiera del Garda* on the lake's southeastern edge. I chose this spot not only because Peschiera is a sort of gateway to the lake, but also because I could travel east and west, seeing some of the attractions on both shores.

The hotel, just three years old and spiffy, caters to cyclists (more on that in a moment) and offers a grass-surround pool and a large restaurant/bar that allows an easy flow inside and out. The minute I return and jump off my bike, I can

Now I'm tackling trails in the *Veneto*, a region that is a dream come true for cyclists of many different levels. I am in reasonably good shape, but anyone who exercises regularly could handle the relatively flat trails and short distances I am traveling near Lake Garda.



Canals in Peschiera

Experienced riders can find epic ascents here, and I see a lot of them on my daily outings: Clad in skintight Lycra adorned with sponsor logos, these athletes travel in packs and seem to be out in all seasons.

Not so for the more leisurely Italian cyclists. As I pedal on the lakeshore



Trail out of Peschiera

head to a table and order a cold bottle of *San Pellegrino* and a snack. Later, after I shower, I can choose from the restaurant's well-edited selection of dishes that highlight the fresh local fish.

Enjoy Garda Hotel is also known as the *Garda Bike Hotel*, so named because it caters to cyclists who bring their own bikes and to those, like me, who arrive without. The hotel offers free city bikes to all of its guests, and handouts with

John Hogan's Lake Garda Cycling Itinerary

- **Day One:** Peschiera east to Lazise (5 miles), Lazise to Bardolino (3 miles), Bardolino to Peschiera (8 miles)
- **Day Two:** Around Peschiera on bicycle, then west to Sirmione and back (14 miles)
- **Day Three:** Peschiera to Malcesine via ferry; around Malcesine on bicycle (6 miles), return to Peschiera via ferry
- **Day Four:** Depart Peschiera by train to Venice

Lake Garda is home to

bike maps are available as well (or you can view routes online on the hotel's website), and the staff is friendly and knowledgeable about the area's many trails. One of them helped me plan one of my day trips, a visit to *Bardolino*, just a little under 10 miles away.

Peschiera itself is a lovely town, inhabited since the Bronze Age and surrounded by gorgeous canals. All around me, Italians and foreign tourists are taking advantage of the lake: swimming, boating, canoeing, paddle boarding.

However, I have to pay attention to the road: The trail east out of Peschiera is often gravelly, disrupted by tree roots that have split the surface, and sometimes wildly uneven, and in some portions, you have to dismount and walk your bike—which is why dedicated cyclists take to the busy highways.



Bardolino

The whizzing traffic and lack of a clearly defined bike lane on many of those roads scare me away from that, but luckily, a little perseverance led to some better conditions on the path to complement the stunningly tranquil views of the lake.

I could have rented a sturdy mountain bike at *L'Arena*. Located directly across the street from my hotel, the shop offers a huge selection of mountain bikes and more, starting from just 15€ per day (higher-quality bikes cost



John in Malcesine

around 50 or so euros for each 24 hours). However, Enjoy Garda offers trail bikes to its guests, and I take one of those for a spin.

First stop: *Lazise*, with medieval walls and buildings not far from a waterpark and theme park called *Gardaland* (www.gardaland.it). Starving from my morning miles, I have a simple lunch of pizza—and gelato. (Who could resist? Try *Al Paradise*, Via Porta del Lion, 7; 39-045-6470262).

Refreshed, I head towards *Bardolino*—for further refreshment! Bardolino has been known for its winemaking for hundreds of years. I check out the *Zeni Vineyard* (39-045 7210022, www.zeni.it) to visit its museum, which contains exhibits about nearly every aspect of viticulture. I am especially interested in the cooperage section with its collection of vintage (even some ancient) tools.

It may be the wine talking, but now I'm hungry: *Ristorante da Beppina* (Via Goffredo Mameli, 22; 39-045-7210387) specializes in fried fish, although I am soon happily stuffed with the restaurant's equally delicious steamed lobster.

The next day, I take a break and explore Peschiera a bit, browsing the open-air market in the town center that offers chocolates, wines, cheeses, *salumi*, and more, even a selection of

local crafts. For lunch, I go to *Trattoria al Ponte* (Via Venezia, 9; 39-045-7550107) for its signature local sardines. These are nothing like the skinny fish you find in metal tins; they're large, perfectly fresh, and deliciously mild.

If you are a more dedicated cyclist than I, you might want to visit *Malcesine*, which offers beautiful mountain views of the lake. At 28 miles north of Peschiera, it's a hard one-day trip, a robust overnight trip—or a nice, easy one if you take the ferry between the two towns. (Information for all of Lake Garda's ferries, including timetables, maps, and fares can be found at www.visitgarda.com).

Not all ferries allow bikes on board; check www.navigazionealaghi.it for details. However, you can always rent a bike on the *Via Gardesana Val di Sogna*, just past the ferry station. The road itself is a nice ride, although I pay close attention to traffic, especially at the roundabouts. There are hillier trails for those not so inclined (www.360gardalife.com/en/sport/bike offers some advice on bike trails for all levels).

Malcesine's most scenic peak, *Monte Baldo*, can't be reached by bike, so I dismount, lock up, and take a cable car ride (all info can be found here: www.bit.ly/1EyoFNP). You can choose your own comfort level, and I realize as I gaze out over Lake Garda that's exactly why this trip is so worthwhile: My comfort level took me where I wanted to go, and yours will, too.

—John Hogan

John Hogan is a freelance writer based in Manhattan.

Enjoy Garda/Garda Bike Hotel

Via Venezia, 26
Peschiera del Garda
(39) 045 6401050

www.gardabikehotel.com

Rates: 1250 to 1750€ for weekly package. Specific cycling packages for all levels are available.

numerous small islands.

we use them and by “coming into contact with people’s warmth on a daily basis, the keys accumulate countless, multilayered memories that dwell within us.” The installation is peaceful and contemplative and an enormous surprise upon entry to see such a sea of bright red.

The city of Venice is not known for its innovative architecture since no new construction is allowed, just refurbishment. An exception to this rule is the construction of the new Australian pavilion in the Giardini and the first new building in Venice in 20 years. The new building replaces the previous pavilion, in the same location.

The building, designed by architects Denton Corker Marshall, is a black rectangle that hangs out on the canal behind the Giardini. The inaugural exhibition by *Fiona Hall* is an immersive installation that confronts global, political, financial and environmental events and issues. Hall is one of many women chosen to represent her country, a trend seen in many of the national pavilions.

The Golden Lion was awarded to the Republic of Armenia this year, which showcased a group exhibition by artists of the Armenian Diaspora on the island of *San Lazzaro degli Armeni*. The award was fitting and much deserved in this symbolic year 2015 on the occasion of the one hundredth commemoration of the Armenian

Genocide. The exhibition location also holds special significance as the Armenian monk Mekhitar established the Mekhitarist Order there in 1717.

It was on the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni that Lord Byron studied the Armenian language in the early 19th century. Many important works of European literature and religious texts were first translated into Armenian on this scenic island. Over its 300-year history the Monastery of San Lazzaro, with its gardens, former print shop, cloisters, museum and library, has helped to preserve Armenia’s unique cultural heritage, much of which might

otherwise have been lost. The exhibition is phenomenal and the visit to the exquisite island is an added bonus.

Moving away from the Giardini, Arsenale and national pavilions and into the center of Venice brings you close to the Accademia Bridge in the *Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo* with four monumental works by *Doug Argue*, an American-born, New York-based artist. The non-profit organization Save Venice Inc. presents its first foray into the contemporary art scene with Argue’s *Scattered Rhymes*, held in conjunction with the 2015 Venice Biennale. The title of the exhibition

pays homage to *Rime Sparse*, the collection of sonnets by the 13th-century Italian poet *Petrarch*.

These site-specific works were inspired in part by *Titian* and *Tintoretto*, two master painters of Renaissance Venice. Argue’s paintings capture the effect of the city’s canals, narrow streets, and particular red brickwork at the same time that they continue his ongoing efforts to suggest the passage of time, light, motion, and how the past informs the present. This is just one example of gaining access to a palace on the Grand Canal that is otherwise closed to the public.

There is no better time to visit Venice than during a visual arts Biennale year, such as this one. La Serenissima shines at the moment while inviting you to explore the city, stopping in numerous exhibitions here and there while winding your way throughout the city. There is no area left untouched and this is the beauty and reach of the Venice Biennale. More artists want to participate each year and because

space is limited in the main venues, they seek out unique spaces for their installations. Venice Biennale truly offers something for every visitor.

—Jill Weinreich Luppi

Jill Weinreich Luppi, an American living in Venice, last wrote about daily life in Venice for the October 2014 issue of Dream of Italy.



Armenian Pavilion



Doug Argue’s *Scattered Rhymes*



89 countries are participating in *La Biennale*.