

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



# JUNIOR

FULVIO BIANCONI  
AT VENINI

13.9.2015  
10.1.2016

LE STANZE DEL VETRO  
Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

10 am – 7 pm  
closed on Wednesdays  
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## FULVIO BIANCONI



Fulvio Bianconi was born in Padua in 1915, but from childhood he lived in Venice. At only 16 years of age he began to spend much of his time at the Murano furnaces, which he found fascinating. He had a natural talent and a great passion for drawing, something which he would cultivate all his life. He was a great graphic artist and illustrated many covers for geography books and literature books for children.

He was involved in advertising, in Milan in particular, where he moved with his wife and their two daughters. At little more than thirty years of age he was invited to come to Murano to design new bottles for a perfume to be put on the market: from this time he began to work with Paolo Venini and returned frequently to the island to design highly coloured vases and glass pieces, such as you will see in this exhibition.

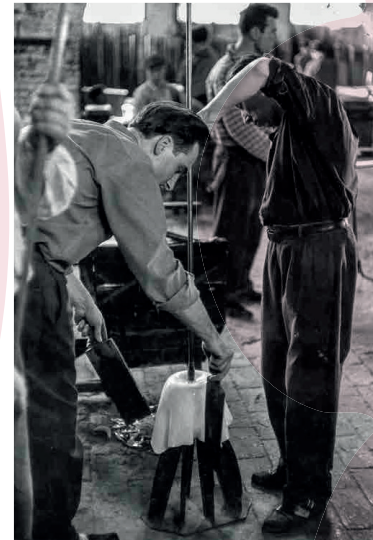
His friend Bruno Munari said of him:

**“Everyone knows that Bianconi draws continually. I mean that he draws while eating, while talking, while walking along the street, that he draws on the vaporetto, at exhibitions, at conferences, everywhere and at all times”.**

## BLOWN GLASS

Glass is a very ancient material, known since 2500 B.C., and was discovered, possibly somewhat by chance, in Mesopotamia, in an area which nowadays corresponds to Syria and Iraq. It is composed principally of **silica**, a mineral contained in river sand, which is fused at very high temperatures (over 1000°C!) with **lime** (calcium carbonate), contained in certain kinds of rock, and **soda** (sodium carbonate), a salt which used to be taken in blocks from the seas of the Middle East or obtained from the ashes of algae or costal plants. Glass can be worked in different ways: one very old technique, developed in Roman times, is that of **blowing**.

The master glassmaker, blowing into a long hollow metal tube, shapes the glass taken in small quantities from the pot inside the oven and forms a bubble, called a **bolo**. When the master glassmaker, in close cooperation with his helpers, shapes it by making certain movements and using specific tools, he is working according to



the technique called “soffio libero” (**free blowing**). If, on the other hand, he puts the ‘bolo’ into a mould, whether open or closed, and continues to blow in such a way as to make it expand along the internal walls, he is using the technique called “soffiatura a stampo” (**mould blowing**). The glass takes on the shape of the mould and any decoration there might be on its internal surface, such as relief details (projecting vertical lines, circles etc.).

# VISIT THE EXHIBITION

1



This **Handkerchief** vase was produced by superimposing layers of different colours (called the *incamiciatura* technique) and skilfully crumpled by hand, as you will see in the video in Room 6.

2



In this room there are two vases with the same shape and dimensions but different colours, do you recognise them? This one in particular is decorated with a close weft like a net.

3



What do you see in these patches? Try to read them like an image and its shadow. Drawing number 4323 hanging on the wall will help you.

4



In this bottle you can see the difference between the transparent and the opaque red glass, produced with an outer layer of transparent red glass and a central white band of “lattimo” (milk-white) glass.

10



The African figurines remind one of sculptures in ebony. They are dressed in mantles made of coloured tesserae (**murrine**) fused together!

9



The many-coloured parrot is decorated with the use of the **Phoenician** technique: a thread of multi-coloured glass is wrapped around the white lattimo glass body and then pulled with a special comb, creating the effect of feathers.

8



These pieces are called the **Tiepoli** pieces or the **Fantocci del Tiepolo** (Tiepolo's Puppets). Fulvio Bianconi gave his Pulcinella series (pulcinella - character of the Italian Commedia dell'Arte) this name as he drew his inspiration from the frescoes of Giandomenico Tiepolo, which you can admire at Ca' Rezzonico, the museum of the Venetian 17th Century.

5



The **Pezzati** (patchwork) vases are produced with multi-coloured tesserae, in precise chromatic combinations. Some are called by the names of cities or continents. Read them carefully in the captions hanging on the wall, they will be useful later on.

6

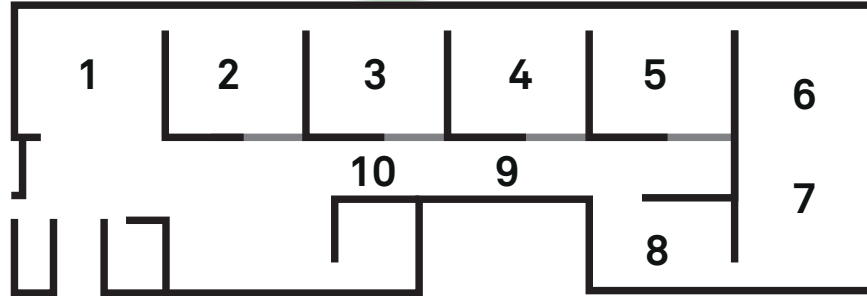


The **perforated** vases or vases with holes are also called the **Moore** glass pieces, having been inspired by the works of the English sculptor Henry Moore, who exhibited at the Biennale of Venice in 1948.

7



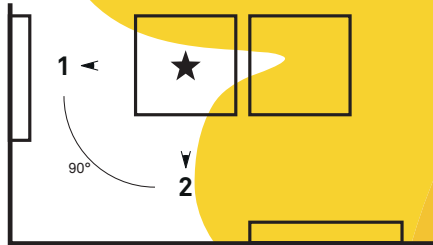
Have you ever been to Burano? It's a very colourful island, in the lagoon in Venice. These vases remind one of the **merletti** (lacework) which still today are produced on this island! The weft of the design is not produced with threads but with so many **murrine** (heat-worked mosaic glass pieces) in lattimo and crystal glass!



# 1. How is the bottle made up?

Go back to Room 4 and ... turn by 90°!

Look at the bottle at the centre of the first showcase from Point 1 and draw it in the first square. Now go to Point 2 and draw it in the second square.



1

2

*Why are the two drawings different?*

This is the effect wanted by Bianconi, who enjoyed playing with forms: by moving from Point 1 to Point 2 you will notice that the base, which was bulging before, has now become slimmer, while the upper volume of the bottle has undergone the opposite effect. Imagine the vase as if made from two flattened spheres aligned vertically and deliberately rotated one on the other to an angle of 90°.

# 2. The colours of the cities

Do you remember the names of the places Fulvio Bianconi gave to the colour combinations of these vases? Associate them with the cities on the map!



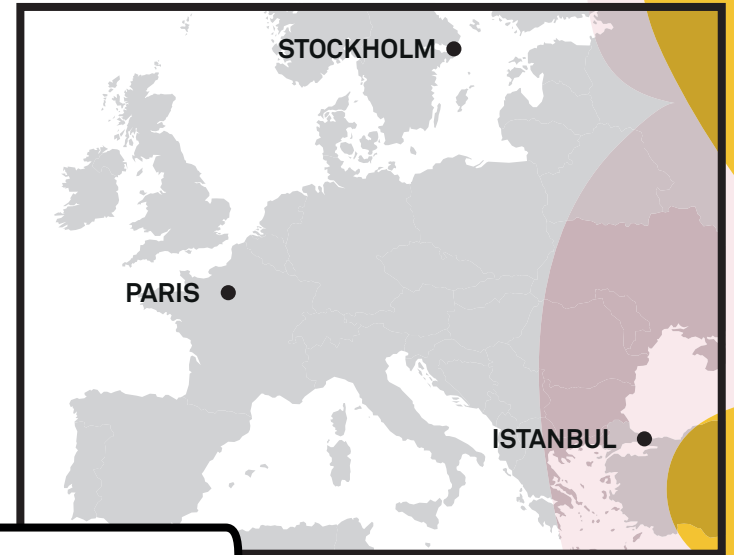
A



B



C



Now invent a combination yourself with the colours which most remind you of your home town and reproduce it on this glass.

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### 3. The characters of the *Commedia dell'Arte*

Find the right stage partner in the wings of the little theatre.... With the help of the drawings hanging on the wall and the hints given below, complete sentences with the names of the characters:



- 1) He's playing a little black harmonica \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) She's near her highly coloured companion \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) He's enjoying himself upside down \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) His name is really comical...with those dangling arms he's really funny, isn't he? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) He's a captain, do you see his sword? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) She's a beautiful young girl, the daughter of the Venetian merchant Pantalone \_\_\_\_\_

GAME 3 1. Giangurgolo; 2. Arlecchino; 3. Meneghino; 4. Peppe Nappa; 5. Capitán Fracassa; 6. Rosaura

GAME 2 A. Istanbul; B. Paris; C. Stockholm

SOLUTIONS