



NEWS

Cristopher Cichocki's 'Rising Inversion' grips viewers with phosphorescent glow



Artist Cristopher Cichocki draws lines with a flashlight on his luminescent sculpture, "Rising Inversion," the signature piece of the 11th annual Art & Nature program at north Main Beach Park in Laguna Beach on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

**By Andrew Turner**Staff Writer | [✉ Contact](#)

Nov. 4, 2023 12:58 PM PT

Beachgoers who came upon it simply couldn't pass it and keep going.

A massive semicircular structure had been placed at Main Beach, due north of the boardwalk, and even in the daylight, its visitors stared perplexed.

Laguna Art Museum representatives filled them in, sharing that the scene before them was the featured exhibit for the institution's 11th annual Art & Nature program.



A crowd of guests waits to watch artist Cristopher Cichocki (in orange jacket) unveil "Rising Inversion" on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

Those who could were advised to stick around for sunset, when [Coachella Valley artist](#) Cristopher Cichocki's headlining work would be officially introduced to the community.

Following a discussion by the artist to kick off the event, museum guests joined more members of the public patiently waiting to catch Cichocki's sculpture, "Rising Inversion," in full effect.

A look at the first reveal of Coachella Valley artist Cristopher Cichocki's "Rising Inversion," the featured exhibit of Laguna Art Museum's 11th annual Art & Nature program. [@TheDailyPilot](#) [@CarolCormaci](#) [pic.twitter.com/L4pBL19s90](#)

— Andrew Turner (@AndrewTurnerTCN) November 3, 2023

When the sun went down, Cichocki flashed a light over the sand and phosphorescent surface of the artwork, each wave of the mysterious wand-like device giving way to a new piece of what he called a "biomorphic light painting."

Gathered in the dark, a captive audience stood at rapt attention as the image came into being, its turquoise-tinted glow an homage to bioluminescence, an occurrence that happens every so often off the shore of Southern California.



Artist Cristopher Cichocki's "Rising Inversion" is set against a hillside at Main Beach Park in Laguna Beach. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The 3,000-pound structure, 12 feet tall and 40 feet long, dominated its location in front of a hillside above the surf line. Its depth ranged from 5 feet in the center to 1 foot at its edges, giving it a spherical appearance.

A high-density foam made the structure transportable. It was then sealed with concrete, a phosphorescent topcoat and sand from the shoreline of Laguna Beach.

While the artwork is located at Main Beach, placing it in front of the hillside and away from the downtown area was by design, Cichocki said.



Artist Cristopher Cichocki begins the process of lighting his luminescent artwork "Rising Inversion" on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

"The phosphorescence is a pigment that I've been using in my work for almost two decades," Cichocki said. "It's a kind of custom varnish that I've created in relationship to this phosphorescent pigment. With just a matter of 30 minutes of sunlight, it will glow all night long. If you were to have zero light pollution, this thing would be looking as bright as this particular activation of the light painting."

Cichocki considers his work to be at the intersection of the natural world and industry. In 2022, he had the opportunity to exhibit and perform at the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival. "Circular Dimensions x Microscape," his installation featuring 25,000 feet of PVC pipe, created a pavilion that served as his performance stage.

During its brief stay on Main Beach, "Rising Inversion" was the planned backdrop for an audiovisual performance by Cichocki on Saturday night.



Artist Cristopher Cichocki walks to his featured exhibit "Rising Inversion" on Thursday in Laguna Beach. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

"Circular Dimensions is my musical moniker," Cichocki said. "It's an audiovisual, ever-evolving series of performances that responds to the immediate site. I've been doing it for 10 years now, and there's always some element of sound, some element of light, of video, kind of a multi-sensory environment."

Cichocki said the sounds planned for Saturday night's show included a combination of ambient sound, Gregorian chants and sounds heard in Laguna such as ocean waves and street traffic passing by in the dead of night.

"If there's nothing around and that car's going down the vastness of Coast Highway, it actually sounds like a wave," Cichocki added. "There's this synthesis that occurs."



The sun sets on artist Cristopher Cichocki's "Rising Inversion" in Laguna Beach on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

The final sunset for the work will fall on Sunday, which concludes this year's Art & Nature festivities.

A graduate of Palm Desert High who went on to study at California Institute of the Arts, Cichocki said it was an honor to have his work featured in the Art & Nature program. He named off several headlining artists of the past, including Laddie John Dill, Lita Albuquerque and Phillip K. Smith III.

Julie Perlin Lee, executive director of Laguna Art Museum, said she consulted with former Art & Nature artists before landing on Cichocki as this year's featured creative. She said that Cichocki had appeal as a multidisciplinary artist who had a history of being able to collaborate with multiple agencies on projects.



Artist Cristopher Cichocki draws lines with a flashlight on "Rising Inversion" at north Main Beach Park in Laguna Beach on Thursday. (Don Leach / Staff Photographer)

"What was really fascinating to me is that Cristopher is an artist who is thinking on a huge timescale," Perlin Lee said. "He thinks on geologic time, and that's something that I think is really important for me, and I hope others are picking up on that when they see his project here, that we are very concerned with our environment today and our planet today."

"So many of us are focused on the now, but I love that the undercurrent of Cristopher's work is to think about the much bigger and broader picture, and not even just in terms of water and its scarcity here on Earth, but he also talks about in his work, he thinks about how water even got onto our planet in the first place when it was being formed."



Andrew Turner

Andrew Turner is a sports reporter for the Daily Pilot. Before joining the Pilot in October 2016, he covered prep sports as a freelancer for the Orange County Register for four years. His work also has been used by the Associated Press and California Rubber Hockey Magazine. While attending Long Beach State, he wrote for the college newspaper, the Daily 49er. He graduated with bachelor's degrees in journalism and history. (714) 966-4611