

Venice Afterburn – Official Regional Event Afterburn Report (2025)

Producer Entity: Dogtown Artists United (501c3)

Head of Production: Daniela Ardizzone

Team Leads: Sunny Bak, Eduardo Manilla, Beth Lillie, Andrew Heom

Event Website: veniceafterburn.com

Location: Venice Beach, Los Angeles, California, USA

Event Date: October 4, 2025

Event Duration: One-day event

Years Active: First held in 1997

Years at Current Location: 8

Event Overview

Venice Afterburn is an Official Burning Man Regional Event dedicated to reclaiming public space for community, art, and radical participation. The 2025 event welcomed approximately 3,000 attendees to Venice Beach through an open-access format that blends large-scale art, performance, and grassroots collaboration in a public urban environment.

Attendance & Participation

- Total attendees: approximately 3,000
- Minors present: Yes (event is family-friendly during the day; no children allowed after 6:00 pm)
- Team leads: 10
- Production volunteers: approximately 20
- Estimated volunteer hours: 30
- Theme camps: 6
- Art projects: 20, including a fire-spinning circle and several fire art/mutant vehicles with flame effects
- Performing artists: approximately 56
- Mutant vehicles: 13

Volunteer Participation

2025 marked a significant increase in volunteer involvement before, during, and after the event. Having more team leads, a strong lead as volunteer coordinator, and a focus on clear communication, shared goals, and listening to one another's ideas helped create a culture where volunteers felt motivated to support each other and work toward common objectives.

Tickets & Access

Venice Afterburn uses a hybrid access model designed to maximize inclusion. The event is free and open to the public until 5:30 pm, allowing broad community participation regardless of financial means. After 5:30 pm, tickets are priced affordably with multiple access options, including pay-what-you-can tiers and volunteer entry.

Inclusion & Radical Accessibility

Making the event free during the daytime is one of the primary ways Venice Afterburn supports radical inclusion. By removing financial barriers during peak public hours, the event remains accessible to local residents, families, artists, and passersby. Additionally, signage and an Info Booth staffed by volunteers helped explain Burning Man Regional Event culture to non-burners, further enhancing radical inclusion and spreading burner culture into the default world.

Sustainability Efforts

In 2025, Venice Afterburn took a significant step toward environmental responsibility by transitioning to a 100% solar-powered energy vendor. This shift reduced carbon impact and aligned the event more closely with sustainability values while operating in a dense, urban setting.

Technology & Tools

Event planning and coordination utilized:

- WhatsApp (communication and department-specific group chats)
- Google Docs (event planning, budgeting, and scheduling)

Ticketing platforms used:

- Ticket Tailor (main event)
- Eventbrite (afterparty)

Financial Overview

- Gross ticket sales: \$49,571 USD
- Total art grants distributed: \$6,117 USD
- Total number of grants given: 20
- Increasing the door contribution from \$10 to \$20 resulted in higher overall revenue. The surplus funds generated this year will be allocated toward expanding the art grant program for 2026. A public call for artists will be released around May 2026, with grants awarded to support the creation of new artworks to be built and presented at Venice Afterburn 2026.

Challenges

The top challenges faced in 2025 included:

- Producing a large-scale event that incorporates Burning Man art, mutant vehicles, performers, and flame effects within a public location managed by the City of Los Angeles
- Placing multiple stages within a relatively small footprint while minimizing sound conflicts, while also striving to remain fully inclusive.

Innovative Solutions

To address space and sound limitations, the event integrated a rotating system that alternated mutant vehicles with live stages, allowing for greater participation and variety without overwhelming the site. This approach increased inclusion while maintaining manageable sound levels and flow.

Progress Compared to the Previous Year

- The number of porta-potties was doubled in 2025 compared to 2024, reducing long lines. Some wait-time complaints remained, and the team is considering spreading porta-potty locations more evenly in 2026.

- Two food trucks were present instead of one, significantly reducing food lines.
- For the first time, a no-children policy was implemented after 6:00 pm. This decision was made due to safety concerns after observing a large number of unattended children during evening hours in 2024.

Community Impact

Venice Afterburn continues to have a tangible positive effect on the local community. The event helps restore a sense of community in Venice Beach that has been fading due to intense gentrification, rising rents, and the displacement of Venice-based artists. By reclaiming public space for collaboration rather than consumption, Venice Afterburn revives Venice's legacy of creative cross-cultures and artist-driven expression.

Inspiration

This year, what stood out most was how naturally people and volunteers stepped into care and participation without being asked. Seeing long-time community members and first-time participants collaborate, problem-solve, and genuinely look out for one another reinforced that the culture is alive, resilient, and worth sustaining.