

LE STANZE DEL VETRO
A Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Pentagram Stiftung project

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore
14 April – 24 November 2024

1912-1930

MURANO GLASS AND THE VENICE BIENNALE

Curated by **Marino Barovier**

The new exhibition of LE STANZE DEL VETRO is dedicated to the presence of Murano glass at this prestigious Venetian event examining the period from 1912 to 1930

The exhibition organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO **1912-1930 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale**, curated by **Marino Barovier**, will run on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore **from 14 April to 24 November 2024**.

The exhibition is dedicated to the presence of Murano glass at this prestigious Venetian event, examining the period between 1912 and 1930 (from the 10th to the 17th edition of the Biennale) through a discerning selection of **135 works**, many of which are extremely rare and on loan from leading museums and private collections.

This was a period in which Murano glass gradually acquired a space at the Biennale, first through artists who chose to use this extraordinary material for their works, and then thanks to the Biennale's opening up to the decorative arts, which until 1930 were shown in various rooms in the Palazzo dell'Esposizione together with the so-called "major" arts. It was only starting in 1932, with the building of a new pavilion, that glass and the decorative arts in general would be assigned a dedicated structure in the Giardini.

In the 1910s, the exhibited works consisted mostly in glass pieces conceived by artists. These included the sculptor and ceramist **Hans Stoltenberg Lerche** from Norway, who participated from 1912 to 1920 with original pieces featuring hot applications of threads and multicoloured powders; the Murano decorator **Vittorio Toso Borella** (1912–1914) and his enamels; the painters **Vittorio Zecchin** and **Teodoro Wolf Ferrari** with their *murrine* (hot-worked mosaic) pieces of 1914, and the wrought-iron artist and craftsman **Umberto Bilotto** (1914–1924), with his iron and glass combinations, often embellished with *murrine* inserts. These artists collaborated with glassmaking companies, such as **Fratelli Toso** and **Artisti Barovier**, to produce their works. Unlike the Muranese production of the time, generally characterized by an historicist approach, these glass pieces presented at the Biennale introduced a **new style** enlivened and enriched, albeit late, by the North-European vibrant art scene.

After the hiatus imposed by World War I, from the 1920s onward various **glassmaking companies** began to participate in the Biennale alongside some of the above artists, presenting their best production independently or in collaboration with external designers.



Outstanding among them was the **Giacomo Cappellin** and **Paolo Venini** furnace, **V.S.M. Cappellin Venini e C.** which, thanks to Vittorio Zecchin's artistic collaboration, produced **monochrome blown glass** pieces with an elegant, understated modern look that built on Renaissance models. Exhibited between 1922 and 1924, they opened up a unique path for renewing Murano glassware, which led to the use of transparent monochrome glass from the 1920s to the 1940s. This type of glass was also adopted by the painter and engraver **Guido Balsamo Stella**, who showed his creations at the Biennale from 1924 to 1930. His engraved glass works, blown at the SAIAR Ferro Toso furnace, were outstanding and, while drawing inspiration from the pieces created by Edward Hald and Simon Gate for the Swedish company Orrefors, in no way lacked originality.

Innovative transparent pieces were presented in 1926 by the glassmaking companies set up after Cappellin and Venini went their separate ways: **M.V.M. Cappellin e C.**, which displayed pieces designed by **Vittorio Zecchin**, and **V.S.M. Venini e C.** whose creations were designed by the sculptor **Napoleone Martinuzzi**.

The latter invented **pulegoso**, a semi-opaque glass with dense bubbles. This was used to create a series of artefacts with an archaic form and sculptural aspect, which attracted considerable attention at the 1928 Biennale. **Vetreria Artistica Barovier** also participated in this edition, with a small series of **animals and plants** in multicoloured transparent glass. It was a new line, as were the ornaments that the furnace would continue to produce in the following years, which stood out for the quality of the vitreous material and the techniques adopted, as well as the playful approach to the theme.

Other animals in translucent glass were presented by **Guido Balsamo Stella** with **SAIAR Ferro Toso** at the 17th edition in 1930, where the extremely interesting **experimental work** with glass by the leading Murano furnaces, such as Vetreria Artistica Barovier and V.S.M. Venini, was also appreciated. The former displayed some extremely refined **primavera** (craquelled) pieces in milky glass with finishings in black vitreous paste, resulting from Ercole Barovier's research, in the Black and White Gallery. By contrast, Venini showed new layered works in **pulegoso**, covered with a thin layer of another brilliant colour, together with **mescolato** (mixed glass) pieces and original objects like aquariums – again devised by Napoleone Martinuzzi.

The accompanying **catalogue** is edited by Marino Barovier and Carla Sonego, and benefits from their painstaking bibliographic and in-depth documentary research in the Biennale's Historical Archive of Contemporary Arts (ASAC). The catalogue illustrates with vintage photos, drawings and documentary material what was shown at the Biennale in a period that marked the entrance of this so-called "minor" art into the world of major arts, setting the official seal on the artistic value of Murano's avant-garde production.

We would like to remind you that the **online bookshop** of LE STANZE DEL VETRO at www.lestanzedelvetro.org is always open with a wide selection of specialist books for glass lovers. You can also purchase a selection of DVDs and catalogues from former exhibitions at LE STANZE DEL VETRO at a special price.

To keep up to date with the latest news, we recommend following its social media profiles (@lestanzedelvetro) and subscribing to the monthly newsletter via the website.

INFORMATION:

PRODUCTION	Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Pentagram Stiftung
TITLE	1912-1930 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale
CURATO	Marino Barovier
DATES	14 April – 24 November 2024
OPENING HOURS	10 am – 7 pm, closed on Wednesdays
VENUE	LE STANZE DEL VETRO, Fondazione Giorgio Cini
ADDRESS	Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice
TICKET	free entry
CATALOGUE	Skira
INFO	info@lestanzedelvetro.org, info@cini.it
WEB	www.lestanzedelvetro.org, www.cini.it

LE STANZE DEL VETRO

GETTING THERE:

Visitors to the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore can take the Actv 2-line *vaporetto* to the San Giorgio stop from:

San Zaccaria (journey time of approx. 3 minutes)
Train Station (journey time of approx. 45 minutes)
Piazzale Roma (journey time of approx. 40 minutes)
Tronchetto (journey time of approx. 35 minutes)



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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FREE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND GUIDED TOURS

From 20 April, **free guided tours** and educational activities for all ages are coming back to LE STANZE DEL VETRO, on the occasion of the exhibition **1912-1930 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale. Translucid Wizardry** are the exciting guided tours at fixed times for adults, scheduled for **every Saturday and Sunday**, at **11 am in English** and **4 pm in Italian**. The tours aim to retrace the beginnings of modern artistic glass work, exploring the key artists, techniques and subjects that have played a role in the history of the art of contemporary glassmaking in Venice.

Guided tours, including for groups (up to 20 people), can be booked on any other day except Wednesdays.

From May onwards, at 4 pm on every last Saturday of the month (and also on Saturday 4 May), there will be guided tours on the theme **Glass portraits – Artist monographies**, accompanying visitors on a journey of discovery through the lives of some of the key figures in the history of Venetian artistic glassmaking from 1912 to 1930: Napoleone Martinuzzi, Hans Stoltenberg Lerche, Vittorio Zecchin, Teodoro Wolf Ferrari and Umberto Biondo.

Educational activities for families

Starting in May, at 4 pm on every last Sunday of the month (and also on Sunday 5) comes **Mani-fatture**, a series of events, each one different, dedicated to families. Adults and kids will be able to test themselves with activities designed to bring together art, science and entertainment, experimenting with different artistic techniques and learning through games and stories.

Educational activities for schools

From April, the educational activities **for schools for all levels begin**, allowing students to enjoy an exciting mix of activities and games. LE STANZE DEL VETRO are the perfect environment to learn and be fascinated by glass.

Aimed at **kindergarten** children, the **Terrarium** activity allows them to get excited about glass, let their imagination run wild and create their own little glass world using recycled materials. The **youngest primary school children**, after seeing how versatile glass is, will be able to try their hand at creating their own little compositions with the **Glasstangram** and **Fragile but not too much!** activities. The older students, up to **middle school**, will have to put their critical thinking into play with the activity **My 'ROOMS FOR GLASS'**, where they will work with their classmates to change the layout of the exhibition on paper, putting themselves in the shoes of the curators. The activity **I'll be the Art Director Today**, is aimed at **high school students**: after the guided tour, students will have to take a representative photograph of the themes discussed during the visit, once printed and entitled, it will become their personal exhibition poster.

You can book (at least two days before the requested date) by calling +39 041 8627167, lines open from Monday to Saturday, or send an email requesting further information to: lestanzedelvetro.didattica@coopculture.it

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



Murano Glass at the Venice Biennale 1912-1930

Marino Barovier

Curator

(Extract from the catalogue)

[...] painters Teodoro Wolf Ferrari and Vittorio Zecchin, who had also participated in the Ca' Pesaro exhibitions and were known as 'Capesarini,' showed their glass works in the room dedicated to the work of the Divisionist artist Carlo Fornara. The pieces, using *tesserae* and *murrine*, were produced with the collaboration of the furnace of Artisti Barovier, who had also been present at Ca' Pesaro from 1908 onwards, and were the result of experimentation by Wolf Ferrari and Zecchin who had only recently begun to explore the medium of glass.

Wolf Ferrari began his artistic career on the Munich avant-garde scene, exploring the decorative arts from the early 1900s onwards, as revealed by a cartoon for a glass panel dating to 1902. In 1912, this interest led him to found *L'Aratro*, inspired by the Secessionist *Die Scholle*, participating in an exhibition at Ca' Pesaro together with his group and presenting four glass panels made by the Venetian glassworks run by Giuseppe Maffioli.

After encountering the work of Dutch painter Jan Toorop, Zecchin, a Muranese artist associated with the Ca' Pesaro group from 1909 onwards, began to explore the art of Klimt. Like many of his contemporaries, Zecchin had been introduced to Klimt's work during the Austrian's solo exhibition at the 1910 Biennale. When he participated in the 1913 Ca' Pesaro exhibition, because 'his designs so evidently derived [...] from the technique and styles of glass manufactured on this industrious island, from the gorgeous colours and the simple designs of the beads and *murrine*', Zecchin's *Giardino delle Fate* decorative cycle was placed in the Murano room, along with glass pieces by Giuseppe Barovier, including his *murrine* works.

In 1913, Wolf Ferrari and Zecchin both exhibited in Venice and at the first Secessione Romana exhibition, and their shared research soon led to an artistic collaboration whose results could be admired in an exhibition held at the Windhager art gallery, Munich, that December.

Along with a number of paintings by Wolf Ferrari, they presented their first glass creations produced thanks to Artisti Barovier: 'from their first pieces expressing only satisfaction with their magnificent colours and their combinations to examples created ad hoc.' In his review of the event, the celebrated critic Fritz von Ostini describes thirteen vases among the exhibits, reserving his highest praise for a vase designed by Zecchin that 'featured Ethiopian figures in splendid attire against a glowing orange-yellow background'. Wolf Ferrari was mentioned as having presented an example that 'was purely ornamental [...] in green and violet' as well as a plate with a 'sample of flowers revealing his strong sense of colour.' Also by Zecchin was a 20-cm-square panel with 'a figure wearing a multicoloured scarf, water, and three red and blue lagoon poles' which was his main work. Both Wolf Ferrari and Zecchin referred to the Munich exhibition and the praise they had received from von Ostini in their text for the catalogue accompanying the 11th Biennale of 1914, describing their participation in the Venetian exhibition as setting the 'seal of approval' on their work as well as representing the symbolic continuation and further development of the Munich show. The selection shown in Venice included glass exhibited in Germany as well as other pieces produced in the early months of 1914, marked with a star *murrine* inserted into the glass. Examples from this series include a vase made from red *tesserae* with floral inserts by Wolf Ferrari and a number of plaques like those held in the Museo del Vetro di Murano, including the 'Bauta' and 'Fiori' plaques purchased at the Biennale by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce for the Scuola d'Arte Applicata di Venezia. The former, also known as the Lastrina del Barbaro, was one of numerous glass works drawing upon a recurring iconography in Zecchin's paintings: in this case that of a warrior (Ethiopian?) in splendid attire appearing in several variations in the contemporary decorative cycle of *The One Thousand and One Nights* that he created for the Hotel Terminus in Venice.

Freely inspired by one of the most famous tales in the collection of the same name, the work consisted of a series of panels depicting Aladdin's lavish wedding procession

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



to his promised bride, in a succession of princesses and warriors evoking the dignitaries in the glazed bas-reliefs in the palace at Persepolis (sixth century BC). In the decorative panels, the opulence of the garments is achieved through the repetition of round Klimtian elements evoking brightly coloured *murrine* glass while the plaque uses a juxtaposition of real *murrine* in green, yellow, and *lattimo* glass to form the cloak of the hieratic dark-skinned figure.

The study and arrangement of the flowers and colour patches in a plaque featuring a basket of flowers by Wolf Ferrari provides us with useful insights into his practice in some of his other works, which also draw upon juxtapositions and fields of colour. The same characteristics distinguish the fragment of plaque with flowers belonging to the collection of the Liceo artistico Guggenheim di Venezia, which was rediscovered and identified on the occasion of this exhibition. In particular, the decorative floral motif distinguishing this plaque not only links it to the plaque with a flower basket but also seems to resemble the plate with a 'sample of flowers' noted by Von Ostini at the Windhager gallery.

Glass mosaic works characterized by a stylized design and construction inspired by the Secessionist movement emerged as one of the most significant innovations in the glass sector at the 11th Biennale, and were destined to have an impact on the development of this industry.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



ARTISTS AND GLASSWORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

1 Hans St. Lerche

A German artist of Norwegian origins, the successful sculptor, ceramicist and jewellery maker Hans St. Lerche (1867–1920) participated in the 10th Venice Biennale in 1912 with a series of 'artistic glass pieces', produced in the Fratelli Toso furnace and exhibited in the personal room of the painter Vincenzo De Stefani. Lerche had dedicated himself to experimenting and producing original artefacts since 1911, thanks to the assistance of master glassmakers and in particular Vittorio Toso. This was in keeping with his personal artistic research, particularly in the field of ceramics. Effortlessly using traditional processing techniques, he repeatedly resorted to the hot application of glass filaments or the inclusion of spots or bands of colour to obtain artefacts of great sculptural quality and unusual hues. In other cases, the artist used hot-applied grit and glass powders to create unique colour effects and to design decorative motifs often drawn from the marine world he loved so much. New glass pieces were seen at the 11th Biennale in 1914, where he presented works resulting from further experiments he had continued to carry out due to the success of his glass production. In some of these pieces Lerche used cold finishes (grinding) and presented combinations with metal elements, among other things. A recurrent feature was the use of polychrome grit, which was also used to make glassware imitating semiprecious stones in appearance. In general, the inspiration of French glassmaking and Eastern art is evident, with the latter also characterizing some of the works sent by the artist to the 12th Biennale in 1920, which opened the day before his sudden death (16 April 1920).

2 Vittorio Toso Borella

Son of the Murano decorator Francesco Toso Borella, Vittorio (1878–1915), who was himself a skilled decorator, created the Calice del campanile (Bell Tower Chalice) in 1912, exhibited at the 10th Biennale and produced as a commemorative artefact to celebrate the reconstruction of St Mark's bell tower, inaugurated on 25 April 1912 just a few days before the opening of the Venetian exhibition. In greater detail, the chalice echoes the shape and decoration of the Renaissance polychrome enamel glass (c. 1510) of which the archaeologist Giacomo Boni, in charge of selecting antique pieces, had identified a fragment among the rubble of the bell tower that had collapsed in 1902. Even more significant was Toso Borella's participation in the 11th Biennale in 1914 where, in a display case in the centre of the personal room of the painter Vettore Zanetti Zilla, he exhibited polychrome and gold enamel glass of Secessionist inspiration. In some cases they feature repeated patterns with sharp outlines, in others chromatic softness.

3 Teodoro Wolf Ferrari, Vittorio Zecchin

'Observing the *Murrine* that have been manufactured in Murano for a few years now and thinking of the vagueness of the colours of the glass, we had the idea of trying out new techniques, taking advantage in part of the systems in use today and making appropriate improvements. To this end, we availed ourselves of the work of the Barovier artists of Murano, masters of the art of glass. We wanted to, and succeeded in, connecting the pieces of glass, forming ornaments and figures, both for the vases and for the sheets, avoiding lead joins. Since there are unfortunately no furnaces in Murano suitable for large flat glass, we had to make do with small ones, which do, however, show what can be done and achieved in this field. After some successful experiments with both vases and flat glass, we exhibited a number of them last December in Munich [...] We are now persevering with this artistic project, which is both commemorative and innovative at the same time. Teodoro Wolf Ferrari, Vittorio Zecchin', (Catalogue of the 11th Venice Biennale, 1914). Introduced in the catalogue by a text written by the authors themselves, the glassware by the painters Teodoro Wolf Ferrari (1878–1945) and Vittorio Zecchin (1878–1947) was one of the most important innovations in the field of glassmaking to be seen at the 11th Biennale in 1914. They also included the small Fiori (Flowers) and Bauta (Carnival Mask) tablets, by Wolf Ferrari and Zecchin respectively, which were purchased by the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce for the Scuola d'Arte Applicata in Venice and

are now housed in the Museo del Vetro in Murano. Particularly in the small tablet by Zecchin, also known as the Barbaro tablet, we find a recurring iconography from the artist's pictorial works: that of a dark-skinned warrior in sumptuous robes, of which there are several variants in the contemporary decorative cycle of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1913–14). Produced for the Hotel Terminus in Venice, the cycle, of which twelve panels remain today, was freely inspired by one of the most famous stories from the Persian collection of the same name and depicted Aladdin's sumptuous wedding procession towards his betrothed, comprising princesses and warriors, which echoes that of the dignitaries in the polychrome enamel bas-reliefs of the palace of Persepolis (6th century BC). As can be seen in the painting on display, from the collection of the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro in Venice, in both the canvas work and the glass tablet, the male figures stand out for their red headgear, beard and long hair, as well as the cloak with circular elements where Klimt's inspiration is combined with the memory and technique of Venetian murrina.

3a Vittorio Zecchin Enamels

After the First World War, Vittorio Zecchin, having concluded his experience with glass tesserae and *murrine*, continued his activity in the field of glassmaking, producing small series of artefacts with polychrome enamel and gold decorations that were exhibited from 1919 ('X Esposizione d'Arte di Ca' Pesaro', Venice). Some of these pieces of glass were presented in the personal room dedicated to the artist at the 13th Biennale in 1922 ('glass decorated with enamels and gold') and at the 14th Biennale in 1924 ('glass plates decorated with gold').



4 Umberto Bellotto

Present with a solo exhibition at the 11th Biennale in 1914, Umberto Bellotto (1882–1940), a Venetian wrought-iron artist, also participated in the exhibition with works made from other materials, especially glass and ceramics, which in some cases were combined with iron. In 1920, after the forced interruption due to the First World War, Bellotto exhibited a number of 'forged iron and glass cups' at the event, an example of those combinations of iron and glass that were becoming a hallmark of his production, as also seen at the 1922 and 1924 Biennale. The glass elements were initially transparent glass artefacts placed on top of wrought iron structures of various degrees of complexity, sometimes featuring stems with anthropomorphic motifs. Glass parts (*murrine*, Phoenician decoration, polychrome threads, etc.) were also found from 1920 in the form of nodes inserted into the stems of mostly wrought iron structures which, especially from 1922, were enriched with glass flasks or vases featuring polychrome *murrine* and tesserae, made with the assistance of the Vetreria Artistica Barovier. Exemplary in this regard are the two works by Bellotto purchased at the 13th edition from the Galleria Civica di Milano (now at Castello Sforzesco): while one, with a glass wire node, stands out for its composition with a wrought-iron gondola, the other, of which the glass element is preserved, consisted of a structure with 'a peacock with its head feathers holding a glass flask decorated in enamel and colours'. In 1924, the 14th Biennale again dedicated a large solo exhibition to the artist, which met with considerable public acclaim. Although there were plenty of new combinations, there were also numerous glass vases and bowls decorated with *murrine* and with monochrome glass with a dark glass finish that indicated a development in Bellotto's artistic career.

5 V.S.M. Cappellin Venini e C., M.V.M. Cappellin e C. Vittorio Zecchin

Celebrated by Francesco Saporì, on the pages of *Emporium* (June 1922), as an 'apostle of glass', Vittorio Zecchin took part in the 13th Biennale in 1922 with a personal room where, together with some stained-glass windows by Pietro Chiesa Jr from Milan and glassware with enamel and gold decorations, the artist presented 'glassware with different decorations'. It was a small group of transparent blown glass pieces whose models had entered the catalogue of V.S.M. Cappellin Venini e C., a glassworks founded in November 1921 by Giacomo Cappellin and Paolo Venini, where Zecchin himself

had been called in as artistic director, an unprecedented role in early 1920s Murano. The production of the furnace, which was active until 1925, stood out for its elegant artefacts with simple shapes, often inspired by Renaissance glassmaking, made in transparent monochrome glass with colours – sometimes subtle, sometimes intense – played out in shades of green, yellow, blue and amethyst. After the success achieved, both internationally (Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1922) and nationally (1st Monza Biennale in 1923), V.S.M. Cappellin Venini e C. participated in the XIV Venice Biennale in 1924 with lamps and a stylish selection of its models including some ribbed glass. In 1925, following the division of the partners Cappellin and Venini and the subsequent establishment of M.V.M. Cappellin and C. and V.S.M. Venini e C., Vittorio Zecchin stayed on as art director at Giacomo Cappellin's glassworks until 1926. However, both furnaces continued to produce Zecchin's models designed between 1921 and 1925. The Murano painter's new glass pieces designed for M.V.M. Cappellin e C. were exhibited at the 15th Venice Biennale in 1926.

6 Guido Balsamo Stella

Present several times at the Venice Biennale with his etchings (from 1907 to 1922), Guido Balsamo Stella (1882–1941) participated in the Venetian event in 1924 with a series of etched crystal and glass pieces. These artefacts – the crystal mostly from Colle Val d'Elsa and the glass blown in the S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso furnace – stood out for the decorations executed on the wheel with the assistance of the Bohemian engraver Franz Pelzel. Characterized by classical forms, these works were not lacking in originality, despite being inspired by the work of Eward Hald and Simon Gate for the Swedish firm Orrefors. As for the subjects depicted on the surface of vases and cups, Balsamo Stella drew on mythological themes in his sophisticated repertoire, but also proposed images from everyday life. New etched artefacts were exhibited by the artist at the Biennali in 1926 and 1928, where he also featured as the creator of the 'smooth' glass presented by S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso. On this occasion, a prominent role was played by the etched lidded vase *Le costellazioni* (The Constellations) with allegorical depictions of the constellations of Cygnus and Andromeda (woman portrayed from behind), Aquila and Cassiopeia (woman with bowed head and flowing hair) and Columba and Virgo (woman with raised arms). Next to these appeared the sun, the moon in different phases and stars of various shapes and sizes. After the 1928 Biennale, during the final months of the year, Balsamo Stella began working with S.A.L.I.R., a Murano company specialized in decoration on glass, which began to produce the artist's models under its own name. Balsamo Stella designed new etched glass for S.A.L.I.R., which was displayed in the Rotunda space at the 17th Biennale in 1930 together with banded vases, 'chemical' glass and animals designed by the artist for S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso.

7 V.S.M. Venini e C. Napoleone Martinuzzi

The debut of V.S.M. Venini e C. at the Venice Biennale dates back to the 15th edition (1926), in which the glassworks participated with a monumental chandelier and a glass fountain designed by the sculptor Napoleone Martinuzzi (1892–1977), partner and artistic director at the furnace. On the same occasion, it also presented the transparent glassware designed by the artist, who took his initial inspiration in designing the models from the classical lines already proposed by Vittorio Zecchin. In his production, the sculptor soon displayed a particular focus on the volumetric rendering of objects, which in some cases were enlarged and/or modelled with moulded ribs, decorated with applied glass threads or ribbed ribbon handles. He also adopted traditional decorative techniques such as *meza stampa* and *filigrana*. New transparent glassware designed by Martinuzzi was exhibited at the 16th Biennale in 1928.

8 V.S.M. Venini e C. Napoleone Martinuzzi

At the 16th Venice Biennale in 1928, V.S.M. Venini e C. presented the *pulegosi*, new glassware resulting from Napoleone Martinuzzi's most recent research. For this series,



the artist adopted an original semi-opaque material with a spongy appearance, characterized by the inclusion of countless little bubbles (*puleghe*) formed by adding sodium bicarbonate or petroleum to the incandescent vitreous mass. By studying some mother-of-pearl glass chandeliers incorporating long bubbles, made by the Barovier artists at the end of the 19th century and housed in the Museo Vetrario in Murano, of which Martinuzzi was director (1922–1931), he was able to develop this new technique to produce artefacts with a remarkable sculptural quality. *Pulegosi* were thick pieces of glass, which were also characterized by archaic shapes imitating ancient amphorae and cups, sometimes of large dimensions. New models of *pulegosi*, also distinguished by gold leaf applications, were exhibited at the 17th Biennale in 1930 and, in greater numbers, at the 4th Monza Triennale in the same year. At the 17th Biennale, V.S.M. Venini e C. also presented a series of opaque glassware, with intense colours, made of layered glass and/or mixed glass developed by Martinuzzi as a variant of chalcedony glass, to obtain polychrome streaks similar to those of semiprecious stones.

9 Fratelli Barovier (Vetreria Artistica Barovier)

On the occasion of the 17th Biennale in 1930, the Vetreria Artistica Barovier, cited in the catalogue as Fratelli Barovier, participated with an extensive exhibition of extraordinary artefacts in *Primavera* glass: an unprecedented milky glass with a craquelé appearance achieved thanks to Ercole Barovier's (1889–1974) experiments on the material. Combined with black or blue glass, *primavera* glass was also used to make a pigeon, which, presented both in Venice and at the 4th Monza Triennale in 1930, can be considered the symbol of the entire series because of its elegance and refinement. Illustrated in the Biennale catalogue and repeatedly published in trade magazines, the artefact combines great formal synthesis with the uniqueness of the glass texture. Because of their characteristic two-tone colouring, some objects were placed in the Black and White Gallery, while others appeared in the room dedicated to decorative art. These were exquisite pieces including vases, bowls, candlesticks and animals, charmingly decorated with Art Deco-inspired finishes, which also aroused considerable enthusiasm among the critics. However, the series had a limited production since the glass mixture with which they were made was, according to the author himself, the product of chance and therefore impossible to replicate.

10 Animals and Plants

At the 1928 and 1930 Biennale, the glass exhibits also included a new type of artefact, destined for great success, represented by animals and plants in blown or hot-moulded glass, made by various furnaces. In 1928, Fratelli Barovier (Vetreria Artistica Barovier) had debuted at the exhibition with a series of plants in transparent polychrome glass with unusual shapes and some exotic animals (elephant, tiger etc.) designed by Ercole Barovier. Far from being realistic representations, the animals in particular stand out for their playful appearance, which is matched by a high degree of technical expertise evident in both the construction of the object, its finishing touches and the quality of the glass itself. In the same year, 1928, V.S.M. Venini e C. also presented a series of four large animals (duck, duckling, rabbit and pelican) designed by Napoleone Martinuzzi and made of *cristallo* glass with bubble or *filigrana* decoration. The sculptor had continued to devote himself to this theme by designing models with a remarkable sculptural quality and smaller dimensions, using *pulegoso* glass or opaque glass such as glass paste with bright colours. These types of glass were also used to create original succulents often characterized by foliage freely inspired by botanical details such as shoots, inflorescences etc. Some plants were seen at the 1930 Biennale, where Venini also exhibited a transparent glass vase with a 'naturalistic' composition inside, featuring overlapping bubbles, from the *Acquari* (Acquarium) series. The same Biennale showcased the animals designed by Guido Balsamo Stella for S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso: gazelles and ermines in translucent blown glass distinguished by their simplicity and elegance.



LE STANZE DEL VETRO

A cultural project and exhibition space dedicated to the study and promotion of modern and contemporary glassmaking

LE STANZE DEL VETRO is a joint venture involving **Fondazione Giorgio Cini** and **Pentagram Stiftung**, a Swiss-based, non-profit foundation and it is both a cultural project and an exhibition space, designed by **New York-based architect Annabelle Selldorf**.

The purpose of LE STANZE DEL VETRO is to focus on the history and the use of glass in 20th and 21st century Art in order to bring this medium back into the centre of the attention and discussion within the international Art scene.

The cultural initiatives of LE STANZE DEL VETRO focus not only on contemporary artists who have used glass as their artistic medium, but also on the main producers and on the major glass collections in the world. Since its opening, two exhibitions have been staged each year on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore. One in the spring, dedicated to the use of glass in 20th and 21st century Art and Design, and the second in the autumn, dedicated to the talented people who designed objects for the Venini glassware company in the 20th century. All exhibitions of LE STANZE DEL VETRO are accompanied by a catalogue published by Skira, available at the bookshop of LE STANZE DEL VETRO and online.

Alongside these initiatives, a series of special, often site-specific projects have been organised, involving contemporary artists (Swiss artist **Not Vital** in 2013, Japanese artist **Hiroshi Sugimoto** in 2014 and American artist **Pae White** in 2017), who were invited to work with glass, either prefabricated or specially produced by craftsmen in Venice. The result was a site-specific installation, coupled with the design of a small limited-edition object produced in Murano and sold at the bookshop to support the activities organized and promoted by LE STANZE DEL VETRO.

In addition to this, LE STANZE DEL VETRO has set up a **Glass Study Centre** dedicated to research in the field of artistic glass, together with a general archive of Venetian glass, and scholarships specifically addressed to researchers interested in the topic are granted annually. Furthermore, conferences and workshops on the history, technology and development of the art of glassmaking are organized regularly.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO has adopted a model often found in English-speaking countries of free access to museums based on the idea that cultural heritage belongs to the community. Admission to the exhibitions, the guided tours and all the educational activities of LE STANZE DEL VETRO are **free of charge**.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



Glass Study Centre
Institute of Art History, Giorgio Cini Foundation, Venice

Transferred in May 2023 in the newly restored Sala Messina located between the Chioistro dei Cipressi (Cypresses Cloister) and the Borges labyrinth of the Giorgio Cini Foundation, the Glass Study Centre mission is the study and valorization of glass art in all its forms, both modern and contemporary, as well as the research, collection and conservation of archives and materials.

Since its establishment as part of the LE STANZE DEL VETRO cultural project, the Centre has developed into the **General Archive of Venetian Glass**, which now holds important collections of documents. Over twelve years the Centre has significantly expanded its initial archive collections and successfully catalogued its collection of extremely varied materials, thus building up an increasingly comprehensive account of Murano creativity. This significant result has been achieved not only thanks to continuing acquisitions and donations from the larger historic glassmaking companies but also through more recent donations made by designers, artists and master glassworkers.

The Centre has always been engaged in organizing conferences, educational events, and exhibitions, and in awarding scholarships to researchers focusing on glass, its history, and its future developments. Also noteworthy are the campaigns for digitizing the collections, as well as the consolidation of the rich **specialist library**, which includes 2,300 titles on 20th and 21st centuries glass, many of which are unique copies or first editions. Among the various initiatives launched – also in collaboration with local universities – should be mentioned the cycles of events and guided tours for schools of all levels. Moreover, in order to make these cultural deposits widely accessible, a particular attention is put in the application of **new technologies**, like the **digitization** of the archive, carried out in collaboration with the ARCHiVe team.

With over **250,000** documents, including original drawings, sketches, and executive projects, the General Archive of Venetian Glass is unique: the graphic collections are accompanied by almost as many photographic prints, in addition to correspondence, albums, administrative archival material, and valuable production catalogues drawn entirely by hand. The collections cover a chronological period ranging from the end of the 19th century to the present day. Among the real treasures there is the Archive of the **Antonio Salviati Glassworks**, which exhaustively illustrates the activity of this company between 1901 and 1992. Equally rich and vast are the **Pauly & C. - C.V.M** and **Seguso Vetri d'Arte** collections: the archive of the historical Murano glassworks Seguso has recently been published as part of the Foundation's digital catalogue. The art-historical value of the archive is further confirmed by the drawings and projects signed by renowned designers and artists, many of whom took part in major exhibitions at the Venice Biennale, the Milan Triennale, and other well-known international venues and events: **Carlo Scarpa, Ettore Sottsass, Dino Martens, Flavio Poli, Sergio Asti, Vinicio Vianello, Fulvio Bianconi, Ginny Ruffner, Emmanuel Babled, Peter Shire, Pino Signoretto, Cristiano Bianchin, Silvano Rubino, and Giorgio Vigna**. As far as glassworks are concerned, the Centre collects archival material of **Barovier Seguso e Ferro, M.V.M. Cappellin & C., M.V.M. Cappellin & C., Vetreria Artistica Rag. Aureliano Toso, Fratelli Toso** and **S.A.L.I.R.**, a company specialized in the decoration and engraving of glass.

All the collections of the Centre – including those related to books, drawings, and photographs – are accessible to the public, and some digitized sections are already available online.

Guided visits to the Glass Study Centre archives can be booked by writing to centrostudivetro@cini.it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Centro Studi del Vetro
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Exhibitions organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO and in cooperation with other museums since 2012:

Carlo Scarpa. Venini 1932–1947

Curated by Marino Barovier
(26.08.2012 / 06.01.2013)

FRAGILE?

Curated by Mario Codognato
(08.04.2013 / 28.07.2013)

Napoleone Martinuzzi. Venini 1925–1931

Curated by Marino Barovier
(06.09.2013 / 06.01.2014)

Venetian Glass by Carlo Scarpa. The Venini Company, 1932–1947

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
(05.11.2013 / 02.03.2014)

I SANTILLANA

Works by Laura de Santillana and Alessandro Diaz de Santillana
(05.04.2014 / 03.08.2014)

Tomaso Buzzi at Venini

Curated by Marino Barovier
(12.09.2014 / 11.01.2015)

I Santillana

MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna
(19.11.2014 / 29.03.2015)

Glass from Finland in the Bischofberger Collection

Curated by Kaisa Koivisto and Pekka Korvenmaa
(12.04.2015 / 02.08.2015)

Fulvio Bianconi at Venini

Curated by Marino Barovier
(11.09.2015 / 10.01.2016)

Laura de Santillana and Alessandro Diaz de Santillana

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK
(02.05.2015 / 06.09.2015)

Glass Tea House *Mondrian*

By Hiroshi Sugimoto
(04.06.2014 / 29.11.2016)

The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900–1937

Curated by Rainald Franz, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection, Vienna
(18.04.2016 / 31.07.2016)

Paolo Venini and His Furnace

Curated by Marino Barovier
(11.09.2016 / 08.01.2017)

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



The Glass of the Architects: Vienna 1900–1937

Curated by Rainald Franz, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection
MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art, Vienna
(18.01.2017 / 17.04.2017)

Ettore Sottsass: The Glass

Curated by Luca Massimo Barbero
(10.04.2017 / 30.07.2017)

Qwalala

By Pae White
(12.05.2017 / 30.11.2019)

Vittorio Zecchin: Transparent Glass for Cappellin and Venini

Curated by Marino Barovier
(11.09.2017 / 07.01.2018)

A Furnace in Marseille.

Cirva (Centre international de recherche sur le verre et les arts plastiques)

Curated by Isabelle Reiher and Chiara Bertola
(09.04.2018 / 29.07.2018)

Venini & C. 1934 – 1959. Le génie verrier à Murano

Vitro Centre, Romont, Switzerland
Curated by Elisa D'Ambrosio and Astrid Kaiser
(09.06.2018 / 04.12.2018)

Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900–1937.

A cooperation of the MAK and LE STANZE DEL VETRO

Corning Museum of Glass, NY (USA)
Curated by Alexandra Ruggiero
(23.06.2018 / 7.01.2019)

The M.V.M. Cappellin Glassworks and the Young Carlo Scarpa 1925–1931

Curated by Marino Barovier
(10.09.2018 / 06.01.2019)

Maurice Marinot. The Glass, 1911–1934

Curated by Jean-Luc Olivié and Cristina Beltrami
(24.04.2018 / 28.07.2018)

Thomas Stearns at Venini

Curated by Marino Barovier
(09.09.2019 / 05.01.2020)

Venice and American Studio Glass

Curated by Tina Oldknow and William Warmus
(06.09.2020 / 10.01.2021)

The Glass Ark. Animals in the Pierre Rosenberg Collection

Curated by Giordana Naccari and Cristina Beltrami
(26.04.2021 / 01.11.2021)

Tapio Wirkkala at Venini and Toni Zuccheri at Venini.

Two exhibitions at LE STANZE DEL VETRO

Curated by Marino Barovier
(21.11.2021 / 13.03.2022)

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



FontanaArte. House of Glass

Curated by Christian Larsen
(04.04.2022 / 31.07.2022)

Venini: Light 1921-1985

Curated by Marino Barovier
(18.09.2022 / 08.01.2023)

The Gigantic Installations extended to 9 July 2023

Bohemian Glass: The Great Masters

Curated by Caterina Tognon and Sylva Petrová
(14.05.2022 / 26.09.2023)

LE STANZE DEL VETRO

