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VENEZIA

BEYOND THE ICON

Photographs by Alejandro Merizalde. Texts by Luis Pérez-Oramas

Alejandro Merizalde began photographing in Venice in 2008. In his early visits he found the city stiflingly overcrowded, but during a brief winter trip a few years later, the overcast skies and foggy atmosphere allowed him to draw out Venice's legendary beauty without the disruptions of mass tourism.

In 2013 he started experimenting with longer exposures to eliminate the distractions of human activity and enable him to concentrate on his architectural compositions. This shift in approach was gradual, but it helped him realise that he was no longer interested in recording iconic features like St Mark's Basilica, the Bridge of Sighs and the gondola, to name a few. From then on, he dropped the predictable locations and buildings and trained his lens on the Venice lagoon and areas of the city where Venetians actually spend their lives.

Alejandro Merizalde was born in Ecuador in 1979 and has spent sixteen years developing his wide-ranging Venice photographic project. His first book, *100 Churches of Venice and the Lagoon*, was published by Damiani in 2021. His second title, *Thirteen Venetian Gasoline Stations*, a limited-edition art book conceived in tribute to artist Ed Ruscha, was published in 2023. He currently lives and works in Connecticut with his wife.

Luis Pérez-Oramas was born in Caracas in 1960. He is a poet and art historian, holding a PhD in Art History from the École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris (1994). He was the curator of Latin American Art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from 2003 to 2017, and is the author of several exhibition catalogues, essays on art, social issues and political criticism, as well as nine books of poetry.