

The Exhibition Project that Shattered Art Glass Clichés at the Last Two Venice Biennales Opens February 14, 2012

GLASSTRESS NEW YORK: NEW ART FROM THE VENICE BIENNALES INCLUDES INSTALLATIONS AND SCULPTURES BY SUCH ACCLAIMED ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS AS JAN FABRE, JAIME HAYON, JAVIER PÉREZ, KIKI SMITH, AND PATRICIA URQUIOLA



New York, New York (January 19, 2012)—*Glasstress*, the exhibition project organized by glass impresario Adriano Berengo for the past two Venice Biennales—each time making waves in the lagoon city—is to have its American debut at the Museum of Arts and Design on February 14th. Running through June 10, 2012, *Glasstress New York: New Art from the Venice Biennale* will present nearly two dozen works culled from the Venetian editions, along with work never before exhibited.

A breakfast reception for press will be held on February 15, 2012, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am, with remarks by the exhibition’s organizers: Holly Hotchner, MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director, David McFadden, MAD’s William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, and Adriano Berengo of Venice Projects.

Berengo calls *Glasstress* “a new, visionary manifesto for glass and art.” His commission of leading contemporary artists and designers from around the globe, unpracticed in glass, to create works in this medium, has proved an aesthetic game changer. Lacking preconceptions, these creators have produced art works that are as inventive as they are provocative. *Glasstress* has become, as Berengo puts it, “an artistic platform for creating synergies between local traditions and global culture; between contemporary business, art, and handicraft; between different cultures and artistic disciplines.”

With the first *Glasstress* exhibition at the 2009 Venice Biennale, Berengo says his intention was “to demonstrate that glass was ‘the ideal means with which to translate contemporary expression.’” To this end, he presented a diverse collection of works in glass by 45 international artists of the recent past and present, including Arman, Louise Bourgeois, Tony Cragg, Lucio Fontana, Robert Rauschenberg, and Chen Zhen.

For the second exhibition at last summer’s Venice Biennale, he took as a theme the complex relationship between art, design, and architecture in this era that has supposedly moved “beyond modernism.” The 20 site-specific sculptures and installations, most of them specially commissioned for the event, asked what made an object formally conditioned by its function a work of art? Did a work need to refer only to itself to respond to the spirit of the times? Such inquiries called into question the notion of “art for art’s sake,” which was at the crux of so many twentieth-century avant-gardes.

Berengo believes Venice is the place to ask such questions, as it is where Murano glass was born and glass innovation remains vital. *Glasstress*, he says, is “not the fruit of tradition, it is what modern Murano artisans can do with glass, learning new roads and visions. It is art for glass.”

Invention in glass is an important theme for the Museum of Arts and Design, according to Holly Hotchner. “2012 is the 50th anniversary of the American Studio Glass Movement. And since that movement’s beginnings, this institution has been a champion of forward-looking art glass. So what better way for us to celebrate than by introducing American audiences to the latest creative currents in this marvelous fluid medium?”

David McFadden concurred: “The wide-ranging vision and diversity of approaches in the *Glasstress* exhibitions galvanized us to bring this important project to the U.S. MAD’s exhibition will include **Jan Fabre’s** witty installation of amethyst-hued, blown-glass pigeons, along with their glass droppings; **Kiki Smith’s** cast glass frogs; and **Javier Pérez’s** ornate, scarlet-colored, Murano glass chandelier, which after it was completed, Pérez smashed—the ruin replete with its shards becoming the artwork.”

“Having this exhibition come to New York has long been my dream,” says Berengo. “I am excited for Americans to see the enormous artistic potential of this medium, which while ancient in origin has never seemed more contemporary.”

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND CREDITS

Glasstress New York: New Art from the Venice Biennales is organized by the Museum of Arts and Design and Venice Projects, and is curated by Holly Hotchner, Nanette L. Laitman Director, David McFadden, William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, and Adriano Berengo, conceiver of *Glasstress* and founder of Venice Projects. *Glasstress New York* is made possible by the Cordover Family Foundation, Shintaro Akatsu School of Design, Berengo Studio, Venice Projects, The Amb Way, Soldiere, and the Inner Circle, a leadership support group of the Museum of Arts and Design.



CATALOGUE

Glasstress New York will be accompanied by a 208-page, fully illustrated catalogue, which includes a foreword by Holly Hotchner and essays by Adriano Berengo and Demetrio Paparoni. A complete set of artist biographies and statements will be included along with images of the works by the artists. The catalogue is made possible through the generosity of Goya Contemporary Gallery, Suzi Cordish, and an anonymous donor.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design explores the blur zone between art, design, and craft today. The Museum focuses on contemporary creativity and the ways in which artists and designers from around the world transform materials through processes ranging from the artisanal to digital. The Museum’s exhibition program explores and illuminates issues and ideas, highlights creativity and craftsmanship, and celebrates the limitless potential of materials and techniques when used by gifted and innovative artists. MAD’s permanent collection is global in scope and focuses on art, craft, and design from 1950 to the present day. At the center of the Museum’s mission is education. The Museum’s dynamic new facility features classrooms and studios for master classes, seminars, and workshops for students, families, and adults. Three open artist studios engage visitors in the creative processes of artists at work and enhance the exhibition programs. Lectures, films, performances, and symposia related to the Museum’s collection and topical subjects affecting the world of contemporary art, craft, and design are held in a renovated 144-seat auditorium.

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