Can’t Make It to the Venice Biennale? See Work by Every Artist in the Arsenale Section of the Sprawling Exhibition

The biennale’s main exhibition "May You Live in Interesting Times" is a show in two halves.

A little bit of fatigue is part of the price of admission to big, sprawling art events like the Venice Biennale. Navigating such an ambitious exhibition is no easy task, since it ranges across multiple venues and brings together vast quantities of material.

Ralph Rugoff’s edition is plenty ambitious and plenty sprawling. But in an attempt to make the 2019 edition a bit more user-friendly, he has conceptually split the big show into two parts, with each of his selected artists getting to show twice: once in the industrial Arsenale
space, and again in the main pavilion in the Giardini. Rugoff has dubbed the two parallel and contrasting exhibitions “Proposition A” and “Proposition B.”

Whether the gesture actually pays off in terms of meaning-making remains to be seen, but it does give you permission to treat the two parts as distinct units that you can consider individually.

—Ben Davis