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THE UNDERSEA ART OF ANDREAS FRANKE

Special Features — 08 July 2016



By Greg Carannante

City & Shore Magazine

OK, here's an idea. Dive 90 feet deep into the Atlantic a few miles off Key West to explore a massive WWII-era shipwreck. And at the same time, take in a fantastic photo exhibit in a uniquely South Florida gallery – the sunken ship itself.

The brainchild of Viennese photographer Andreas Franke, the exhibit on the *USNS Vandenberg*, which in 2009 became the world's second-largest vessel sunk to become an artificial reef, will over four months turn a projected 12,000 divers into undersea gallery-goers.

Franke shoots sunken ships and then digitally enhances the photos into thematic conceptual images of undersea *human* life – for example, a young girl on deck with a butterfly net trying to catch fish swimming by. Then Franke returns the artworks to their source, where they take on what he calls “the patina of the sea” – the attachment of marine life to their surface – before being exhibited in a gallery on dry land.

Though his first underwater exhibit was shot *and* displayed on the *Vandenberg* in 2010, and a second a year later, this fifth installation of the series he calls “The Sinking World” is a little different. In April the 520-foot missile-tracking ship was hung with new, larger prints of images shot on the sunken Greek freighter *Stavronikita* off Barbados a couple of years ago.

The concept was conceived seven years ago when Franke, 48, came upon a shipwreck in Croatia and began shooting. A diver and commercial photographer for more than 20 years, Franke says: “For me it was always a wish – how can I bring those two together? I’m a conceptual photographer, so back in the studio I added a person. I said, ‘OK, that looks a lot better than I hoped.’”

An article about the *Vandenberg* drew him across the ocean a couple of years later. Here, he says, “I came up with the idea – maybe it’s possible to have an installation underwater, to bring it back where everything started, to the *Vandenberg*.”

It took months to make the right connection: Joe Weatherby, whose Artificial Reefs International in Key West was the ship’s wrecker. “I knocked on his door and said let’s make it an underwater photo gallery,” Franke says. “[Joe] said, ‘OK, that’s crazy enough – he’s crazy, I’m even crazier.’”

Franke makes five to six dives – “[The view is] empty, only fish and my camera” – before returning to his studio in Vienna to narrow the thousand images to 12 and photograph the models, sets and props he will Photoshop into the underwater shots.

“It’s almost like a fashion shoot,” he says. Months of production, printing and waterproofing precede shipping the pieces back here and hanging them with magnets on the steel wrecks.

At the end of this month, Franke and Weatherby, now his Florida associate, will bring up the prints and show them off at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West, tentatively from mid-August to January. Contact the center at 35 E. Quay Road, 305-809-4750.



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"This is one of the most important parts – that the sea converts them," Franke says. "It is unique with all the growths, the patina of the sea. I never know if they will look fantastic afterwards. The ocean is the one who makes it good."

The 4x5-foot pieces sell for \$15,000-\$20,000. Smaller reproductions are available for \$300 on Franke's website, thesinkingworld.com.

IF YOU GO

Dive companies

Adventure Watersport Charters

adventurewatersportcharters.com, 305-453-6070

Dive Key West

divekeywest.com,

305-296-3823,

800-426-0707

Finz Dive Center

finzdivecenter.com,

305-395-0880

Florida Straits Diving

floridastraitsdiving.com,

305-587-4018

Key West Dive Center

keywestdivecenter.com,

866-563-1805

Lost Reef Adventures

lostreef-adventures.com,

305-296-9737

South Point Divers

southpointdivers.com,

305-292-9778

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FOOD & DINING

A round of South Florida beer events

South Florida BrewFest, noon-4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 7 Name a local brewery and it will be participating in the fourth annual South Florida BrewFest at Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus, 3000 NE 151 St., North Miami. The festival brings together breweries, brewpubs and home...

TV's Gordon Ramsay dines at Fort Lauderdale's ROK:BRGR

TV's "Hell's Kitchen" chef Gordon Ramsay had dinner last week at the Fort Lauderdale ROK:BRGR in Himmarshee Village. Ramsay caught up with Bret Hauser, a former "Hell's Kitchen" contestant who's now chef at PizzaCraft. ROK:BRGR and PizzaCraft are owned by Fort Lauderdale-based J.E.Y. Hospitality...

THE GO GUIDE

Johnny V restaurant on Las Olas closes

Owner cites proposed rent increase for sudden shuttering.

Best events this week: Flight of the Conchords and Miss Florida USA

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The top things to do, see and hear July 11-17 in South Florida.

SHOPPING & BEAUTY

Free Slurpee at 7-Eleven on Monday

Chill with a free Slurpee at 7-Eleven on Monday, July 11. No purchase is necessary to get the free small frozen drink from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at participating convenience stores to celebrate Slurpee's 50th birthday. 7-Eleven also is giving away 11 free Slurpees with purchase of seven cold ones during...

Big discount on new voice-activated Apple TV with Sling TV subscription

SlingTV is celebrating its new Apple TV application with a hot \$60 discount on the new voice-activated streaming device with Siri Remote. The noncontract subscription service from Dish Network, which streams live cable TV channels (AMC, ESPN, TBS, TNT, CNN, etc.) for \$20 a month, is offering the...

ROD HAGWOOD

Fashion porn: Miami Heat Dancers post new poster

Wearing a variety of racy red bikinis (where else could that happen but in SoFlo in the winter?), the Miami Heat Dancers have launched their poster. Heat-ster fans will get to see the haute-hot poster at tonight's game against the Toronto Raptors.

Fashion porn: Behind the scenes at Parke & Ronen's Miami photo shoot

Here are some behind-the-scenes photos from swimwear brand Parke & Ronen's latest photo shoot in Miami (Wynwood, Midtown, the Design District and several beaches) for their 2016 Resort Collection. Founded in 1997 by Parke Lutter and Ronen Jehezkel, the label has established itself as a fashion...

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Sunrise-based Pet Supermarket merges with Pet Valu of Ontario

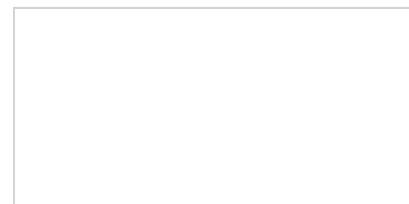
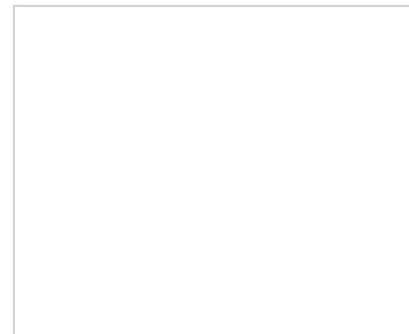
Sunrise-based Pet Supermarket has merged with Pet Valu of Ontario, Canada, the companies announced Monday. Pet Supermarket, which has 165 stores in the southeastern U.S. and 43 in South Florida, will continue to be based in Sunrise, the companies said. Pet Supermarket employs 2,257 people, including...

Man gets 10 years for Delray shooting that left one teen dead, another wounded

A man on Monday was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to manslaughter in a 2012 Delray Beach shooting that left one teen dead and another wounded. Thomas Alan Taylor, 34, had been facing a first-degree murder charge. His lawyer, Ruth Martinez-Estes, said that Taylor's guilty...

Snake bites man in Lake Worth, firefighters say

A snake bite left a man in Lake Worth hospitalized Monday, according to a Palm Beach County Fire Rescue news release. It happened at about 8:30 a.m. when firefighters responded to the 9000 block of Pineville Drive, just south of Lantana Road. The man told firefighters that a snake bit him but he...





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