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Design

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Editorial Coordination

Gabriele Nason, Filomena Moscatelli

Copyediting

Emily Ligniti

Translations

Brenda Lea Stone

Copywriting and Press Office

Silvia Palombi

US Editorial Director

Francesca Sorace

Promotion and Web

Monica D'Emidio

Distribution

Antonia De Besi

Administration

Grazia De Giosa

Warehouse and Outlet

Roberto Curiale

Cover

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Francesco Allegretto

Chris Amaral

Ela Bialkowska

Christopher Burke

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Alex Deyaert

Francesco Ferruzzi

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David Heald

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Berengo Studio 1989 srl

Fondamenta Vetrai 109/a

30141 Murano-Venice

Tel. +39 041739453

Fax +39 0415276588

e-mail: adberen@yahoo.it

www.berengo.com

Edizioni Charta srl

Milano

via della Moscova, 27 - 20121

Tel. +39-026598098/026598200

Fax +39-026598577

e-mail: charta@chartaartbooks.it

Charta Books Ltd.

New York City

Tribeca Office

Tel. +1-313-406-8468

e-mail: international@chartaartbooks.it

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GLASSTRESS

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Adriano Berengo

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Laura Mattioli Rossi *and* Rosa Barovier Mentasti

guest curator

Francesca Giubilei

exhibition management

general coordination

Adriano Berengo

Marco Berengo

Francesca Giubilei

exhibition staging

Koen Vanmechelen

organizing secretariat

Alessandra Versace

shipping department

Daniela Bufo

insurance broker

Pierluigi Morasco

biographical apparatus

Elena Cimenti

Maria Antonietta Sergi

translations

Brenda Lea Stone

berengo studio

master glass blower

Danilo Zanella

Walter Ballarin

Roberto Mavaracchio

Roberto Salso

Giorgio Alzetta

Roberto Berengo

Valter Brunello

Roberto Campello

Mauro Falcier

Gianni Gallo

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Stefano Lo Duca

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Gianluca Rossetti

Giovanni Scarpa

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communications and graphic design

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23	AN ADVENTURE IN THE ART OF GLASS	<i>Adriano Berengo</i>
24	MODERNISM AND GLASS	<i>Laura Mattioli Rossi</i>
27	A SUSTANCIA LUMINOSA Y MALEABLE, THE GLASS	<i>Rosa Barovier Mentasti</i>
33	WOMEN'S GLASS	<i>Francesca Giubilei</i>
38	THE CRAFTSMAN AND THE MANUFACTURER	<i>Giacinto Di Pietrantonio</i>
41	GLASS AND THE PSYCHE	<i>Fausto Petrella</i>
49	RECASTING GLASS	<i>Tina Oldknow</i>
52	RETURNABLE CONTAINERS	<i>Luca Beatrice</i>
55	GLASSTRESS / WORKS	
132	ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES	
141	GLASSTRESS / EXHIBITION	
159	GLASSTRESS / SPECIAL PROJECT	







Marya Kazoun and Berengo Studio staff



Adriano Berengo and Lawrence Carroll



Tony Cragg



Adriano Berengo, Silvano Rubino, Shintaro Akatsu and Tony Cragg







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AN ADVENTURE IN THE ART OF GLASS

Adriano Berengo

I began my adventure in the world of glass in faraway 1989. I say “faraway” because twenty years have passed since that date and many things have changed in the approach to this material including the recognition it has managed to obtain in other, distant yet conversant milieus. I am referring, in particular, to the world of art.

When, with great humility and care, I began to work with glass, I immediately understood the necessity and importance of working so as to free it from the exclusively commercial ghetto in which it had been imprisoned for years. There was an urgent need to free glass from the outmoded tradition that confined it to a material used exclusively for prestigious everyday objects.

Intellectual integrity compels me to say that in the mid-twentieth century the great Egidio Costantini had already begun this courageous enterprise, inviting great masters of modern art to the island of Murano and involving Peggy Guggenheim, the multi-faceted collector and patron, in his project. I only had the courage and perhaps the recklessness to continue along the path forged by Costantini.

Today, on Murano, those who support the idea of glass as an artistic medium are few, their actions sporadic, and their voices weak. Berengo Studio stands out for its innovation, the farsightedness of its projects and its ability to develop opportunities for the worlds of glass and contemporary art to come together.

“The emphasis on the creative process and on things in the making will not exclude works in classical media,” writes Daniel Birnbaum with regard to the 2009 Biennale.

The Studio I created has welcomed a multitude of artists from around the world. In this place, they have had the possibility

of experimenting, of challenging this material, of conceiving surprisingly innovative works—in short, of *Making Worlds*, thus giving their creations the meaning of a vision that fully welcomes the *Thought and Realization* project.

As a rule, I support emerging artists and artists who come from horizons distant from that of glass. “Glass artists” do not work at Berengo Studio, but rather artists who, before coming to Murano, have worked with completely different techniques and materials. This choice guarantees a fresh approach and the ability to look with entirely new eyes at the material, something that would otherwise not be possible.

The history of this island, with its centuries-old expertise, its skilled workers, its unique tradition, its recent past—marked by great names in art who have worked with its master glassblowers—and its present marked by a growing fervor and a new wave of experimentation led by contemporary artists have contributed to building a new world that perhaps no one had believed was possible.

The theme of the 53rd Venice Biennale is “the construction of new worlds,” which seemed to me the perfect occasion to present an exhibition in which to try to imagine *another world*, a context where glass—thanks to the inspiration of great international artists—has the possibility of showing the best of itself. For this project, which I immediately realized I could not bring about alone, I have asked the cooperation and help of two experts: Dr. Laura Mattioli Rossi, curator, and Dr. Rosa Barovier Mentasti, historian of glass. I am firmly convinced that synergy is essential for realizing good projects, good ideas, and grand objectives, and hope that this project can be a splendid opportunity for contemporary art, the artists, the world of glass, and the island of Murano.

MODERNISM AND GLASS

Laura Mattioli Rossi

The two *Runners* in the Museo Archeologico of Naples look at us with bright and intense eyes made from glass paste, like those of the five *Danaides* nearby. The glass-cameo panel portraying the initiation of Ariadne (15–54 CE) is one of the museum's treasures, together with a *balsamarium* shaped like a dove in blue blown glass also from Pompeii just as the other finds. For the Ancients, it was normal to use different materials in statuary and, in general, in plastic arts—wood, stone, marble, bronze, wax, terracotta, and glass—were used according to the object's value and the artifact's characteristics. Polychromy always complemented the shape. This great freedom continued throughout the centuries and lasted from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, up to the mid-eighteenth century, namely to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. In Gothic cathedrals, frescoes were replaced by stained glass windows; glass beads and glass inserts on the clothing of the most noble figures were common in frescoes and polyptychs, and glass and copper were used to create precious miniatures. Only with neo-classicism and the affirmation of the artistic culture of the Academies of Fine Arts did a rigid hierarchy of values establish itself regarding even artistic materials, placing marble and bronze statuary, mural and oil painting above all other materials, to which was assigned the accessory function of decoration in the sphere of “minor arts.” But this rigid distinction lasted only a short time. It was swept away, on one hand, by artists' experimentation (Degas created his *Fourteen-year-old Ballerina* in 1880, with flesh-colored wax and real hair, clothing, and shoes and Medardo Rosso began to model works in wax in 1895), and on the other hand, by Art Nouveau and the Vienna Secession, which had put forward and practiced a renewed fusion of the arts since 1890.

But the revolution that gave artists complete liberty in the choice of material and made glass a new material of predilection was launched by the avant-garde movements and found its full expression with the affirmation of modernism in the first half of the twentieth century.

Umberto Boccioni was the first to theorize that modern sculpture should be made of several different materials in his *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture* from 1912, claiming the need to

“destroy entirely the literary nobility of marble and bronze [and to] deny that one must use a single material for a sculptural ensemble.” He even proclaimed “the abolition of the closed statue” in favor of a new plastic genre, in which the figure merges with the environment: “So that transparent planes of glass, strips of metal, wire, interior or exterior electric lights can indicate the planes, the tendencies, the tones and half-tones of a new reality.” He gave concrete form to this program with his sculpture *Fusion of a Head and a Window* from 1913, in which a woman's head in painted plaster was crowned by a wooden and glass window and given a finishing touch by a glass eye, horsehair, and an iron wire that audaciously outlined its profile.¹ The use of different materials could seem to be a mere expedient for realism (as Margherita Sarfatti must have believed in 1913 when she visited the artist's studio), if Boccioni had not found in glass itself a material, both transparent and reflective at the same time, the means by which to give concrete form to his ideas regarding the interpenetration of the inside and the outside and the blending of bodies with the surrounding space through light. The evolution of futurist poetics towards an ever greater abstraction as in Giacomo Balla's work and towards mechanical-like forms as in Fortunato Depero's sees the return of glass—together with wire, mirrors, colored tinfoil, and “very flashy materials”—among the items necessary to create abstract and dynamic plastic constructions, as stated in their manifesto, *Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe*, dated March 11, 1915.

At that time, Marcel Duchamp began to fashion a revolutionary work in glass that was destined to become a milestone in the history of art, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, known as *The Large Glass* (1915–1923, Philadelphia, Museum of Art). Starting from an idea based on some drawings from 1912–1913, he decided to abandon the purely pictorial research of the cubists in order to create completely different works in concept and aspect. The choice of working with glass was born somewhat by accident: having used a piece of glass as a palette, Duchamp was intrigued by the fact that the color could be seen from both sides and thought that this would force the spectator to make a choice of which side to view. He then explained: “The transparency of the



1

glass is important, because it creates depth, as opposed to the boring sense of background created by canvas. Each image on the glass has a precise goal, and nothing is put there simply to fill an empty space or solely to please the eye.”² The reflectivity of glass permits not only seeing the work but also the surrounding space, optically projected on its surface. Thus it becomes the place, almost immaterial, where the projection of three-dimensional objects drawn by the artist and the reflections of real objects meet. From 1964 to 1968, Duchamp dedicated himself to creating a series of etchings depicting individual elements that appeared in *The Large Glass* and how the work should have been if it had not remained unfinished in 1923. During the same period (1965 and 1971), the English painter Richard Hamilton, a friend of Duchamp and a thorough scholar of his work, curated a one-man show of the French artist at the Tate Gallery in London (1966) and produced a series of works inspired by *The Large Glass*, one of which reintroduces the funnels used in the lower part of *The Bride Stripped . . .* and is on display in the current exhibition.

Another fundamental work of Russian constructivism should have been constructed largely in glass, *The Monument to the Third International*, designed in 1919 by Vladimir Tatlin: an anti-bourgeois architectural monument, abstract and mobile, 400 meters high and made up of a cylinder, a cone, and a cube, all of glass, encircled by a slanting metal spiral. This bold and difficult design was never produced by the Party, which was opposed to abstract art, but remained a fundamental point of reference that inspired generations of artists. Two other constructivist artists, the brothers Anton Pevsner and Naum Gabo, put forward in 1920 in *The Realist Manifesto* an art that used abstract shapes, geometric principles, architectural plans, and dynamic lines, able to depict the contemporary world in both space and time. Refusing the static mass as a constant sculptural element, they created plastic ensembles with transparent materials that enabled them to reformulate in a complex way the relations between full and empty, concave and convex, internal and external. While Gabo preferred new materials like Perspex, Pevsner used glass above all, as in the work on display in the exhibition.

In 1919, in Weimar, Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus school

of architecture and applied arts where young people could receive anti-academic training. The school also included a glass workshop, overseen by a master of shape and a master craftsman, which was practically inexistent in 1921—when Josef Albers decided to attend—for want of students. Albers got permission to work alone and, lacking both technical support and materials, went about collecting from the dump bottle pieces and bottoms in many different colors. He therefore created his early compositions with glass debris, held together by iron, lead, and copper wires as well as metal parts, also recycled. The tangibility of the material, its geometrical shapes and rustic character gave extraordinary strength to these works, whose potent luminosity contrasted with that of traditional oil paintings. Appreciated by his teachers for this work, Albers was put in charge of the workshop together with Paul Klee. In this way, he was able to continue his experimentation, implementing increasingly complex techniques to create stained glass windows and glass paintings, with a production that continued until the early 1930s.³

As is sadly known, the 1933 Nazi repression of Jews and intellectuals forced many artists and notable German speakers to emigrate, while the totalitarian regimes in power in the Soviet Union and in Italy, not to mention the Spanish Civil War, in actual fact paralyzed the most creatively innovative and expressive talents. In the 1930s, the artistic scene seems to have been characterized by the dying out of the revolutionary impetus, which had sprung up at the beginning of the century. Apart from some extraordinary and isolated figures, such as Picasso, only surrealist and abstract artists, mostly active in France or fled to the United States, continued to develop new ideas and images that, however, were alien or unrelated to the distressing and tragically inhuman social and political situation. As in the case of Miró, who sought to free painting from any bourgeois legacy and to put into action a systematic technical revolution, their images were created with unusual materials, which sometimes included glass.

The end of World War II was met everywhere with an overwhelming desire to move on from the past and to build a new world, in which art would play a role next to scientific and technological innovations in renovating everyday life and the world. Filled



2

with this new excitement, Lucio Fontana drew up his *White Manifesto*⁴ in Buenos Aires in 1946. He posited the need for an artistic renewal that corresponded to the “transformation of the material base of existence,” the new organization of work, and the “great scientific discoveries.”

He asked: “We call on those in the world of science who know that art is a fundamental requirement for our species, that they may direct part of their research towards discovering that malleable substance full of light, and instruments that will produce sounds which will enable the development of four-dimensional art.” In fact, the material that Fontana imagined had already existed for millennia. It was glass, a material that soon entered the artist’s paintings breaking their two-dimensional aspect and lighting them with intense touches of color.

In the second half of the twentieth century, paintings on canvas lost their frames, pictures stopped being “square,” assuming more and more various shapes. Art materials, often untraditional ones, were chosen freely. Today when an artist decides to continue using only canvas, brush, and paint, he does so as a challenge to tradition, following the specific decision to take a stand. Not only different types of materials (textile, metallic, chemical, etc.) but also everyday objects are used as artistic means. Glass is not only worked “artistically” but also used in the shape of industrially produced everyday objects—like bottles, glasses, vials, or light bulbs—that become at once artistic materials and subjects. It is the case, for example, with the works on display by Man Ray, Arman, and César, but even with some photographs by Mimmo Jodice.

Glass, in its various forms, is particularly adapted to the research carried forward by some artistic movements, such as conceptual art or Arte Povera.

Joseph Kosuth created one of his most famous conceptual works in glass (*Clear, Square, Glass, Leaning*, 1965), using four identical square sheets of glass and writing one of the four words of the title on each, like four spoken definitions, all equally true but also insufficient to describe the object.

Roni Horn creates powerful masses of rather transparent colored glass and often pairs them, to indicate contrasting and ambiguous perceptions and conceptions, like solid and liquid, mass and

transparency, fragility and solidity, identity and difference . . .

Barbara Bloom evokes the dialogue between past and present, the ability of tradition to prompt questions and answers, the fragile existence of shapes and words passed down to the world of today.

Other artists, like Larry Bell and Dan Graham—interested in working on the spectator’s perception and the psychophysical aspects related to it (such as the perception of angles and planes in an asymmetrical system or self-perception in an open/closed space)—prefer to use glass sheets because of their reflective and transparent qualities.

Arte Povera has made widespread use of glass in all its various forms, from Mario Merz’s *Igloo* and *Tables* to Giuseppe Penone’s *Nail and Candles*, 1994 and from Luciano Fabro’s *Basins (Iconography)* to Gilberto Zorio’s *Alembics* and to the wall compositions by Jannis Kounellis, to name only a few.

Glass has also become the preferred material for many artists who express themselves through shapes that allude in various ways to the human body. As Fausto Petrella argues in his text, glass has characteristics opposite from the body. But it is precisely for that reason that it lends itself to becoming a metaphor of the fears and desires of the deeply rooted Self: the fragility implied by incurable wounds or total destruction, the transparency that reveals how much is hidden from view but no longer today from medicine and science, the ability to hold and at the same time to show liquids, including organic ones, or anatomical parts, and the ductility that allows it to assume complex and basic forms simultaneously, have made glass one of the richest expressive media available to these artists.

Notes

1. The sculpture, lost, is known by some photographs taken by Lucette Korsoff at the Exhibition of Futurist Sculpture by the futurist painter and sculptor Boccioni, held at La Boetie gallery in Paris from June 20 to July 16, 1913.
2. *Marcel Duchamp and Other Heretics*, edited by Arturo Schwarz, Milan, Skira, 2008, p. 137.
3. Regarding glass production by J. Albers, see *Josef Albers. Vitraux. Dessins. Gravures. Typographie. Meubles*, exhibition catalogue, Château-Cambrésis, Musée Matisse, July 6–September 29, 2008.
4. The quotations from the Manifesto are taken from *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Charles Harrison, Paul J. Wood (eds.), pp. 652–653.

A SUSTANCIA LUMINOSA Y MALEABLE, THE GLASS

Rosa Barovier Mentasti

There is an ancient work, very well-known to lovers of glass, which continues to astonish visitors to the Römisch-Germanisches Museum in Cologne because of its beauty and superb execution. It is a high-relief portrait of Augustus, dated to the first century CE, probably cast using the lost-wax process in dark blue glass that, over the millennia, has acquired a splendid surface coloring of turquoise with striking plays of silvery iridescence. It is about five centimeters tall but its delicate modeling distinguishes it from among the hundreds of sculptural portraits of the emperor that are known today. If the technique of casting glass in a mold had been as advanced at that time as it is today, perhaps the anonymous glassmaker who made it would have created a larger work that might very well have become not only the symbol of the seminal exhibition, *The Glass of the Caesars* (1987), but would also have been displayed in an exhibition on Imperial Age sculpture. The portrait would have enjoyed even greater appreciation had it been sculpted in snow-white marble. This confirms how ephemeral, if not imaginary in certain cases, the border between art and decorative art is, and how the size and choice of material have conditioned our perception for centuries, creating conventional barriers in the vast and varied field of artistic expression.

Over the last decades, the world of art has radically changed as it has opened up to materials and techniques that some time ago would have been unacceptable or even unimaginable. However it has been difficult for glass to be considered an artistic medium, perhaps because, in the popular imagination, it is closely associated both to useful household objects and to the brilliant craftsmanship often tied to traditional decorative models. If today it is found in contemporary art exhibitions, this is due to the absolute freedom with which some of the greatest artists have chosen their techniques and materials, including glass when it meets their needs, without letting themselves be conditioned by prejudice. The critics—and the public as well, notwithstanding some resistance—cannot but take into consideration and accept the most unconventional choices if they believe them to be compatible with the work at hand.

The first faint signs of change were seen more than a century ago. Emile Gallé, perhaps the most important pioneer in modern glass, introduced a new perception of glass as an art material. In recalling Gallé's works at the 1889 Paris World's Fair, Jules Henrivaux, a careful observer of both industrial and artistic glass at that time, wrote in 1911 that the glassmaker from Lorraine had demonstrated "how much art, poetry, how many deep and exquisite intents, delicate and rare thoughts can be put into the composition of a simple flower vase or into a drinking glass. It seemed one could go no further in animating matter with such a wealth of feeling and spirit." The author continued by stating that Gallé had actually gone even further at the 1900 exposition.

It is obvious that not all Gallé workshop's craft products must be considered in this light, no matter how pleasantly decorated they may be, but more exactly the unique pieces that Gallé personally created. Through these exceptional works, he was able to express his impassioned involvement in the current events of his time as well as his profound and very personal feelings (which themselves were, nevertheless, in tune with the spirit of the age). Through many vases, Gallé proclaimed his support for Captain Dreyfus, unjustly accused of high treason in 1894; he was also intensely committed to condemning the Armenian genocide, as he expressed in the chalice *Le sang d'Arménie*. His aims were not superimposed on the glass but were intrinsic to it. An outstanding example is a famous vase, created with sophisticated experimental techniques and whose surface is a relief decoration of herbs, flowers, mushrooms, and even falling leaves. On the shoulder of the vase, one sees a delicate butterfly, beneath which, at closer look, lies a menacing spider's web: created inside the wall of the vase, the web can be seen only when held up against the light. In this way Gallé conveyed the feeling of life's precariousness and the transience of beauty, addressing those sensitive enough to intuit his message without recurring to striking and dramatic images. There is no question that this work could only have been created using the transparent and chromatic



3

overlays of glass, which, in this case, highlight how glass was the only possible expressive medium.

Yet Emile Gallé has remained confined within the world of the art of glass, and his works, although highly prized on today's market, are considered "mere" vases. What he did however has reverberated far and wide. Some artists wanted to create an all-Venetian response to Gallé's innovations; so renowned glassmakers from Murano created vases, using specifically the murrhine technique—of noteworthy decorative value but without the expressive merit of the best works by the glassmaker from Nancy. It was however the Murano painter Vittorio Zecchin who, together with his Venetian friend Teodoro Wolf-Ferrari—more inclined towards the Munich Secession movement—designed a collection of fused murrhine vases and small plaques, in a style close to that of the Viennese Secession, for a 1913 exhibition in Munich and a double solo at the 1914 Venice Biennale. The two painters were aware of the interest shown by the Art Nouveau movement, the Viennese Secession, and the Munich Secession towards decorative techniques. In the catalogue of the international exposition, the two painters announced their intention to produce outsized stained-glass windows that, at the time, were not possible to make owing to the size of the furnaces at the (otherwise well-organized) Barovier glassworks, where their works were produced. Zecchin and Wolf-Ferrari were fascinated by the transparency of glass and the variety of colors that, in their view, could enhance the colors of their paintings, while avoiding the interruptions required by the metal structure in traditional stained-glass, thanks to the technique of fusing polychrome tesserae, i.e., "murrhine." In reality, they never brought to completion their project of creating large stained-glass windows fused into a single piece, something with which Paolo Venini would experiment in 1957 and which has been adopted more recently at the international level following the improvement of the glass-fusion technique, applied however to a base sheet of colorless glass.

The art of creating stained glass windows is certainly the one most intimately related to that of painting, so much so that since the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, many painters,

as well as artists dedicated strictly to that art, have been involved in making the cartoons for stained glass windows to be executed by specialized glaziers. Some minor painters actually have given the best of themselves to stained glass. One Venetian example is that of the Murano painter Girolamo Mocetto, who left us his masterpiece in the lower part of the large stained glass window in the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. In the late 1920s, using traditional techniques, Vittorio Zecchin made a stained glass window that involved using a metal structure for the MVM Cappellin & C. glassworks. The same glassworks exhibited stained glass windows by Carlo Scarpa, Ernesto Thyat, and Mario Sironi at the 1930 Milan Triennale. Sironi's stupendous work, which can be seen at Milan's Civiche Raccolte di Arte Applicata at the Castello Sforzesco, demonstrates how stained glass windows, if made with blown glass and worked by hand, can rival paintings while claiming, of course, their own expressive autonomy and can reach the very heights of excellence through the chromatic shades and irregularities that result from artisanal glass working techniques.

Since the beginnings of contemporary art, numerous painters as well as designers, not only in Venice but, in reality, especially outside of Venice, have experimented with stained glass. Henri Matisse stands out as among the most famous. Between 1949 and 1951, he conceived stained glass windows in Mediterranean colors as an integral part of his design for the Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence in the French Maritime Alps. Other great colorists, like Marc Chagall, were attracted by stained glass, as well as the rationalist architect Le Corbusier.

Examples of forays by painters and designers into the world of stained glass are so many and varied that they would require a very substantial treatise. If some have made use of traditional artisanal techniques, using a metallic framework and grisaille painting for details, others have preferred to abandon them so as to bring out the intrinsic colors of glass and the polychrome lights transmitted (by day) and reflected (by night) that intensify the glass material per se. During the twentieth century, stained glass followed an evolution-



4

ary path parallel to that of painting, sometimes acquiring a liquid appearance—glass is actually a supercooled liquid—sometimes that of a geometric pattern. Much more than glass mosaic art, which however has always involved even great painters, stained glass art has been renewed by technology through the use of experimental processes and sometimes an ingenious use of recycled materials. Besides, who among us has not given in at least once to the temptation during a visit to a glass furnace to collect leftovers from the work—drops, colored threads, and sharp pointed bits of glass that then stayed in our pockets as fragile, useless souvenirs? The artist looks at them with a visionary's eye and senses their potential.

It is impossible to examine all the projects undertaken in this sector by artists or designers interested in experimentation. Josef Albers, a German artist who moved to the United States, stood out for his audacity; while at the Bauhaus—first as a student and then as a teacher—he created stained glass windows with a metallic frame. The glass parts were broken pieces of glass and bottle bottoms found in the Weimar dumps. From 1925 onward, he developed a new, technically innovative stained glass model, conceived as a wall panel and made from layered sheets in various colors. A sandblaster was used to make the surface layers opaque; they were then cut in such a way as to create alternating shades of color. Owing to his research on the perception of color, he is considered one of the most influential color theorists of the twentieth century.

At the opposite end, flat glass has sometimes been chosen for its transparency and virtual invisibility, which remains unchanged over time. Indeed, more than five centuries have passed since Murano's Angelo Barovier in around 1450 was successfully experimenting amidst the alchemist's retorts, alembics, and ovens of his glassworks to achieve a colorless glass without any impurities that for the first time was called crystal. And so the cryptic signs made by Marcel Duchamp using oil painting, lead wire and sheets, dust and paint in one of his most famous works, *Le Grand Verre*, or *The Large Glass* or *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (1915–1923),

which seem to float in the air, are actually imprisoned between two sheets of transparent glass. Sheets of glass are also used in Anton Pevsner's constructivist sculpture *Anchored Cross* (1933), this time to delineate space, together with marble and painted brass. The colorless surface is barely visible, if not thanks to its curved edge or in particular light conditions.

The sheets of glass that contemporary artists have found most fascinating however are those with mirrored surfaces. One could speak of a “neo-baroque” art founded on an exploration of illusionistic effects, if the prefix “neo” actually had some meaning and if situations, thoughts, and artistic intuitions were repeated in exactly the same way throughout history.

Mirrors, however, have always fascinated artists, who are sensitive to visual phenomena, and human beings in general, who perceive a mirror's function between sixteen and twenty-four months of age. As was highlighted by the magnificent exhibition *On Reflection*, which opened at the National Gallery of London in 1998 and was curated by Jonathan Miller (who not by chance, is a neuropsychologist, author, and stage director), the mirror has always been a part of art works or related to art in many different ways until it became a work of art in itself in the twentieth century.

Mirrors have been a tool for painters, sometimes to ensure a synchronous vision of different points of view, sometimes to do a self-portrait. It has also been used in the particular forms of anamorphic painting in which the use of a mirror is necessary to reconstruct a distorted image—let us think of the anamorphic depiction of a skull in Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (1533).

Furthermore, mirrors have been placed in paintings as an integral element of the scene depicted, especially since the fifteenth century. They have made it possible to go beyond the two-dimensional limits of canvas and to introduce into the painting a part of the scene that remains physically outside of the frame. A convex mirror then acts as a wide-angle

5. Bettina Pousttchi piece / set-up crew in action
6. Bettina Pousttchi
- 7, 8. Lino Tagliapietra



5

lens. Think of the *Portrait of Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife* (1434) by Jan Van Eyck, which shows an image, otherwise impossible to see, of the rear of the room that includes the painter himself between the two figures. Giovanni Bellini, for his part, is reflected in the mirror of an *Allegory* (1490) perhaps of prudence, perhaps of conceit. In *Las Meninas* (1656), Diego Velázquez introduced in his painting, by way of a mirror, the two sovereigns, parents of the young royals who are the centerpiece of the scene. In the composition, they find themselves in the act of being portrayed, in the position of one who today observes the painting as it is being portrayed. Infinite variations on the theme were made until twentieth-century painting.

In daily life, the mirror is a device of self-knowledge—in this sense, it is a symbol of prudence also because it allows us to look simultaneously at what is behind our backs and what is before us—and of vanity. As a symbol of vanity, it has been used since the Venuses of the Renaissance who, owing to their beauty, made this vice acceptable, while it is instead connoted as grotesque when it is a wrinkled old woman who gazes at herself, as in a painting by Bernardo Strozzi (1615 ca.) or an etching by Otto Dix (1921). All the implications connected to mirrors have stimulated in various ways contemporary artists, but not only artists. One of the greatest critics and promoters of contemporary art, Pontus Hulten, was fascinated by Parmigianino's *Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1523–1524) to such an extent that he introduced a copy of the original into his personal collection alongside works by Rebecca Horn, Robert Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Andy Warhol. The uniqueness of the sixteenth-century work comes from the fact that Parmigianino did not depict the mirror but that we are able to intuit its presence because of the disproportion of the youth's body and the distortion of the background.

Parmigianino's painting fixes on canvas a purposely distorted image of the painter at a time (the sixteenth century) when the flat, non-distorting mirror was already being produced and its use becoming widespread. It was therefore the artist's deliberate intention to manipulate objective reality and

its proportions. Today, in mirrors that become works of art, the viewer each time interacts in different ways with the work itself and the surrounding environment, which is also reflected in the artwork. It almost becomes a work in motion, whereas in reality it is the onlooker who moves and the immediate surroundings changes. Entering one of Dan Graham's *Pavilions*, made of flat or curved, semitransparent, transparent and reflecting walls, gives us a new outlook on the setting, as it is transformed by the interaction between ourselves and the glass surfaces. In Daniel Buren's installations, mirroring effects are combined with the colored reflections of bands of brightly hued gels. His extraordinary installation constructed in 2005 inside the Guggenheim Museum in New York accompanied visitors along their descent of Wright's spiral ramp, leading them to experience ever-changing visual sensations. Not all reflecting glass works are architectonic and monumental, even though the current artistic trend is prevalently oriented in that direction. Let us mention—to cite three examples that require being seen from up-close—Sergio Bovenga's sculptural forms, Anne Peabody's delicate silver leaf surfaces finely etched with images that have a dream-like vagueness, and the "Venetian" mirrors of one of the most extreme figures in body art: ORLAN.

The debt contemporary art owes to the dada movement deserves to be stressed over and over again; dada was the movement that proclaimed the right of an artist to confer the status of art on a readymade object, presented as such yet deprived of its function, or assembled into sculptures, bas-reliefs, and collages. This revolution has developed in various ways, which are often distant from the dadaist ideological assumptions. The readymade object is a recurring element in contemporary works and installations; it is often an anonymous industrial product that the artist feels free to fill with meaning, which is of course a direct expression of the artist's thoughts and emotions. Finely manufactured objects are usually shunned either because they bear too strongly the imprint of whoever invented and produced them, or because



6

they seem too far from the present-day society accustomed to industrial design and standardization. It is not so for Barbara Bloom, the extraordinary American conceptual artist whose installations, made of collected and finely executed objects, visually recreate a very personal world in which memories, literary tastes, self-perception, and the perception of others flow together. She loves small, everyday things that also correspond to her attention to detail in her observation of people. By her own admission, she is particularly attracted to porcelain and glass that, owing to their fragility, bring to mind ephemerality.

Even if her work suggests them in some way, Bloom is a long way from dadaism and other later movements—new realism, for example—that hailed urban scrap as materials with which to create works of art. She is far from Arman and César who, in different ways and with different aims, collect and put together many objects of the same type, giving them new life and using them like colors on a palette. In these works, glass occupies an important place as it is found abundantly in everyday trash, unlike traditional art materials such as marble and bronze. The attitude of these artists, however, implies indifference toward the artist's ability to transform matter and toward the "craftsmanship" aspects of creative work, which had been considered inalienable values for millennia.

The new generation of artists has moved partly away from this position. For instance, Luca Pancrazzi, in recycling everyday objects—a chair, a lamp, a ladder—transforms them and gives them new light—"light" in the literal sense—as he covers his objects with brilliant shards of glass that glitter and mystify the viewer. Soyeon Cho blends disposable products, lighting sources, glass beads, and other items into evocative, highly colored, and luminous artifacts. There is consequently some regenerative intervention performed by hand, almost as if the call to recycle materials (to melt glass and metals and to pulp used paper in order to make new objects)—a moral imperative in present-day society—had awakened the world of art. Or is it art that has contributed to opening our eyes?

In contrast to the trend for using sheets of industrial glass, readymade objects, and urban scrap, some artists in the second half of the twentieth century decided to create works or parts of works using the traditional and often very refined manual techniques of glass-making, without a sense that their creative role was diminished in any way. Actually, a similar phenomenon also took place in the world of furniture and furnishings, which followed a course parallel to that of art. In fact, while industrial design was being successfully developed, movements aimed at promoting extremely well-made traditional crafts were also being born. They were a great success with the public and often resulted in the creation of exceptional, one-of-a-kind pieces, especially in glass. This development was already taking place during the 1950s in Venice and in Bohemia, and nurtured the American Studio Glass movement through visits by young Americans to Europe and teaching by European masters in the United States.

The choice of some artists to have expert glassmakers craft their works in all or in part was born from the growing interest generated by this material; in any case, its use is conditioned by the meaning that the artist attributes to glass, a meaning that often is connected to such intrinsic qualities as transparency and fragility. Thus, Louise Bourgeois, in expressing her lacerating memories and her sense of isolation, has also used glass together with her favorite materials: marble, bronze, and fabric. Kiki Smith, a passionate technical innovator with a predilection for decorative art techniques, uses glass for totally non-decorative ends. Mona Hatoum often plays ironically on oppositions, such as that between the pleasantness of fragile colored glass and what can be modeled with it. Chen Zhen has chosen glass to represent parts of the body, his own body, and to speak about its very delicate balance which can be destroyed by the slightest thing.

With glass in Bohemia seen as a material for carving, sort of an artificial semi-precious stone, the Bohemian glassmakers of Studio Glass developed techniques that went beyond cutting and engraving; in first place was casting, which allowed the production of works of sizes never before seen in glass. The



7

great Bohemian master glassmaker, Stanislav Libensky, who taught numerous students in his country and abroad, including some interesting artists from the United States, exhibited massive pieces of colored or colorless glass whose surfaces, by turns, are rough or perfectly shiny. The glass works by the American Roni Horn, well-known in Italy, refer to the Bohemian school of glassmaking for the techniques chosen and her sensitivity towards the medium; she has always worked with pigment drawings on paper that she then cuts up and assembles. From these spatial compositions, she goes on to create solid geometric forms in cast glass, which on the vertical side are generally rough with the upper surface clear and polished. Looking at one of these works means plunging one's vision into a pool of water that, in reality, is a block of a "supercooled liquid," the depth of which cannot be perceived.

Since the 1950s, the Venice glass furnaces have boasted a steady stream of artists unfamiliar with the world of glass yet who are fascinated by the material and the skill of the city's master glassmakers. For instance, it is known that Giuseppe Santomaso worked with the master glassmaker Archimede Seguso, and that his pieces were exhibited at the 1951 Milan Triennale. The interest displayed by Italian and foreign artists, especially painters, towards Murano glass was facilitated by the foundation in 1953 of the Centro Studio Pittori Arte del Vetro by Egidio Costantini, a figure whose merits still have not been recognized by Murano. He organized the studio—later called the "Fucina degli Angeli" ("Furnace of Angels") by Jean Cocteau—so as to coordinate the collaboration between recognized artists and master glassmakers. These were artists such as Jean Arp, Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, and Max Ernst, who had marked and would continue marking the history of art of the twentieth century. Meanwhile, spatialism was gaining ground. The *Manifesto Blanco*—written by Lucio Fontana in 1946 in Buenos Aires—imagined the use in spatial art of a *sustancia luminosa y malleable*, although not identified, the substance seems to have the characteristics of glass. It was not by chance that Fontana himself and other artists close to



8

him joined the Fucina degli Angeli or, in any case, chose glass as an expressive medium. Some of them, like Luciano Gaspari and Vinicio Vianello, even decided to work as glass designers, alongside their artistic activity.

If the Fucina degli Angeli, not having its own furnace, could only have its pieces produced at dependable furnaces, Murano workshops have often hosted artists who wished to create works in glass. For twenty years, Berengo Studio's mission has been to facilitate the collaboration between artists from outside the world of glass and glassmakers. Creating a unique piece of art in glass implies a preparation phase with technical experts who can assist the artist in assessing the feasibility of his design and the possibilities offered by glass. The artist is therefore present at the furnace when the work is made, which is a guarantee of its authenticity. It is a delicate operation that requires both an understanding of the material on the part of the artist and an interpretative sensibility on the part of the master glassmaker. Over time, some artists have included glass among their own means of expression and have established an ongoing relationship with Berengo Studio. In this exhibition, they include Marie Louise Ekman, Marya Kazoun, Silvano Rubino, and Koen Vanmechelen. Others have made occasional incursions into glassmaking or have come to it recently, such as Lawrence Carroll, Tony Cragg, Jean Fabre, Raimund Kummer, Rene Rietmeyer, and Fred Wilson. In their work, glass is celebrated for its quality as a colored and ductile material, which can be blown and shaped in a race against time when fire has brought it to a malleable state, using the ancient techniques typical of Murano.

It is also to pay homage to the Murano tradition and its inexhaustible ability to innovate that Lino Tagliapietra was invited to display one of his installations at the *Glasstress* exhibition. Tagliapietra is the most famous Murano glassmaker-artist in the world today; he has been able to demonstrate how a very ancient material and traditional expertise—that of Venice—that dates to before 1000 CE can become incarnate in undeniably contemporary works.

WOMEN'S GLASS

Francesca Giubilei

"I see life only with one eye; the other is made of glass.
Though I see many things with this single eye,
I see much more with the other one.
Because the healthy eye allows me to see, the blind one to dream."

Paruir Savak,
Armenian poet (1924–1971)

Is it still pertinent and does it even make sense to wonder what it means to be a woman artist today? In other words, is it still appropriate to think about the relevance of differences in gender and how these are more or less directly reflected in cultural differences?

The debate is still open and of significant importance since if, on the one hand, it is true that women artists have always expressed a great desire for equality, and that the world of art has always been more egalitarian in respect to other social spheres, on the other hand, works by women artists have allowed their differences to be revealed.

It is wrong to link women to their gender identity in the artistic sphere, yet the biological difference actually carries with it some expressive differences that cannot be ignored.

Though it has never been easily accepted, the image of woman as self-reliant, free, emancipated, creative, and creating, not only in a biological-reproductive sense but also as a creator of ideas, thoughts, and different worlds, goes back to distant times.

It is Lilith.

The archetype of the feminine, a mythological figure of great modernity.

Created not from man but in parallel to him, she did not accept submitting to male power and, for this reason, was expelled and damned.

Lilith thus seems a modern-day symbol representing the emancipation of women and the equality reached between the sexes in the contemporary world.¹

Besides many well-known names, the exhibition gives space to some young women artists who explore various aspects of

femininity. In particular, the six women artists discussed in this text, through their works, have touched upon such complex and controversial themes as the dualism between nature and artifice, reality and imagination, inside and outside, visible and invisible, man and woman.

The thoughts that underlie their creative process and the practical completion of their works are never irrelevant to womanhood.

In her works, Kimiko Yoshida provocatively displays and questions stereotyped images of women. In large self-portrait photographs, her face and body are continually transformed.

In her 2006 series entitled *Self-portraits*, the artist dresses up in traditional wedding costumes from various cultures that reflect the same message: the central role of marriage in the life of a woman.

The photographic self-portraits of Kimiko Yoshida are based on close connections between baroque canons, minimalist elements, and anthropological and ethnographical references. Her photographic work represents a journey across time and history, but above all a reflection on the condition of women in the past and present.

The use of costumes, besides helping the artist to dissolve her own identity and offer a universal image of existence, also refers to an activity much loved by little girls, who dress up to emulate their mothers, offering an attractive and seductive self-image to conquer first their fathers and then other men. This cycle of works, collected for the 2001–2006 *Infinity Wall* project, examines the link between woman and the tradition of belonging, which often imprisons her in the role of wife-mother-sexual object.

The 2005 series *Self-portrait with a comma*, through the use of monochrome, particular lighting effects and glass, has allowed the artist to transmit a particular sense of fragility, precariousness, and impossibility.

In these works, the comma has been chosen as a symbol of language. It dominates and almost totally covers the artist's face, acquiring a distinct meaning: language, traditionally a male prerogative that has often been used as a weapon



9

against women, is represented and synthesized here by a large blown-glass comma that hides the feminine face of the artist and “shuts her up.” On the one hand, the lack of communication between the two sexes is denounced, on the other, the differences in their languages.

Many women artists owe their creative drive to the personal pain they have had to endure.

For example, Marya Kazoun, through works that use a broad spectrum of techniques (photography, installations, performance, and painting), attempts to give shape to the most private fears and anguish so as to make them more bearable.

A fervid, almost childlike imagination lets her combine the figurative with the abstract in her works. Kazoun is attracted by ambiguity and contradiction. In her works, which utilize a variety of materials, she depicts menacing and tentacular forms, anatomical parts and organs that, through her creativity, acquire nobility, charm, and splendor. The materials used (fabric, wire, paper, pearls, glass, bamboo, and pieces of plastic bottles) come from the banality of everyday life, but through her work they acquire a new life, becoming ethereal and impalpable.

With embroidery she studies and delves into things to see what is below the surface, behind the mask, and under the skin. Often the objects and settings created are marked by strong female symbolism.

Marya Kazoun is a new Lilith, a loving but authoritarian sovereign, surrounded by the Amos, asexual semi-human creatures that, as physical and mental extensions of herself, follow her everywhere on all fours while she moves, mistress of herself and her space, inside her imaginary world. She can be despotic but is also a protective mother. She takes it upon herself to carry the heavy burden of a suffering and oppressed humanity. She caresses and heals her monstrous children, holding them to her bosom to protect them from the aggressivity of the outside world.

The artist entrusts to the beauty, refinement, and delicacy of her art the task of softening humanity's dark side. She embroiders, sews, and draws as if she were reciting a mantra to



10

help her tame the untamable, control the irrational, and give order to chaos.

In her works, she uses “warm language,” intensifying the tactile aspect of the materials. She reintroduces, in artistic form, the manual skill of a craft traditionally performed by women—weaving, an activity that today is rejected by many women.

The 2009 installation-performance *Habitat: Where he came from*, present in this exhibition, reverses the usual roles. Kazoun always plays the part of the main character but this time she is not personally responsible for humanity's salvation, rather it is Momoth—a prehistoric creature that lives among the glaciers and that a little girl, giving voice to the artist's childish fears, calls to help the human race.

Anne Peabody grew up in Kentucky, USA, in the 1970s when the consequences of the feminist movement were dispersing, resulting in the abandonment of traditional crafts by women. Fascinated by her research on myths, by fairy tales and the private, domestic setting, the artist depicts in her work a happy and ideal “pastel-shaded” world.

Her 2004 work *Sidewalk* is a composition of mirrored sheets of glass placed on the floor that invite the observer to take a stroll and walk beside them as if on a path; they tell of a particular moment in the artist's life and suggest an interaction with the observer, who is invited to take part in the process of recovering memories.

Drawn on the surfaces are some common objects from the everyday reality of women and others that refer to the artist's life (a small comb, a stuffed teddy bear, etc.).

Glass and silver fragments freeze these objects, transforming them into memories and divesting them, at least partly, of their emotional charge. At a certain point, the path stops, the glass is shattered, and the dreamy, ethereal atmosphere is disturbed. Something that was is no longer there; the imagined perfection and happiness are perhaps not real.

Maybe it is the end of childhood, or the beginning of a traumatic period. We do not know, but it is not so important. What counts is the message transmitted by Anne Peabody's work,



11

9, 10. set-up crew in action
11. Marya Kazoun

in other words, the sense of frustration in the face of smashed dreams and hopes.

In her 2005 work *The Silver Show*, the artist has recreated a bedroom atmosphere; the great delicacy and skill with which the objects were made and distributed about the space transmits a strong sense of timelessness and suspension. The use of glass and thin silver foil worked using an ancient technique give the ambiance a subtle and undefined touch. The observer feels wrapped in a moment of memory, inside a remembrance. Her language of symbolic signs is a metaphor to describe subtly the transience of life and the meaning of memory.

An interest in recycled materials and in the fairy tales and dreams of the female world are the themes examined by Soyeon Cho.

The artist brings together two ideas: on the one hand, the beauty and originality of the works she creates with various recycled materials represent an attempt to imagine another world better than the real one; on the other, through the use of recycled materials, she provides a profound criticism of our consumer society.

In capitalist society, the supreme value seems to be the right/obligation to pursue happiness—an instantaneous and perpetual happiness that derives not so much from the satisfaction of desires as from their accumulation. In this type of society, everything becomes a commodity, even individuals who, like any other product, are likely to become trash, “throwaway lives.”

The message that the artist seems to make is the same as the one that Zygmunt Bauman, one of the most noted and influential thinkers in the world, has been trying to convey for some years now: “Every day we consume without thinking, without realizing that consumption is consuming us. It is a silent war and we are losing it.”²

Soyeon Cho’s research is mainly about the dualism between the natural and the artificial; she is interested in the study and discovery of artificial materials and in their possible reuse in unusual contexts.

With cotton swabs, plastic forks, and telephone wires, Soyeon

Cho creates imaginary landscapes, full of light and color.

Her 2009 work *In Bloom* is a large flower made of disposable forks and iron wire. In the center a giant pistil, made of small glass bottles and LED lights, rises from the corolla.

Behind the long manual labor necessary for the creation of this mobile sculpture lies the desire to give new artistic value to objects, the wish to look at the world with a different pair of eyes. Glass in particular—which she introduced only recently into her work—allows her, thanks to its intrinsic characteristics, to reflect on both the transience and fragility of what surrounds us, of what we possess, and contributes to shaping our identity and the need and desire for permanence and stability that we are continually seeking.

Soyeon Cho uses various objects and materials, symbols of modern-day frustrations and unhappiness, to give shape to an alternative reality, as in *Wonderlandlust* from 2005 where she has turned reality upside down in the true sense of the expression; every rational and physical rule has been overturned and everything floats in a very colorful and ironic world.

In recent years, the young generation of artists has opened new territories and possibilities in representation and expression, thanks to the spread of digital technologies that allow the creation of a virtual reality. The Korean artist Hye Rim Lee’s 2007 video installation *Crystal City Spun* is a 3-D animation that tells a fantasy tale based on an intermingling of Eastern and Western popular culture and the study of new technologies and how they influence tradition. It is a reflection on today’s increasingly “changed” female identity, as a result of cosmetics, plastic surgery, and genetic manipulation.

TOKI, the video’s main character, is part woman, part child, part animal, part machine; she is the result of some cyberspace mistake, an imaginary figure that incarnates male sexual desires and the aspirations of feminine beauty.

The dragon YONG, her traveling companion, is the symbol of Asian identity and culture. Unlike in the West, where the dragon is associated with negative values, in the East, it is a symbol of courage, loyalty, and strength.



12

Crystal City is a fantasy world that evokes nostalgia for childhood but it is also a world filled with obsessions and insanity. Crystal City, an artistic project “in progress”, is a reflection on how the female sexual identity is perceived and used at a global level.

The graphics used inevitably refer to the manga tradition, but are mixed with Western aesthetic ideals, thus giving life to a transgender, transcultural heroine who lives in an imaginary world governed by testosterone.

Through an exploration of videogame dynamics, intended for a male public, and a fascination with new technologies, the artist Hye Rim Lee has used a different outlook to analyze some aspects of popular culture, globalization and especially femininity in relation to the media.

Never before has the human body, particularly the female one, been so manipulated.³ Starting from this consideration, the artist in her 2004 work *Super Toy* makes explicit reference to the idea of transforming and modifying the female body through cosmetic surgery. TOKI becomes a tool with which to criticize –with irony and from inside – contemporary culture, the result of male chauvinist thought that encourages the pursuit of the perfect female body, or better the one that suits male sexual desires. TOKI is not a passive female but a heroine who publicly submits to the tortures of the scalpel so as to show everyone the excruciating process to which women must submit themselves in order to reach the ideal of beauty imposed upon them by men.

Through her numerous works, Hye Rim Lee demonstrates that the exploitation of the female body is still very much a relevant

question. Her work straddles stylistically the East and the West but the reality she tells about is unfortunately universal. No grace but tension and analysis in the works of Bettina Pousttchi. The German-Iranian artist’s sculptural and photographic research abandons the realm of the personal and the private to address the external, i.e., society.

Her glass and metal sculptures are the expression of a strong, tough, and combative femininity.

The materials used, although difficult to shape, are distorted, bent, and twisted as if by exceptional strength.

Bettina Pousttchi loves to catch the observer off-guard by creating a sense of confusion and uneasiness. Through the interaction of the various sculptures, she creates settings that are cold, disorienting, and aseptic.

In *Blackout I-IV* from 2008, she positioned various metal crowd-control barriers, powder-coated in black, that block the normal and rational passage of people. Some barriers are standing while others are on the ground, almost as if they had been knocked down by someone, perhaps an uncontrolled mob.

In reality, the space is deserted, creating a certain tension and the unpleasant sense of latent violence, which could explode again from one moment to the next.

The artist frequently uses objects, generally urban furnishings, as models for the sculptures that she then places in unusual settings.

Removed from their urban context, these objects acquire completely different meanings and become messengers of a social criticism directed at institutional power.

A recognized authority imposes rules and places barriers that



13

the artist provocatively and idealistically knocks down, alters, and ridicules.

Through this distortion-destruction of objects, symbols of our society, Bettina Pousttchi mocks political power and depicts it as a victim of its own coercive violence.

What has been said so far has permitted highlighting how women artists—or artistic women, if one prefers—express themselves with a different, female (as it is) understanding that reveals a strong creativity and expressive energy but also a great gift for introspection.

All the women artists mentioned here share a common desire and need to investigate a multifaceted world and to examine thoroughly the connections between the individual and the universal spheres, between everyday reality and fantasy, between art and life.

In addition to the female aspects of creation, the six women artists are united—in this exhibition in particular—by their use of glass, as the central material in their works.

If one thinks about it, the choice of this material by a woman artist seems a rather unusual one, especially as it refers to a material, a craft, and a creative act commonly considered masculine. The women artists that decided to test themselves through this experience have had to deal with this reality and reflect on the subordinate relationship that still exists between manifestations of female and male creativity. The woman who chooses to use glass as an expressive medium, by having to face a male chauvinist hierarchical system, disturbs the pre-established order and asserts her own creative freedom.

Furthermore, how can the many similarities and connections

that exist between the female nature and that of glass go unnoticed? Vitreous paste is the matter best suited to evoke a sense of the everyday anxiety, inconsistency, and uncertainty that characterize every individual and, particularly, the contemporary woman.

From an opaque, incandescent, malleable, and unbreakable mixture, glass distills into a clear, delicate, cold, and sharp material. Resistance and fragility characterize both the nature of glass and that of women.

The women artists of today probably no longer consider themselves the weak link in the process of artistic creation. They are certainly not fragile in their active role as creators; on the contrary, by measuring themselves against glass and the male world that surrounds it, they strengthen and expand the presence of women in the world of art.

Notes

1. Trevisan, Maria Luisa. *Lilith. L'aspetto femminile della creazione*. Venice: Quaderni di Concerto d'Arte Contemporanea, 2004, p. 11.
2. Bauman, Zygmunt. *Consumo, dunque sono*. Bari: Laterza Editori, 2008, p. 107.
3. Cf. with *Ibid.*, pp. 149–150.

Additional Bibliography:

- Bartolena, S., *Arte al femminile. Donne artiste dal Rinascimento al XXI secolo*. Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2003.
- De Gregorio, C., *Malamore. Esercizi di resistenza al dolore*. Milan: Mondadori Editore, 2008.
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THE CRAFTSMAN AND THE MANUFACTURER

Giacinto Di Pietrantonio

The decanting of modernity into postmodernity has distant origins, dating to the years when modernity itself was being built and which, according to many, coincides with the times, fashions, and ideas of the Enlightenment, when Diderot and D’Alambert in their *Encyclopedia* separated arts and crafts, classifying human knowledge from an educational and progressive perspective. In the construction of this new world, glass art was not an outsider, as Richard Sennet points out in *L’uomo artigiano* (*The Craftsman*, Feltrinelli, 2009). In this book, the author recounts how, driven by a need to manufacture large sheets of glass for windows in order to bring light into homes, at the end of the seventeenth century French craftsmen from the Saint-Gobin glassworks, under the supervision of Abraham Thévart, were able to manufacture flat glass in 2 x 2-meter sheets, surpassing the primacy of the rival Venetian glassworks on Murano, which maintained and continue to maintain primacy in artistic glass production. Indeed, the *Encyclopedia* distinguished between two different methods of glassmaking: on the one hand, the new method in which a roller machine compressed, flattened, and smoothed sheets of glass with technical precision; on the other, the traditional method of working from a gob of melted glass into which the craftsman breathed his *body and soul*, making use of his great manual skill. In fact, “the *Encyclopedia* asserts that handmade glass, with its imperfections, also has ‘character.’”

It might seem that, to suit the purposes of this show, we are approaching this in a roundabout way, or as the old saying goes “going back to the dawn of things, as the French do,” but it is not so, to the extent that our aim is to understand the whys of various conceptions of art and the world, also based on the use of glass and glass making. This being said, let us begin, for example, by underscoring the difference in the use of neon, a noble gas contained in glass tubes, by the Italo-Argentine Lucio Fontana (Rosario, Argentina, 1899–Comabio, Italy, 1968) on the one hand and the American Dan Flavin (New York, USA, 1933–1996) on the other. The former used craftsmen to create his large spatial concept doodle-drawing

in neon for the staircase at the IX Milan Triennale in 1951, whereas the latter, beginning in the early 1960s, used common tubes of neon found on the market. It is therefore not difficult to notice, without wishing to make a classification based on value, a difference similar to that between handicraft and industry stated in the *Encyclopedia*, as underlined above. In fact, if we extend this concept to other artists—Italian and American for the moment—we notice a similar difference between the work of Luciano Fabro (Turin, 1936–Milan, 2007) and that of Dan Graham (Urbana, Illinois, USA, 1942). If we think about the work *Feet* (1968–1971) by Fabro and about Graham’s *Pavilions* (begun in 1980), we are faced with two different artistic conceptions that highlight their different provenances: Europe—and more particularly Italy—on the one hand, South America and the US on the other. In the first, the craft tradition is fundamental while the second echoes something closer to the Industrial Revolution. This is a difference that we also find in that most manual of arts, painting: let us think about Andy Warhol, who took painting to the level of serigraphic repetitiveness. If we linger again over the relations of these works to earlier periods and place of origin, we see how Fabro’s *Feet* express a comment and a longing to be included in the figurative sculptural tradition of Western art: notice the right foot positioned halfway between the act of walking—thereby animating the statue—and the academic rules of antithesis. For his part, Dan Graham places his work within the relational tradition that is typical of American art, directed at setting man in a spatial, architectural, and urban context, where the point of view is always in motion, inviting a continually changing look at things. Having made this brief digression, we can note how the above-mentioned examples concern works that have a relation with space, therefore with architecture and living space, but even living space has various connotations; one is related to the wide spaces of architecture and the other to familiar everyday life. In short, let us say that it is also a question of scale, which we could define “from glass to metropolis” (to paraphrase Walter Gropius’s famous expression “from spoon to



14



15

14. Luca Pancrazzi piece /
set-up crew in action
15. Soyeon Cho

city”) or, in other words, from object to urban planning, from the smallest to the biggest. Let us not forget how both the physical and mental construction of modernity was made possible also thanks to the use of ancient and modern materials—such as glass, iron, and reinforced concrete—that were used like new ones. In fact, if we think about the present relevance of the Great Exhibition, we see that the first World’s Fair was held in the Crystal Palace designed by the architect Joseph Paxton, a pavilion of iron and glass built in London in 1851. There is a significant literature on glass that bears witness to its importance; an example is Paul Scheerbart’s *Glass Architecture* (1914). But here we are still in that modernity whose early founding dominance was outside of Italy, whereas if we look at the artisan’s commitment to glass working, we find its foundations, maintenance, and development in Italy, which means in Venice and Murano. From one digression to another, I would also like to hypothesize that the persistence and mastery of glass working in Venice is related to the city’s artistic history, just as that of painting. It is Vasari who informs us that in Venice painting was done with light (Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, Tiepolo, Canaletto . . .), while in Florence, drawing was dominant (Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Pontormo, Rosso Fiorentino . . .): the open form and the closed one. That is to say that glass art has to do with the characteristics of a people and of a particular place, the lagoon, in which the reflections of light, the transparent and changing colors of the water are an everyday sight and that therefore glass and glass working are something natural for Venetians. This persistence has made it so that even today—in the world of computers and the Internet, amidst this fluid society—this tradition is still very strong and used by artists, especially in a society of “conceptualized” art where it is not necessary for the artist to know how to create a work with his own hands but to have an idea which can be translated into a work by a good craftsman under the watchful guidance of the artist. Here is another meaningful distinction, the one between craftsman and manual worker. Without intending to draw any classification regarding social

importance, we wish to include them in our scrutiny, so as to seek a definition and delineate the world of each, because the craftsman means blown glass, while the worker is the one who uses machines to flatten the glass. So the worker belongs to glass factory production and to modernity while the craftsman belongs to tradition and postmodernity, the latter period directed at recovering manual ability. In reality, we see in this ambivalence the resurgence of individuality, the body, and the ego, instead of the “we” that characterized modernity, where large transparent windows, by connecting internal and external spaces, indicated the blurring of boundaries between public and private, by which, as modern sociology states, the private is public and the public is private, while the body is both social and collective. To the contrary, postmodernity affirms the return of the ego, the body, the individual, the return of emotion, and private space, that is also the artisan’s workshop, where there are no modern patent rights but the knowledge and handing down of secrets from master to pupil, where learning is a direct daily event. To better understand what we are doing, here are some examples that compare the work of the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth (Toledo, Ohio, 1941), and of the Belgian Jan Fabre (Antwerp, 1958): the first with his works *Box, Cube, Empty, Clear, Glass – a Description* (1965) and *Five Words in Blue Neon* (1965) and the second with *DE SCHELDE (Hé wat een plezierige zottigheid!)*, a 1988 video in which we see the artist in a boat as he lays on the waters of the Schelde River and the words *Hé wat een plezierige zottigheid!* (Oh, what fantastic madness!), in which the words are made with blue blown glass though they seem to be written in neon, as well as a blown glass owl, also in blue. The difference between the two artists’ positions appears obvious. For the former, glass and the cubical form, just as the neon writing and the color, are what they are, that is to say, that quality, form, and content coincide tautologically in the sense that text, form, and material say what we already know, specifically that this is an empty transparent cubical glass box, just as the five words are in blue neon, while the execution, especially for the first work, is assigned to a machine. On the

16. Giuseppe Penone piece /
set-up crew in action
17. Rene Rietmeyer



16



17

other hand, for Fabre, an artist who focuses, among others, on the revival of tradition in both its mythological and structural meanings, art becomes mimesis, metamorphosis, and a brilliant simulation by which blown glass appears to be neon, but is not, while the blue-painted owl refers to the blue hour, which is the time when night slips into dawn, when nocturnal animals, like the owl, go to sleep and the diurnal ones such as the dove (like those seen in the 2008 Louvre exhibition) awaken. Therefore, glass and color are not materials and meanings in themselves but they are what the artist instills in them with the help of the master glassmaker. We note the same tendency in almost all the artists of postmodernity, which does not mean that they are postmodern, only that their work matured in the era of postmodernity. Let us think of some examples like Tony Cragg (Liverpool, UK, 1949), who went from using discarded plastic, which he then assembled on a wall or the ground, to using glass in various figurative and non-figurative forms, always with an eye to the English tradition of form that originated with Henry Moore, yet in light of the latest achievements in rendering volume by computer and in a chemical structure. As a matter of fact, he moves from works in which glass containers and sheets are assembled as in *Clear Glass Stack* (1999) or bells as in *Making Sense* (2007) to *Material Thoughts*, a sort of wave, also from 2007. Chen Zhen (Shanghai, 1955–Paris, 2000) began to use blown glass towards the end of his life, prematurely cut short by an incur-

able illness. The artist perceived the sense of human fragility, which he himself was existentially experiencing. Thus he started creating still lifes in transparent glass where, in place of plants or objects, we find human internal organs, making up a sort of anatomical illustration of the viscera. From one body to another, we turn to that of Kiki Smith (Nuremberg, Germany, 1954), an artist who, through sculpture and drawing, has made her own body the center of her work, investigating identity and sexual stereotypes in which the materiality, the perishability, and, above all, the vulnerability of the body itself are made even more evident through the use of glass, the quintessentially fragile material. Roni Horn (New York, USA, 1955) seeks to broaden the concept of drawing using writing, sculpture, photography, and graphics to speak about nature, time, and individual experience. In our opinion, *Asphere*, or *Untitled (Yes)-1*, a block of clear transparent glass, and *Untitled (Yes)-2*, in black glass, both from 2001, are works in which reflections and mirror images are ever changing, mobile, and, for this reason, have been described by the artist as a self-portrait. In the same way, works in glass are always a reflection of ourselves and of our world. May we observe, by the way, that both glass and computer chips are made chiefly from silicon, therefore history, memory, and knowledge, while they have in common the artistic, technical, and scientific wisdom in which we are able to transform it but that is stuff for another story.

GLASS AND THE PSYCHE

Fausto Petrella

Introduction

Glass is a material with singular properties and with such varied characteristics that it allows an extraordinary multiplicity of uses. In order to describe this variety, the common definitions of *glass* end up seeming overly general and all-encompassing. It is therefore necessary to point out at least some of the complex and always surprising *transformational* aspects of the raw materials including the quartz sands from which glass originates, one of the most ancient tricks in mankind's bag of technical and physicochemical know-how.

I am aware of over-simplification in recalling that glass is made from silica (SiO_2) mixed with other oxides (e.g. sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, barium, etc. acting now as a melting now as a stabilizing agent), or with lead oxides (to create lead crystal that in reality has nothing crystalline about it), and that high temperatures are required to transform the raw materials into an incandescent paste that, after being cooled using a series of singular methods, at last solidifies into the glass we know. Silica and the various oxides, according to the materials used and the temperatures they are brought to, take on a toffee-like consistency that is moldable using various techniques. Glass can be pressed, worked in sheets of varying thicknesses, even very thin ones, or molded using suitable methods, including the ancient art of glassblowing. Glass can be molded, ground, transformed into all types of mirrors, not to mention optical glass, free of any anomalies or internal tension.

One fundamental aspect of glass is to be *amorphous* owing to the processes used to melt the basic material, which prevent the formation of crystals during cooling and solidification. This amorphous character is at the base of the perfect transparency and colorlessness of glass.

The heterogeneous qualities of glass and its singular properties depend on the various factors mentioned above: its chemical composition, of course, but also the various ways of working it. Thus many types of glass can be obtained that differ as regards purity, transparency, fragility, electrical conduction, color, resistance to temperature variations, re-

fraction index, and more. From this wide range of qualitative attributes derive the variegated types of glass which have made it possible to use glass in an extremely broad array of technical and artistic applications.

A combination of miscellaneous elements makes glass a special material in art: the relation between the vitreous material, fire and cold—with its liquid and toffee-like stages, before it finally takes on a definitive form, permanent yet fragile, in its solid state; its link with the breath of the craftsman who blows it, and with the deft movements that mold it, defying the heat and difficult handling of the paste to produce a tonal and timbral combination of colors, transparencies, and shapes. All these combine in making glass a sort of ductile expressive orchestral, in which the variety of sounds, timbers, and colors has been fixed in an instant and definitive synthesis. A profound and radical tie exists between glass and the expressive body, that is condensed in the glass object, creating the foundations of these synesthesias, for which we attribute to an ephemeral vocal or artificially produced sound the abstract qualities of glass, as when we say that it is *clear*, *limpid*, or *transparent*, *pure* or *cold*, *sharp* or *cutting* . . .

We are literally surrounded by glass, or better yet, by the *vitreous*, which is made up not only of what we commonly call glass but also of other materials that share some fundamental properties with glass.

Glass = Psyche. The Extent of an Analogy

Glass's rich catalogue of attributes is at the base of the metaphor that relates it to the psyche.

In other words, the psyche is often spoken of in reference to glass and to certain of its characteristic properties. The analogy of the psyche with glass, very ancient and deeply rooted in language, seems inevitable. It is so much a part of our language that we are not even aware of it. As what we refer to as psychic is represented essentially in the language, the qualities of glass are often found in the linguistic games of the psyche, both in current language and in pre-scientific and scientific psychological discourse. We thus witness the for-

18. Kimiko Yoshida
 19. Fred Wilson
 20. Fred Wilson piece /
 set-up crew in action



18

mation of a network of conversational uses that are supported and interwoven with other, different metaphorical references. This movement, from metaphorizing glass to metaphORIZED psyche, ends up going in both directions. In other words, even the psyche, this concentrate of heterogeneous and even contradictory attributes, can lend its properties to glass. *Glass* \Leftrightarrow *Psyche* ends up constituting a circle in which sometimes a vitrification of the psyche takes place, and sometimes a “psyche-ation” of glass in various directions. Some metaphorical and symbolic lines are established by usage, but other or new ones are always possible.

By saying that with this essay I intend to launch a *reflection* on the glass-psyche nexus, have I not already entered into the metaphorical uses of which I am about to speak? The answer can only be affirmative. And so let us reflect upon it.

Consciousness: Cognitive Transparency and Confusion

Certain structural aspects of consciousness are defined by some elementary qualities of glass. Consciousness is not easy to define for psychology and psychopathology. This is commonly admitted in psychology, and many scholars have maintained no reference should be made to this notion. But it is impossible, for many reasons, to avoid it completely, especially when we wish to define certain experiential alterations under various pathological conditions.

Normally, consciousness is a function of which we are not aware. It is, so to say, a *transparent* function, in the same way that we are not aware of the eyes with which we see or the invisible glass partition that separates the room where we happen to be from the outside, and which we run the risk of bumping into if it is not appropriately marked. We do not usually say that conscience is transparent but that it has been blurred, obscured, and that its clarity has diminished to the point of disappearing. It is a clarity which, like that of glass, contributes to its ability to reflect light and objects in certain conditions.

Thought is more easily qualified as being transparent, something which it can be or seem to be when it is lucid and crys-

tal clear. The ideas expressed by thought can be “clear and distinct,” luminous and brilliant, reflecting exactly the things represented by thought, to the point of blending into them. The imprecisions and “impurities” of thought that upset its transparency and ability to reflect are what reveal it to be only a mirror image of the world and ourselves, not to be identified with the thing being thought or articulated: revealing that thought expresses or portrays that which is the result of a construction largely owed to its representative faculties.

Crystalline waters and clear glass share certain properties. The vitreous flow of clear waters and the flow of thought set in motion that changeable clarity and transparency that is fixed in glass’s solidity. *Flowing* and *remaining* cannot normally be represented only by glass, just as the ability of thought and consciousness to illuminate and clarify that which comes into view cannot be attributed to glass alone. But when consciousness becomes opaque, its light is spent and it can no longer reveal anything. It is here that the unconscious begins, while vision is hindered by an obstacle that can be overcome only with great difficulty, if at all. Freud named this obstacle in different ways: first, *psychic censorship* (Petrella, 1999) and later, *repression*, up to identifying an unrepressed unconscious that regards non-conscious experiences, i.e., those not sufficiently illuminated by language, as happens in the pre-verbal experiences of a very small child.

Consciousness applied to these images regards the cognitive syntheses that put the psyche in relation to the world and to itself. When the transparency, clarity, and lucidity of experience are affected, one’s consciousness is confused: we are in the sphere of *mental confusion*. A confused consciousness and a confused psychic landscape are one and the same. Confusional disorder generates anguish and anguish generates disorder by the loss of the world’s transparency, habitual clarity, and “natural” evidence.¹

In psychotic alterations of consciousness, we find not only a loss of *clarity* but also an alteration of *contact* with things, even though they might appear clear and distinct. It is as if a piece of transparent glass were placed between me and my



19



20

relationship with the natural and human world. The world and things are “under glass,” visible but not accessible, touchable or appropriable. Even with the greatest transparency, glass then becomes a symbol of the inaccessibility and the cold indifference with which things and contact with others can appear.

Having many years ago collaborated on the space planning for the reception area of a mental health center that I would soon direct, I had to fight a small battle to prevent the construction of a reception area locked in glass that would have bureaucratically separated the users of the service from whomever had to “welcome” them. Unconsciously, the glass served to establish for the health care clerk a barrier and a protective distance from the feared patients. The glass, in other words, aimed at establishing an inappropriate form of preventive control for the presumed dangerousness of the users: a sort of bullet-proof glass that was meant to protect from mutual aggressive projections. The necessity of putting experiences under glass is not only part of the psychotic experience but is symmetrically present in the attending staff and tends to be incorporated unconsciously and inappropriately in spaces that should be therapeutic. All this contrasts with the positive *reparative, protective, and retentive functions* of glass in other circumstances.

The clear eye of consciousness finds one of its characteristic obstacles in the *opacity of the living body*, in the impossibility of the eye of consciousness to penetrate and know it. The psyche, which also emanates from the body, cannot penetrate it visually. It presents itself as a closed box, a “black box.” Medicine has thought up many strategies to *see inside* this opaque box, sometimes through indirect strategies, like radiological images that construct clever and plausible images of this interior. With these indirect images, one tries to bring the body’s interior into the visible realm, to produce increasingly credible images of the body. With more direct methods, glass and light are introduced into the body for assessment and diagnostic purposes as, for example, through the glass optical fibers used in endoscopy.

There is a single natural exception to the body’s opacity, represented by the only organ—the eye—whose main functional characteristic is transparency. The properties of the various parts of the eye—the cornea, *crystalline* lens, *aqueous* humor, and *vitreous* humor—are those of transparent glass and of its series of lenses, one of which has a variable focus. It ensures that vision also permits taking the opposite direction by looking into the eye from the outside, and to obtain, thanks to a simple ophthalmoscope, a small but direct image of the ground of the eye, the most descriptive, informative, and semiological information.

It is because of its transparency and its visual capacity that the eye has always been considered the organ of consciousness, that sees and observes. In Antiquity, physiology even maintained that the eye gave off a light that allowed vision (Pietrantonio, 1981). The emission theory of light from the eye soon declined but our language continues to attribute illuminating and clarifying functions to consciousness and awareness. A reverse functioning of sight is imagined in the projected visual (and auditory) hallucinatory phenomena of the psychopathological realm: but these projections are only the exteriorizing fantasy of an image, a thought, a proto-thought, or an affect that are projected outward from the mind through a process that can be expulsive or evacuating on the part of a psyche, which is unable to keep thoughts, images, and affects inside. We find these concepts expressed in Chapter VII of Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) and in Bion (1965).

Dirty and Clear Conscience

Next to consciousness, which ensures the most elementary cognitive functioning, lies the conscience, to which language more easily has recourse. It is the *moral conscience* that controls the ethical behavior of the ego, establishing what is good and what is bad. This ethical conscience is also the matrix of blame and feelings of guilt. Let us say then that, with the advent of guilt, the “bad conscience” has become clouded and dirty because it has lost its innocence and clarity, its more



21

or less original “purity.” The expiation of guilt restores clarity to the moral conscience, while the rules of ethics serve to maintain clarity and transparency in human relations. It will seem trite to recall the reiteration of the word *transparency* (*glasnost*) in everyday as well as political and administrative language as a need to regulate the relationship between the state and its citizens against censorship and secret, hidden maneuvers of the political power or of single individuals when they wish to escape the eye of the law (Petrella, 1993).

Forms of Psychic Fragility

The typical attribute of glass is its fragility, one that depends on its being an inflexible material at ordinary temperature and of having “the characteristic of suddenly shattering without any sign of yielding before reaching the breaking point” (De Mauro, 2000). Even a succinct dictionary definition shows the double psycho-scientific nature of the terms used.

The fragility of glass is used figuratively to designate a weak constitution, psychic instability, a lack of strength of mind, personal instability. It is the opposite of hardness, strength, cohesion, solidity, and resilience.

The famous novella by Cervantes on the madness of the “Glass Licentiate”—the Doctor Glass who deliriously imagined he was made of glass—is perhaps the most important literary passage that demonstrates how glass lends itself to representing the fragility of the Self. In reality, the madness of the licentiate Tomas Rodaja is not so isolated. Cesare Segre (1999), analyzing Cervantes’s tale, recalls a series of madmen who insisted that they were made, either wholly or partly, of glass. They are documented and described by a medical literature that has developed since 1500 and even earlier. The most famous of these glass madmen is King Charles VI of France who in 1392, as Silvio Piccolomini related, was struck by a madness in which he announced that he was made of glass and so could no longer tolerate being touched, wearing armor or carrying arms for fear of breaking. Today, the deliria in which the subject maintains that his thoughts can be seen from outside are more frequent. In these deliria of transpar-

ency, both body and mind are penetrable and visible by anyone, so that personal interiority becomes accessible to the eye of everyone. The Self being made of glass and therefore transparent does not allow either masks or secrets, whereas in the old cases of self-transformation into glass, it is the person’s fragility and fear of breaking and going to pieces that are at play. When one speaks generally of “being in pieces,” one expresses the same experience of fragility and of being at a breaking point.

In the case of Cervantes’s character, it is especially the meeting with a courtesan who was infatuated with him and whom he categorically refused that produced the character’s horror of a traumatic sexual seduction, which exposes his entire body to the threat of castration and, more profoundly, reopens old narcissistic wounds from childhood that are to blame for the risk of shattering. It is within this conflictual situation that the woman’s giving of a love potion to the licentiate must be interpreted, a potion that should cause him to fall in love. But the potion acts instead as a poison that immediately triggers the character’s delirious illness. How much is due to its toxicological effect and how much to its potential as a traumatic symbol of “oral” seduction is not known.

It may be asked if this “Renaissance” delirium can still be diagnosed today. In the evolution of psychopathological thought, and under the influence of psychoanalysis, the idea of fragility that was expressed by Cervantes character’s belief that he was a glass jar, has been defined characteristically by medicine and psychiatry, and is still open to scientific exploration (Petrella, 1993). Starting with Eugen Bleuler (1911), who coined the term “schizophrenia,” the notion of *Spaltung* (splitting) has become an important mechanism of the psychotic experience, responsible for the splits that characterize the schizophrenic psyche. In other words, we may say that the delirious assimilation of oneself to glass has changed profoundly since the last century; it has changed from a delirious experience of fragility into a psychopathological conception that typically defines the schizophrenic experience. The idea of incurable psychotic *vulnerability* is thus considered nat-



22



23

ural—and medically confirmed. Psychotics are fragile, like glass, and their going to pieces, in which the fragmentation of their pathology consists, is not easily put back together, just as glass cannot be repaired once it breaks into fragments, shattering into countless pieces of varying sizes.

The *vulnerability* implied here has generated much discussion regarding its nature and certainly refers to differences in the constitution of the various types of “psychic glass,” relatively brittle, relatively resistant according to their constitution/composition. From this point of view, it may be interesting to study the debate that took place in psychiatry on the anthropology of vulnerability during the twentieth century, both on a descriptive level and on what is implied by vulnerability at the biological-structural level.² It remains that glass, being more or less brittle, is however an amorphous, isotropic, and hyaline structure. No one is able to put it back together once some external trauma or internal tension has caused the “material” to break into pieces. It is obvious that the metaphor must be used sparingly and with great precision, keeping in mind the practical consequences of its semantic extension.

Freud’s position is markedly different from that of coeval psychopathologists. He said, in one of his writings from 1932, that the ego in general, the ego of us all is fragile like glass, only apparently solid and compact. When it breaks because of a trauma or a fall, there is nothing accidental about its fracture and fragmentation. In breaking, it reveals its intimate structure, which can be studied. It is never amorphous, nor chaotic, nor a shapeless jumble but it constantly discloses shapes, some kind of pattern in the way it breaks. It thus has a crystalline structure, namely something that we can treat as a model, using models.³ These models are representations of the split states of the ego and the world, now decidedly psychologized and confined to interiority. They draw their insistency and consistency from man, from his needs, fantasies, and history: and so although they belong to the world, they are inside, and not outside, a world that is also ours. For this reason, perhaps, the delirium of being made of glass is rare among today’s patients. Because psychological fragility is to

be considered as a universal attribute of “us” and everyone. So much so that during the course of the twentieth century, the ideas of *Spaltung*, of splitting and fragmentation, having become images current in psychology and analytical psychopathology, implicitly suggest the metaphor of a fragility that finds its physiological prototype in the small child. In any case, it is not at all irrelevant to see man as amorphous glass, or crystal. The psychoanalyst certainly sees in the split ego broken crystal and not broken glass. And he wonders about the nature and characteristics of the traumas that may have caused it to break and looks for the structures the trauma may reveal. This is the sign of an opening to meaning and of a better outlook than the one shown by psychiatry when it makes vulnerability an element linked to a constitutional malfunction without history or motives. For psychiatry, even a traumatic event likewise finishes by having a marginal meaning and by being undervalued by the psychiatrist.

Ambiguity of Glass: Between Dioptrics and Catoptrics

The fact that, besides being transparent, glass can be a surface that reflects light has created an impressive series of analogies that have served, and continue to serve, successfully in ordinary language, in psychology, in psychoanalysis, and in the neurosciences.

I cannot enter other than very briefly into the descriptive and theoretical games that have arisen around the ambiguity of this transparency and reflectiveness of glass. Mirrors, in which glass assumes a reflective function only through the silvering of one of the surfaces, causes glass to lose its transparency, whereas it stabilizes and reinforces its reflecting qualities. The existence of flat and spherical mirrors as well as special ones in which transparency works only one way (one side is reflective, the other transparent) establishes correspondences between glass and the complexity of the reflective functions of the mind.

Everything is complicated here. *Reflection* and *speculation*—supreme manifestations of the spiritual faculties—find a powerful image in the etymological root *re-flectere*, i.e., “to



24

fold back,” the folding back on itself of the reflected image. The phenomenon by which transparent glass acts as a mirror in certain lighting conditions lends itself perfectly to depicting the mutability of the functions of self- and hetero-representation. In brief, if the glass in which our face is reflected becomes transparent in certain lighting conditions, we see our reflected image become indistinct and eventually disappear. In its place, a different image emerges, that of the world or of another person beyond the glass. By day from the train window I see the countryside but, by night, it is the reflection of my face that appears before my eyes. The phenomenon of the mirror’s instability can represent a real “optical catastrophe,” as Valerio Magrelli writes (2002, p. 65 ff.). The symptoms of this instability of the self-image were captured acutely and precisely, on the threshold of the twentieth century, by the subtle perception and intuition of a certain number of artists and poets. Magrelli has completed an important and detailed reconstruction and analysis of the autoscopic experience in twentieth-century French poetry, along a line that runs from Mallarmé to Paul Valéry. At stake are the images of the Self and the Other, as they are reflected in the glass/mirror oscillation.

In general, it can be said that mirrors are not absolutely reliable. Glass here shows the very human quality of ambiguity, where the greatest realism turns out to be illusory because the mirror reveals its imaginary character. From the various forms that can take the phenomena of specular instability, people develop positive and negative feelings towards reflected images, with an extraordinary variety of manifestations and of psychological and theoretical accents. We could give many examples.

Thus we have phobias of mirror images and therefore of mirrors, and the attraction/repulsion that many feel for their own image, either reflected or photographed. The “mirror phenomenon”—which corresponds to the loss of the mental vision of oneself—is a known symptom that was described by the old semeiotics of psychoses at the beginnings of illness. The risks of the mirror are not limited to psychopathology, as

exemplified by the myths of Narcissus and of Medusa, where the mirror shows its deep and universal connection with the loss of the Self and with death. There are countless literary, pictorial, and cinematographic works which mirror (reflect, show . . .) the multiple aspects of the mirror in the reflective experience. The experience of the double—with its long literary and psychological history (see Massimo Fusillo, 1988, for all and, in reference to pathology, see Petrella and Vanna Berlincioni, 2006)—is often accompanied by the loss of one’s own reflection in the mirror. While the pictorial genre of *Vanitas*, especially widespread in seventeenth-century Europe and in the Low Countries, regularly shows a mirror among the group of objects that mark the ineluctable passing of time and the inanity of the narcissistic link to life and beauty.

It is a characteristic of modernity’s identity crisis that the mirror has lost its stability. A relevant early turning point in the twentieth-century change in the representation of the Self is expressed by the refusal to be faithful to the mirror image as a starting point in representational self-portraits.

It is a programmatic refusal that also corresponds to a specific distrust towards mirrors, which have become incapable of faithfully reflecting our image and corroborating its stable state, and not only because of their distorting properties.

The phenomenon by which glass can manifest sometimes catoptric, sometimes dioptric properties lends itself very well to depicting the instability of the self- and hetero-representative functions.

With their installation *Identimix* (1994), Flavia Alman and Sabine Reiff present a simple yet effective device of interactive simulation that exploits and intensifies this property of glass to act sometimes as a mirror and sometimes be transparent according to how it is lighted. It then becomes possible to force a dynamic and experimental recombination of the features of my face with those of another person, and achieve a sort of explant, transplant, and non-invasive recombination of one’s own facial features with those of someone else. The resulting destabilization of one’s own facial image renders tangible, visible, and reproducible for everyone those phe-



25

nomena that psychopathology describes as depersonalization. All forms of depersonalization are characterized by the boundaries between the ego, the other, and the world becoming permeable to the point of collapse. Glass permits a simple simulation of all this.

A different and further step visible in the twentieth-century self-portrait is when—as is often the case—it shows disfiguring, deforming, and anomalous transformations. These transformations are also to be interpreted as a reaction to a tradition of self-representation that had as its identity paradigm the faithful, specular self-image that of the faithful self-portrait. After the catastrophe of the Great War, there appeared in art an entire phenomenology of the fragmentary, which exposed and devalued the illusion of specular symmetry. On the epistemological plane, the metaphor of regular glass is contrasted with that of smoke and chaos, seen as aspects of a new reality now asking to be depicted and scientifically considered (Atlan, 1979).

Against the background of all these experiences, and at their origin, we find Freud's "Introduction to Narcissism" (1914). This Freudian essay picks the critical moment of identity already present in that period and launches a new reflection on reflection that will complicate the reflective experience as far as the eye can see: connecting it, on the one hand, to drive and to its constituent and relational vicissitudes; on the other, to the subject's imaginative life and his pathology.

It was Lacan (1949)—in a text that became famous—who brought into consideration a child's primary experience with that special mirror, i.e., his mother's face: a virtual but also very real place in which he recognizes both his own face and that of the object, going through the experience of loss together with that of the reappearance of the destroyed/re-found object, which glass, with its alternating catoptric and dioptric properties, effectively simulates, filling itself with all the desires and needs of human experience at its origins (Carels, 2002).

This reflection was reintroduced with its therapeutic implications by Kohut (1977), who made the reciprocal *mirroring*

between patient and therapist an essential moment in the psychoanalytical cure.

Conclusions

I believe to have shown, needless to say in a quite incomplete and very general way, by which means—linguistic and not only—the properties and the merits of glass can be connected to the psyche in defining several of its essential characteristics. These psychic properties are reflected in glass itself, transforming it into an extraordinary expressive and symbolic material.

I have not spoken of optical glass, in which glass modifies its power of refraction to make objects bigger, smaller, nearer, or farther. I will only recall quickly that one of the main Freudian models of the psychic apparatus was conceived, at the end of the *Interpretation of Dreams*, as "a composite optical instrument"—microscope, telescope, or camera—meant to justify the virtual location of images that "cannot simply be localized in organic elements of the nervous system but, so to speak, among them" (Freud, 1899). Psychoanalysis itself appears to Freud as a magnifying glass, which makes visible and representable unconscious aspects of the functioning of the human psyche and of the cure, which is otherwise inaccessible to the eye of consciousness.

The colors and transparencies that glass can assume permit the affects to reveal their diaphanous aspects, translucent and uncertain, opaque or bright, creating other possible metaphors. Nor have I spoken about distorting mirrors or the optical tricks performed by convex or concave mirrors, through which Lacan tried to render intuitive the difference between imaginary, real, and symbolic.⁴ Nor of stained glass windows that can tell stories written with color, or reflect the sky and the landscape, making even the mass of immense buildings disappear in the weightless light.

The metaphor of the mirror has maintained its vitality and has been renewed with the appearance of the *mirror neurons* in neuro-scientific literature: in this last use, the mirror has been moved to and located in the cerebral space. Here, from



26



27

26. Raimund Kummer and Marya Kazoun
27. Louise Bourgeois piece / set-up crew in action

inside the brain, the mirror neurons take part in imitative phenomena and processes that are at the base of identity and identification (Gallese, 2006).

The various properties of glass appear, in short, like a veritable orchestra at the artist's disposition for an unending game of inventive recreation. A game that has rooted glass in the cognitive and affective experience of man, from the most childish to the most abstract speculative activity, to reach the imaginative constructions of art.

Notes

1. For a discussion of these aspects from a psychopathological point of view, see Wolfgang Blankenburg, *La perdita dell'evidenza naturale*, Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 1998.
2. For a discussion on the psychopathological trends on the theme of psychotic vulnerability and in authors that go from Strauss to Tellenbach, Von Gebsattel to Binswanger and Minkowski, see Giovanni Stanghellini, *Antropologia della vulnerabilità*, Feltrinelli, Milan, 1997.
3. Freud, "La scomposizione della personalità psichica," in *In Introduzione alla psicoanalisi (Nuova serie di lezioni)*, OSF vol. 11.
4. On mirrors, see Umberto Eco's interesting analysis (1985). On the metaphorical use of mirrors in psychoanalysis, there is a specific body of literature. Besides Lacan's important references to spherical mirrors (1961), see L. Shengols (1974), P.E. Haglund (1996), and M. C. Gurnari's recent writings (2008). On the use of the kaleidoscope as a model of a psychic device complementary to the Freudian spyglass, see Petrella (1992).

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RECASTING GLASS

Tina Oldknow

Throughout the twentieth century, artists and designers from outside the glass community have been invited to work with glass and glass masters. This has been an ongoing activity for certain glass companies on Murano, as it has been at glassworks elsewhere in Europe, Scandinavia, and the United States. In the 1920s, Paolo Venini started a trend by hiring the painter, Vittorio Zecchin, as his artistic director. Venini & C. continued the practice of bringing in artists and architects to design for decades, culminating in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the arrival of young American studio glass artists, such as Dale Chihuly, Richard Marquis, Dan Dailey, and Benjamin Moore. Their exposure to Venini profoundly affected the development of studio glass in America.¹ There were several other glassworks on Murano that experimented with “outside” artists, the most famous of which was the Fucina degli Angeli and its international personalities, including Hans Arp, Marc Chagall, Jean Cocteau, Max Ernst, and Pablo Picasso, who gave their designs to Egidio Costantini for production.²

The exhibition *Glasstress*, which presents contemporary sculpture in glass by international artists who are not affiliated with the studio glass community, continues this historic trend.³ In regards to the development of glass as a material for art, this activity is interesting in itself. But, it also encourages discussion about the relationship between the work of studio glass artists, who use glass as a primary medium, and others—sculptors and installation artists from outside the glass world—who use it occasionally.

The interest in “outside” artists demonstrated by Venini, the Fucina degli Angeli, and later by other glass companies—notably Maurizio Albarelli at Vistosi and especially Adriano Berengo at Berengo Fine Arts—was not shared, for the most part, by the rest of the Venetian glassmaking community, many of whom viewed, and still view, these individuals as interlopers in the field of traditional glass design. Since the 1960s, there has been a similar tension between the worlds of design, represented by design-oriented, industrial glassworks; craft, represented by individual studio glass artists; and contemporary art, represented by sculptors and installation artists who work in a range of materials.

In recent years, artistic ideas coming from design, craft, and fine arts circles have been meeting and intersecting in exciting ways, bringing a renewed energy into the more conservative fields of craft and glass design. But the reality, in most cases, is that glass in art, and especially sculpture, tends to be validated by contemporary art cognoscenti only if it is made by an artist coming to glass from outside the glass world, rather than by an artist for whom glass is a primary material.

Organizing an exhibition such as *Glasstress* during the Venice Biennale—one of the most highly visible venues for international contemporary art—begs the question: can or cannot the work of studio glass artists and contemporary sculptors and installation artists using glass successfully occupy the same physical and intellectual space? How do the artists in *Glasstress* use glass to drive ideas, and how is this similar to, or different from, the way the material is approached by studio glass artists? Are all studio glass artists truly more conservative or *retardataire* than their colleagues in the fine arts?⁴ Rather than focusing solely on artists coming to glass from outside the glass world, it would perhaps have been more instructive to see a mix of strong work by established and emerging artists from inside and outside the glass world, so that they might be compared.⁵

Glass, of course, is not the only medium subject to marginalization in the fine arts. Other craft-identified materials such as clay, wood, and fiber are also met with suspicion. However, in the case of glass, there is an added layer of skepticism, which may have to do with the material itself. Perhaps, glass, as a material, is difficult to understand. Art made in glass, and especially blown or sculpted glass, is often undermined for its dangerous proximity to kitsch. And glass is routinely condemned for being too beautiful.

I have repeatedly read and heard negative comments aimed at glass, which I find intriguing, sometimes surprising, and occasionally deserved. Several writers have remarked, and I am paraphrasing, that glass “fetishizes” technique, reveling in the hermetic secrecy of its making. Or, that by being bright, shiny, and pretty, it is consequently transparent (meaning empty of meaning) and shallow. Even in the craft field, there is no soli-



28



29

darity and no equality among materials. Sculptures and vessels in ceramic and fiber, for example, are often represented by critics, art historians, and other writers on craft as the smart cousins of objects made in that attractive but witless material, glass.⁶ Artists occasionally indulge in this kind of thinking, but more often than not, they are interested in materials for what they can do with them, rather than in judging them.

Glass is fundamentally unlike other materials. It is paradoxical. It is completely different in its hot and cold states, and it is transparent, thus denying its own materiality. It is inorganic, its historical practice is industrial rather than pastoral (unlike other craft-associated materials), and according to scientists, it is not a single material but a state of matter.⁷ It is a unique medium for sculpture, because no other material has such an ability to change color, texture, and mass. Glass holds and reflects light, and as it moves from transparency to translucency to opacity, its volume may be understood in completely different ways. While these qualities may pique the curiosity of artists, they may cause critics to throw up their hands in frustration at trying to understand it.

The point that I am trying to make is that it is misguided to dismiss glass, the material—as is so often done by critics—when it is its culture that may be the target. Exhibitions like *Glasstress* provide an opportunity for a new infusion of thought and culture into glass through the minds, and sometimes hands, of artists who do not participate in the culture of studio glass, specifically, and the culture of craft, in general. The culture of studio glass has different concerns and intentions than the culture of fine art. The often exclusive focus in studio glass on technique (and on the drama of its making) can be off-putting to some, as can its tight and supportive community of creator/collector devotees. As a material, glass has easy good looks, a much extolled “magic,” and an irrational charm, and it is perhaps this mystery that undermines it. When confronted with glass, its detractors share a suspicion of being hoodwinked, of being duped by a “magical” sleight-of-hand.

Perhaps the remedy for some of this uneasiness lies in the demystification of glass. The secretive nature of the material and

its making goes back many centuries, and in fact, Venice and Murano are the supreme symbols of that history.⁸ Traditionally, glass has been difficult (and expensive) to access. Throughout the twentieth century, in general, it was not easy for artists to work with hot glass outside of industry. Glass in the form of plate glass or mirror was much more accessible, and interest in this material grew in the 1960s, when sculptors such as Larry Bell, Robert Smithson, Mario Merz, and Barry Le Va were exploring its potential. At about the same time, Harvey Littleton, a ceramist who was one of the founders of the American studio glass movement, introduced hot glassworking into the private studio and into university and art-school curricula. But, from the 1960s to the 1990s, it was still a complicated matter for artists who wanted to use hot glass, but who did not want to invest time in learning how to work it.

Over the last twenty years, the number of artists unaffiliated with studio glass, but who are working with glass, has grown steadily. In the United States, this is due to the growth of public-access glass studios across the country, and to the availability of studio glass artists as hands for hire. Sculptors who have ideas for glass can use a glass studio like a bronze foundry. They can rent facilities and engage artists to work with them to produce blown, cast, hot-sculpted, and flameworked objects in glass.⁹

Besides providing additional income for artists, what effect does this activity have on the culture of studio glass? Glass is a technically demanding medium, and many studio glass artists have devoted their full attention to the acquisition of technical skills at the expense of content. In studio glass, there is always the threat of artists and—equally important—their viewers becoming arrested at a level that focuses on the mastery of skill. Artists who come to glass from outside the glass world help shift the attention on the material from process to idea. And as a result, there are now many artists for whom glass is a primary material, but for whom idea is most important. Often, these artists find themselves in a strange limbo, not part of a culture that is interested in traditional studio glass, and not part of a world that is interested in fine art.¹⁰

So, while glass has become increasingly available as a mate-



28, 29, 31, 32. set-up crew in action
30. Susan Scherman, Lawrence Carroll,
André Buchmann and Adriano Berengo

30

rial for sculpture to artists from outside the glass world, the ways in which glass is being used among studio glass artists is changing. The same is true in design, the culture of which has experienced radical shifts in recent years.¹¹ The good news for glass, and its development as a material for art, is that it has become available to all. The methods of working it, and how it may be accessed, have become open and transparent: the use of glass is inclusive rather than exclusive. As this accessibility continues to spread, glass will become less self-involved. While glass and glassmaking will always belong to the culture of craft, this core will be expanded and altered by its strong peripheral relationships with the cultures of design, fine art, and architecture. This is the most significant benefit of an exhibition such as *Glasstress*, and I hope to see many more exhibitions that not only present glass through diverse perspectives, but which integrate these artistic cultures so that we may gain a better, more objective understanding of their similarities and differences.

Notes

1. This is significant. With a few exceptions, all of America's traditional glass factories have closed, yet studio glass enjoys a strong market. As the artist Joel Philip Myers has observed, "Studio glass is the new glass industry in America."

2. Steuben Glass, in New York City, undertook a similar project with its *Twenty-Seven Contemporary Artists* exhibition in January 1940. This exhibition, organized by Steuben's design director John Monteith Gates with his friend Henri Matisse, included designs by Thomas Hart Benton, Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico, André Derain, Raoul Dufy, Marie Laurencin, Aristide Maillol, Matisse, Isamu Noguchi, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Grant Wood.

3. The exhibition is organized by Adriano Berengo, owner of Berengo Fine Arts, who has been working to bring "outside" artists to glass for twenty years, and whose dream is to create a center for contemporary art in glass on Murano. This exhibition is the first time that glass has officially appeared at the Venice Biennale, as a category and as a subject in contemporary art, since 1972.

4. These are some of the many issues in the art versus craft debate which, having ossified into polarized viewpoints for the most part, tends now to be dismissed as irrelevant although opinions still silently—and sometimes not so silently—boil. Fortunately, Glenn Adamson's excellent recent book, *Thinking Through Craft* (Berg Publishers, 2007), gives this complex and long-lived controversy the thorough, scholarly, and fresh attention it deserves.

5. Work in glass by artists from inside and outside the glass world was well integrated in the recent American exhibitions, *Glass: Material Matters* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 2006) and *Shattering Glass: New Perspectives* (Katonah Art Museum, Katonah, NY, 2007).

6. For example, as Peter Scheldjahl remarked on the installations of Josiah McElheny: "... besides being gorgeous, such things marry extreme braininess to what is generally the kitschiest of mediums. The consequent pleasure is a Reese Witherspoon effect: artistically blond." Peter Scheldjahl, "Critics Notebook: A Glass House," *The New Yorker*, June 5, 2006. Scheldjahl was being very positive about McElheny's work, which is widely accepted in the broader contemporary art world. The equation of glass and kitsch is made by many other well-respected writers, generally in discussions of the work of Dale Chihuly, such as Paul Greenhalgh and Glenn Adamson. The clearest, most recent message was that communicated by *San Francisco Chronicle* art critic Kenneth Baker, who viciously reviewed Dale Chihuly's 2008 solo exhibition at the De Young Museum. His review was met with public protest, in the form of a flurry of blogging, which resulted in Baker writing a second negative review. Kenneth Baker, "Art Review: Chihuly at the De Young," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 5, 2008, E1.

7. Glass is formed when a molten material cools so rapidly that there is not enough time for a crystalline structure to form. Crystals are materials that have their atoms arranged in perfectly ordered, lattice-like structures. In liquids and gases, atoms and molecules are free to move about in a random way, which is why they can flow. In glass, the atoms are held rigidly in place so it cannot flow, but they have not had time to arrange themselves in the perfectly ordered lattice that nature prefers. Neither a solid nor a liquid, glass is often called a rigid liquid. Obsidian or volcanic glass, for example, is molten rock that has quickly cooled, becoming rock in a glassy state, just as boiled hard sugar candies are sugar in a glassy state. Recently, scientists have experimented with making materials such as glassy steel and glassy concrete. Glassy materials share certain characteristics, such as shiny surfaces, brittleness, and the tendency to form conchoidal (shell-like) fractures. They do not show the regular, geometric x-ray diffraction patterns characteristic of crystalline solids.

8. Glass is rife with legends: one is that Venetian glassmakers are said to have been killed for divulging their secrets. As with all legends, there is some truth to this. Glassmakers may not have been physically killed for communicating glassmaking knowledge outside of their community, but they were often socially ostracized, or "killed," in their communities.

9. Although glassworkers on Murano, for example, have been involved in this kind of service for decades (and still are), many artists cannot afford to work there, or they prefer to work closer to home. While he headed the glass programs at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, Rhode Island, and at Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington, Dale Chihuly introduced many sculptors to glass through the artist in residence programs that he established. Now, the majority of glass programs throughout the United States and, increasingly, around the world, have artist in residence programs to stimulate new work in glass.

10. Some of these artists exhibit in glass galleries or in fine art galleries, but many artists, especially younger ones, need to find new contexts in which to display their work. Younger gallerists, in general, are more open to work from different art cultures.

11. One example of this kind of change is GlassLab, a partnership between the Corning Museum of Glass and the Vitra Design Museum that aims to expose designers to glass by inviting them to work with Corning Museum glassblowers. By handling the material, designers are able to better understand it and to develop more innovative forms. Because glassblowing yields an immediate result, designers may even use hot glass as a method for the rapid prototyping of ideas.

RETURNABLE CONTAINERS

Luca Beatrice

In his essay “Glass Architecture” published in 1914, Paul Scheerbart sensed the origin of modern taste in the unequivocal end of the distinction between inside and outside, internal and external. Transparency thus becomes an anti-ornament while, according to the new dictates, the decorative elements in contemporary houses must be reduced to minimal terms, if not completely eliminated.

“That the furniture in a glass house must not be placed against the precious and colorful glass walls will certainly appear obvious,” Scheerbart writes. “This environmental revolution is positively inevitable; there is nothing to be done. It goes without saying that pictures on the walls are utterly unacceptable. On this field of battle, glass architecture will have to fight hard. Still, we must overcome the force of habit. It is not right that images dating back to our grandparents’ time be decisive in the creation of this new environment. Everything new must fight a hard battle against deeply rooted traditions; if we desire the new to triumph, there is no other way.”

However, if glass in architecture has become a symbol of the future, marking the passage from modern to contemporary, in the field of visual arts, it has remained imprisoned in the realm of the minor arts, of Arts & Crafts, and of decoration.

Yet there are many artists who, since the end of the 1900s, have returned glass to a central position. There are those who have accepted running the risk of crossing into kitsch—such as Jeff Koons who in fact has stretched to the extreme the semantic ambiguity between artwork and knick-knack, reviving Duchamp’s theory of ready-made in the era of “camp.” And there are those who have fully exploited glass, rightly extolling its properties—it is Jan Vercruysse’s favorite material, and Jan Fabre used it in his splendid installation of “shitting pigeons” last year at the Louvre. (Who knows if it is merely chance that these two artists are both from Belgium?)

But perhaps true contemporary waste—and here we enter the aesthetics of the third millennium—is connected to the theory of waste and recycling (let us observe, by the way, that one tended to waste less when the ecological emergency was not yet so pronounced, be it only because it cost to keep a returnable container. We, in fact, are the children of a generation that kept glass bottles, for water or milk, to save on shopping expenses). Then the age of plastic arrived, and with it the theory of throw-away containers; because plastic costs so little, rubbish and trash have spread throughout the world.



31



32

The use of glass in contemporary art soon assumed an ethical meaning. Already in the mid-1950s, Robert Rauschenberg used small Coca Cola bottles, before they became a pop icon, in the composition of his *Combine Paintings*, assigning “eternity” to an object with an otherwise limited period of use.

At the height of the second economic boom, the American writer Paul Auster published a book that made him famous all over the world, *The New York Trilogy* (1985–1987). *City of Glass*, the first of the three stories that make up the fresco, revolves around Stillman, an eccentric tramp who always wanders the same Manhattan streets with no specific destination; he collects objects that he finds on the ground, putting them in a large sack. Quinn, a failed writer, finds himself dogging the man’s footsteps without any reason other than to investigate his life in the search for who knows what mysteries that he will never find.

What kind of things does Stillman collect? What value do they have? Is there some relation between them, between an umbrella without its fabric and a rubber doll’s head, a black glove and the bottom of a broken light bulb, pieces of magazines or newspapers and a torn photo belonging to who knows who?

The ironic and bewildering aspect of the event lies in the fact

that Stillman gives importance to that which everyone else ignores or pretends to ignore: trash.

The figure of Stillman, the vagabond philosopher who roams the streets of New York, “the archeologist of a fragmentary post-modern city,” says Auster, becomes the involuntary icon of the new Western society looking around and witnessing its own daily ruin. Re-reading these extraordinary pages, we cannot but recall some installations in which Tony Cragg, after having collected rubbish, especially pieces of glass, tried to give order to the refuse, in an attempt to confer a new meaning.

Both the artist and the tramp—one real, the other unreal—are men who *walk on pieces of glass*, to quote a beautiful song by Francesco De Gregori. The character created by Auster and the sculptor Tony Cragg not only invite us to think about the untamed consumerism that threatens to transform today’s metropolises into enormous trash heaps, but above all they expose the inadequacy of our cultural systems to channel the incessant flow of history.

An entire civilization moves quickly rolling on itself and producing fragments: material fragments on one hand, ideological and cultural ones on the other. Glass included, no longer returnable.

GLASSTRESS

WORKS



Josef Albers

Kaiserlich (Imperial), ca. 1923

Assemblage (glass and lead)

48x49x4.4 cm

with frame: 72x72x16.4 cm

Courtesy: Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop, Bottrop



Arman

Accumulation of light bulbs, 1962

Accumulation of glass light bulbs in a case (Plexiglas and wood)

33.5x22x5.5 cm

Courtesy: Private collection, Bassano



Jean Arp

Collage n. 2 (glass object), 1964

Blue glass form on a opaque glass sheet

Ed. 2/3

50x34.7x3 cm

Courtesy: Berengo Private collection, Venice

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Barbara Bloom

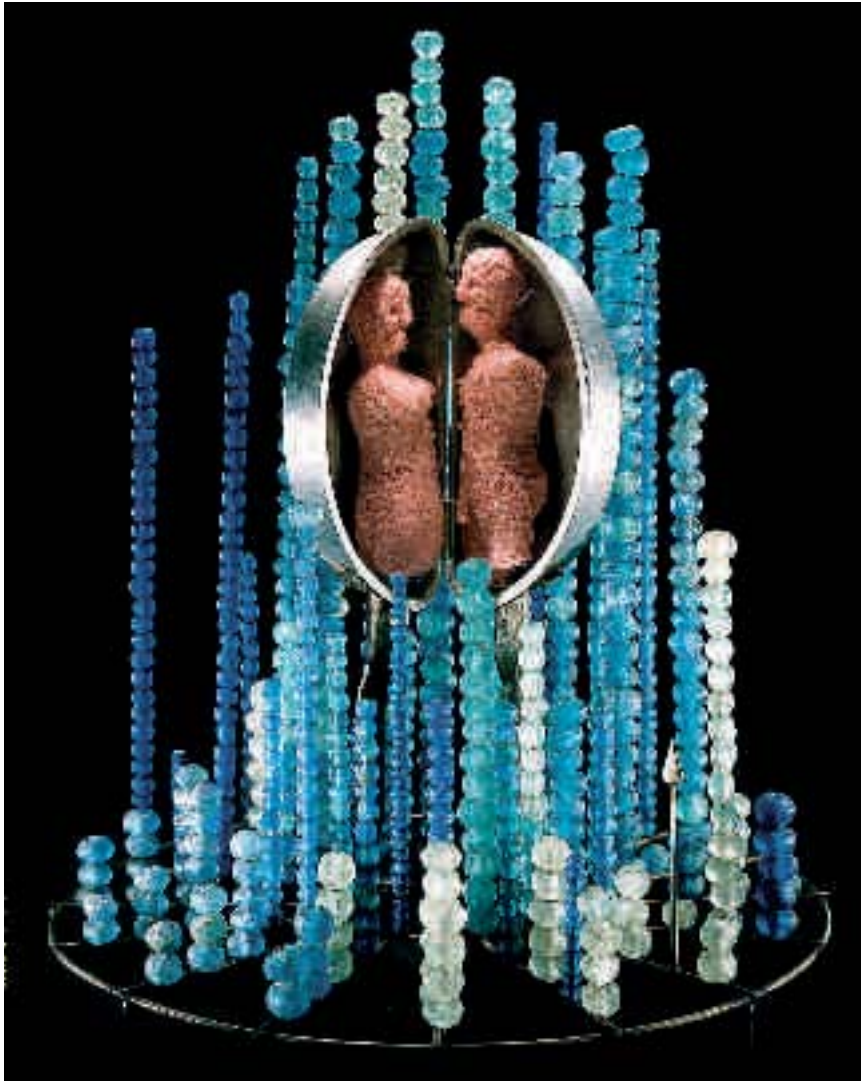
Flaubert Letters II, 1987–2008

Glassware engraved with fragments of letters from Gustave Flaubert to Louise Colette
and from Barbara Bloom to Gustave Flaubert

Ed.2/3 three versions, each unique

Courtesy: The artist and Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Louise Bourgeois

The Couple, 2002

Glass beads, fabric, and steel

54.6x44.5x44.5 cm

Aluminum, glass, and wood vitrine

177.8x76.2x76.2 cm

Courtesy: Karsten and Claudia Greve, St. Moritz

Photo: Christopher Burke

Sergio Bovenga

Spazio, 2009

Mirrored glass

Ed. 1/6

Ø 55 cm

Courtesy: Venice Projects, Sarnen





Daniel Buren

Photo-souvenir: Transparence vénitienne avec reflets, travail in situ,
in Glasstress, Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti-Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti,
Venice, 1972–2009

611x270 cm

Détail ©DB_ADAGP

Courtesy: Buchmann Galerie, Berlin/Lugano

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Lawrence Carroll

Untitled, 2009

Glass, sand, paint, wax

Ed. 1/5

h 100cm Ø 90 cm

Courtesy: Galleria Michela Rizzo, Venice

Photo: Francesco Allegretto





César

Compression, 1992

Glass

37x23x24 cm

Courtesy: Berengo Private collection, Venice

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Soyeon Cho

In Bloom, 2009

Plastic forks, crystal, glass pipettes,

LED Lamp, metal structure

150x150x110cm

Photo: Francesco Allegretto





Tony Cragg

Sensory devices, 2009

Glass

47x15x10 cm

37.5x19x11.5 cm

Courtesy: Buchmann Galerie, Lugano/Berlin

Photo: Francesco Allegretto

Tony Cragg

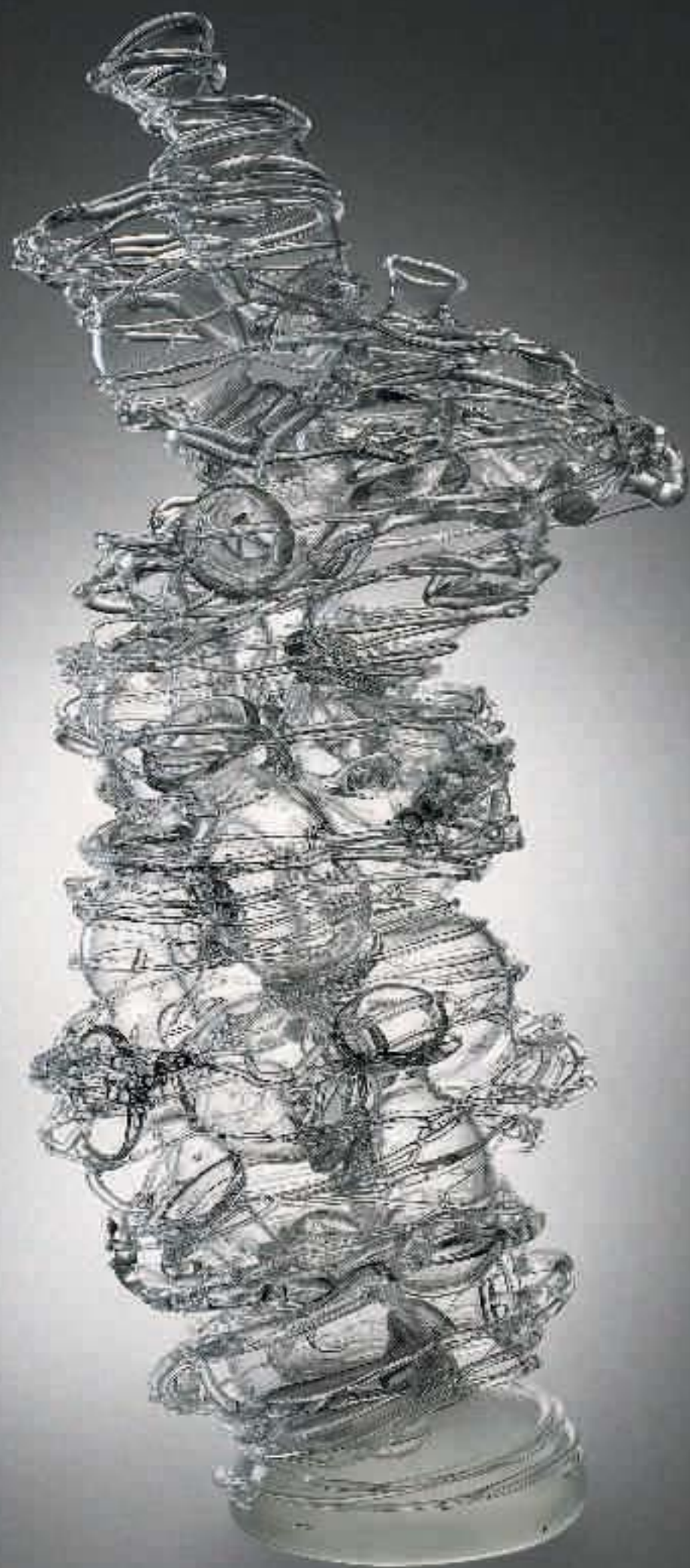
Visible men, 2009

Glass

47x16 cm

Courtesy: Buchmann Galerie, Lugano/Berlin

Photo: Francesco Allegretto







Marie Louise Ekman
 Termometri, 2005–2007 (from the series Hospital)
 Glass
 Ed. 6
 h 100 cm/h 90 cm; Ø 11 cm
 Courtesy: Angelica Knapper Gallery, Stockholm
 Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Marie Louise Ekman
 Bambini malati, 2005–2007 (from the series Hospital)
 Glass
 Ed. 6
 Variable dimensions
 Courtesy: Angelica Knapper Gallery, Stockholm
 Photo: Francesco Ferruzzi



Jan Fabre

Untitled, 2009

Glass, bic-ink

Ed.4 + 2AP

22x44x43 cm

Courtesy: Venice Projects, Sarnen

Photo: Francesco Allegretto

Jan Fabre

Schijtende vredesduiven en vliegende ratten

-Shitting Doves of Peace and Flying Rats, 2008

Bic ink on Murano glass

260 x 25 x 25 cm / Variable dimensions

Installation view Jan Fabre at the Louvre.

Angel of Metamorphosis, 2008, Paris

Venice Projects collection, Sarnen

Photo: Attilio Maranzano

© Angelos

Jan Fabre

Het toekomstige hart van barmhartigheid
voor mannen en vrouwen- The future merciful heart
for men and women, 2008

Murano glass, Bic pen blue, human bones

each 0.8x1x2.1 m

Installation view 2nd floor, Kunsthau Bregenz, 2008

Angelos bvba collection, Antwerpen

Photo: Markus Tretter

© Jan Fabre/VBK, Wien, 2008, Kunsthau Bregenz



Egidio Costantini and Lucio Fontana

Pannello, 1965

Collaborative work of art

Panel with 15 bubbles and a Murano glass bowl on a copper metal panel with holes

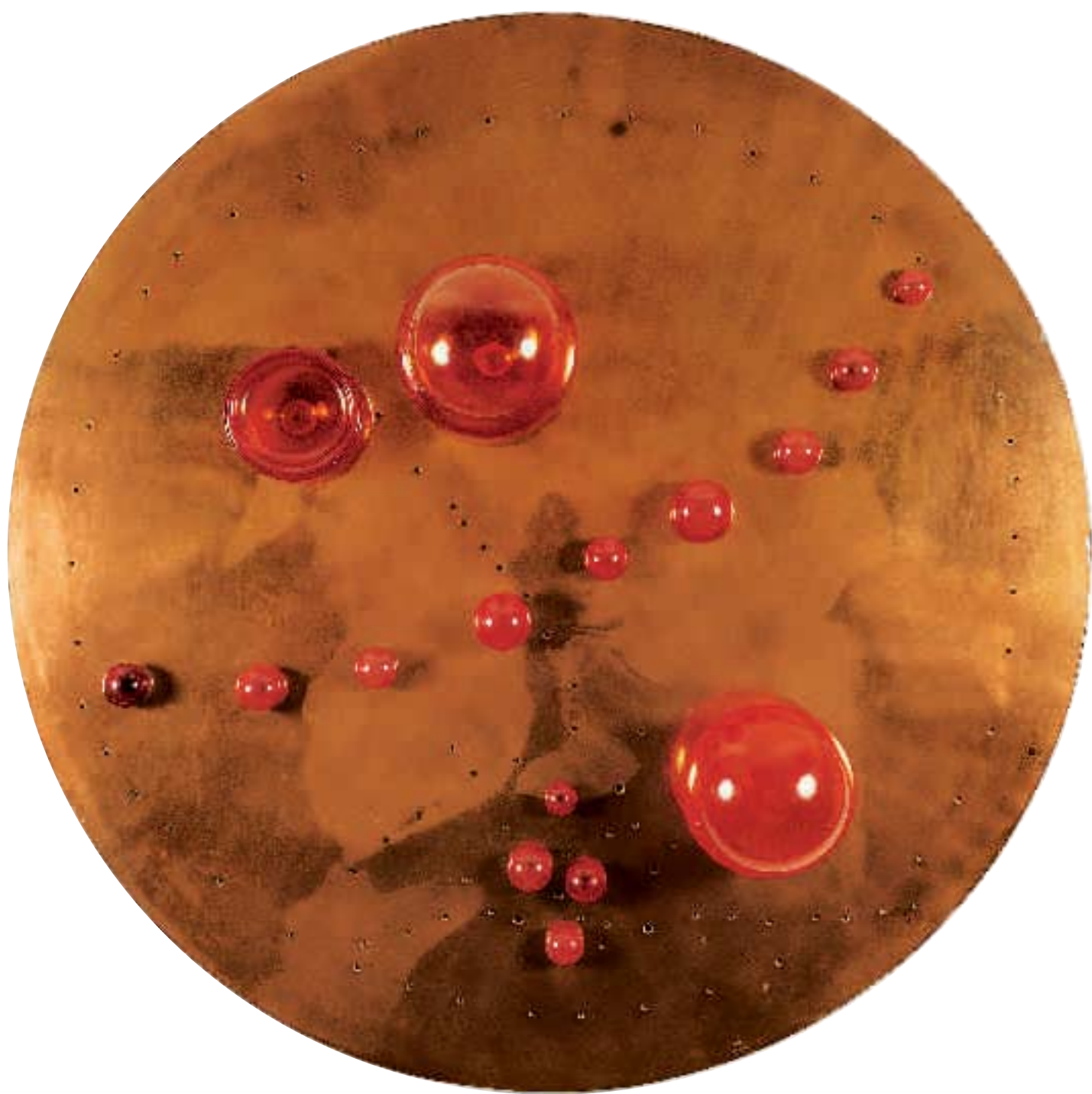
Ø 124.5x6 cm

Courtesy: Private collection, Bassano

General Catalogue edited by E. Crispolti (Skira 2006): n. 65 OC 4

Fontana archive 2733/1

note: Work made up of 15 bubbles, including two large ones,
and a Murano blown glass bowl on a metal panel with holes,
made in collaboration with Egidio Costantini (Fucina degli Angeli, Venice)
on a design by Lucio Fontana





Dan Graham

Sagittarian Girls, 2008

Two-way mirror, steel

230x550x250 cm

Courtesy: Francesca Minini, Milan

Photo: Francesco Allegretto





Francesco Gennari

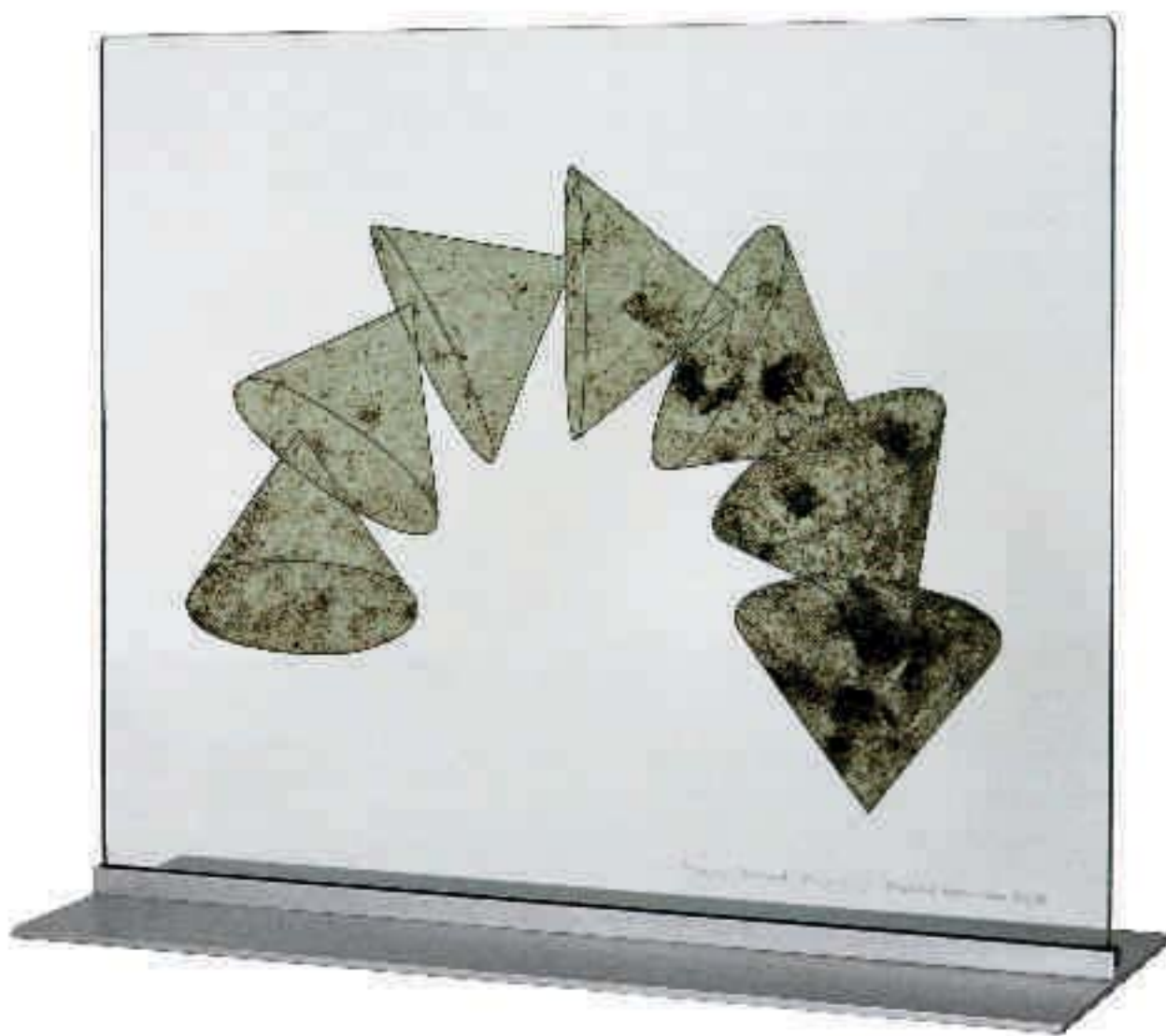
Autoritratto come rotazione della terra (con loden e scarpe clarks), 2008

Murano glass, sunlight

471x6.5x7 cm

Courtesy: The artist and Tucci Russo Studio
per l'Arte Contemporanea, Torre Pellice (Turin)

Photo: Paolo Semprucci



Richard Hamilton

Sieves (with Marcel Duchamp), 1971

Serigraphy and dust between two sheets of glass, aluminum base

52x63.5x20.4 cm

Ed. 50 copies + 7 AP

Edition Petersburg Press, London

Publications: Richard Hamilton, *Druckgraphik und Multiples 1939-2002*,

Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Richter Verlag, 2002, p. 271, M7

Courtesy: Fondazione Marconi, Milan

Photo: Fondazione Marconi, Milan





Mona Hatoum

Nature morte aux grenades, 2006–2007

Crystal, mild steel and rubber

95x208x70 cm

Private collection, Bassano

Courtesy: Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin

Photo: Ela Bialkowska

Hye Rim Lee

Crystal City Spun, 2008

3D animation projection with surround sound

3D animation, 3 min 15 sec loop

Courtesy: The artist and Kukje Gallery, Seoul

Direction, concept, editing, 3D model design and sound design: Hye Rim Lee

3D animation: NZVFX

Sound design: Hye Rim Lee, Jed Town





Charlotte Hodes

Eurydice I, 2009

Glass with sandblasted stencil
40x22 cm

Courtesy: Malborough Gallery, London
Photo: Francesco Allegretto

Eurydice II, 2009

Glass with sandblasted stencil
40x25 cm

Courtesy: Malborough Gallery, London
Photo: Francesco Allegretto

Eurydice III, 2009

Glass with sandblasted stencil
40x26 cm

Courtesy: Malborough Gallery, London
Photo: Francesco Allegretto





Mimmo Jodice

Composizione,

opera 1, opera 2, opera 3, opera 4, opera 5,
1966

Photograph (printed on baryta-coated paper
with a silver bromide emulsion, made by the artist)
unique

30x40 cm (with frame 60x60 cm)

Photo: Mimmo Jodice







Marya Kazoun

Habitat: Where he came from, 2009

Tissue, pen, pencil, glass, plastic,
acrylic, paper, beads, glue, nylon thread
200x170x620 cm

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Joseph Kosuth

Any two meter square sheet of glass
to lean against any wall, 1965

Metal plaque and glass

glass: 200x200 cm

metal plaque: 5.8x20 cm

Courtesy: Joseph Kosuth Studio, Rome

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Jannis Kounellis

Senza titolo, 2005

Sheet metal, glass and sackcloth

100x70 cm

Private collection, Bergamo

Courtesy: Galleria Fumagalli, Bergamo





Raimund Kummer
Hindsight Bias, 2007
 Murano glass, Industrial Opti-white,
 transportation wagons/mobile portal crane
Glass eyes: 80x80x205 cm
Mirror sheets: 240x300 cm
Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Federica Marangoni

The thread, 2002

Massive silver-gray glass wheels, antiqued outer surface, polished inside,
white neon coil on one end and fragments of real crystal in a typical Murano container used for glass scraps
40x3.5 cm; h. neon 70 cm

Courtesy: Berengo Private collection, Venice

Photo: Studio Marangoni



ORLAN

Miroirs portrait-stress of our society, 2009

5 Venetian mirrors, glass vessels, oil,
water from Venice, sequins, blood, gold
87x57x2 cm each

Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Jean Michel Othoniel

Ricochet Rouge, 2009

Glass and aluminum

unique

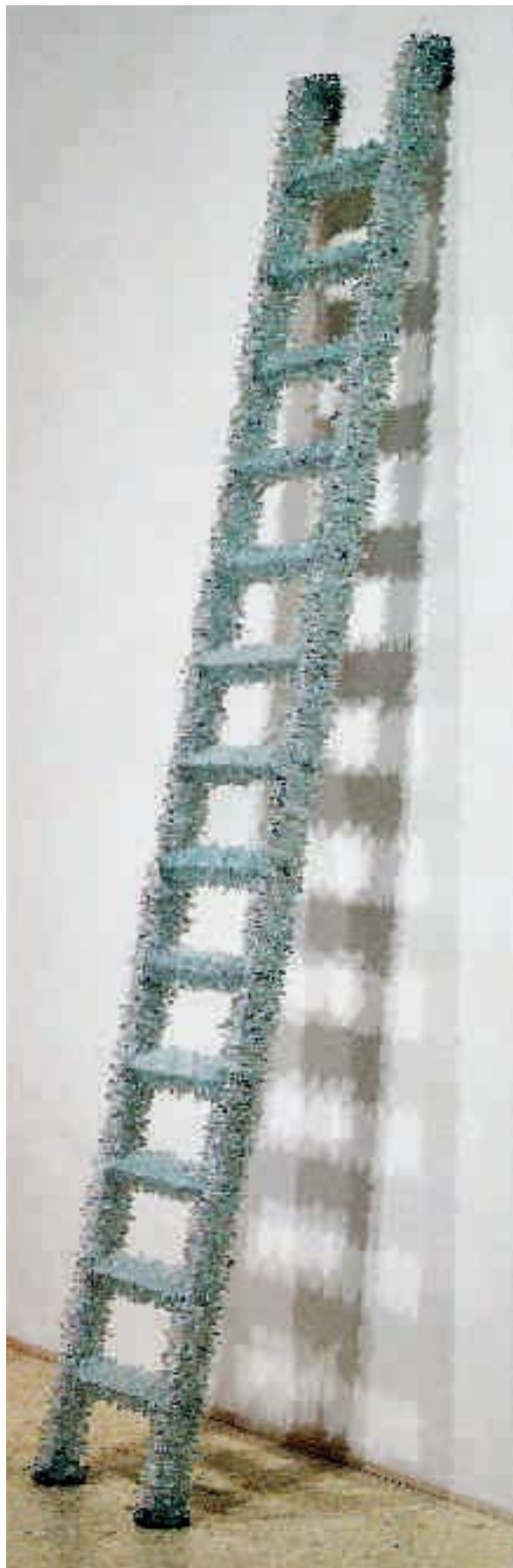
110x110x110 cm

Courtesy: Galerie Karsten Greve AG, St. Moritz

Photo: Francesco Allegretto







Luca Pancrazzi

Scala, 2008

Superclear glass, silicone, aluminum

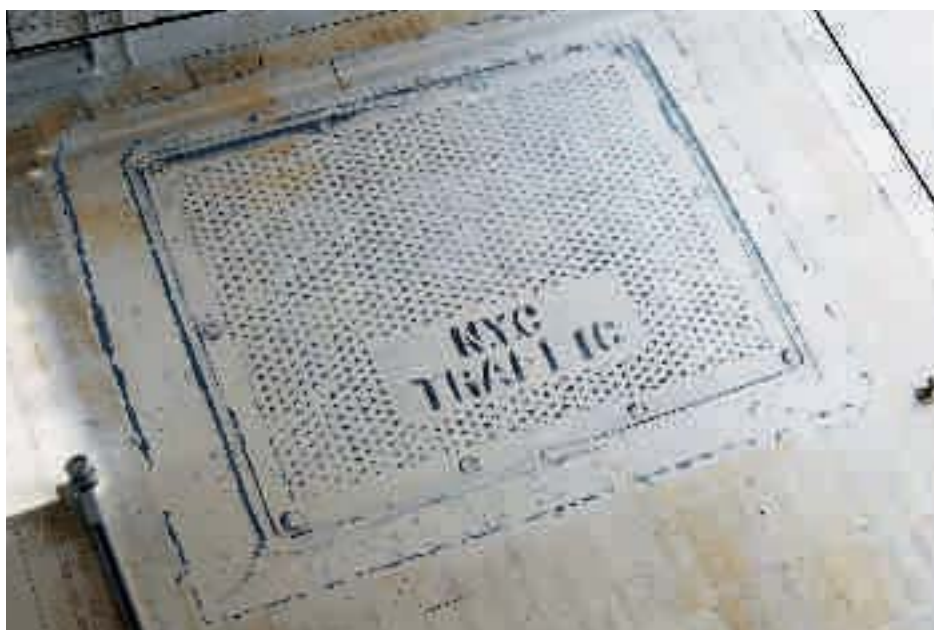
h 350 cm

Patrizia Pepe Private collection, Florence

Courtesy: Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Le Moulin

Photo: Andrea Fiesoli





Anne Peabody

My Sidewalk, 2004

This piece was made using the Verre eglomise technique in which hundreds of pieces of sterling silver leaf are adhered to the back of glass using a gelatin size. An image is then engraved on the leaf with a stylus.

The engraving is sealed with paint and the glass is turned over so that the image is viewed in reverse.

533.4x213.6x1 cm

Courtesy: The artist and Berengo Studio 1989

Photo: Chris Amaral



Giuseppe Penone

Unghia e candele, 1994

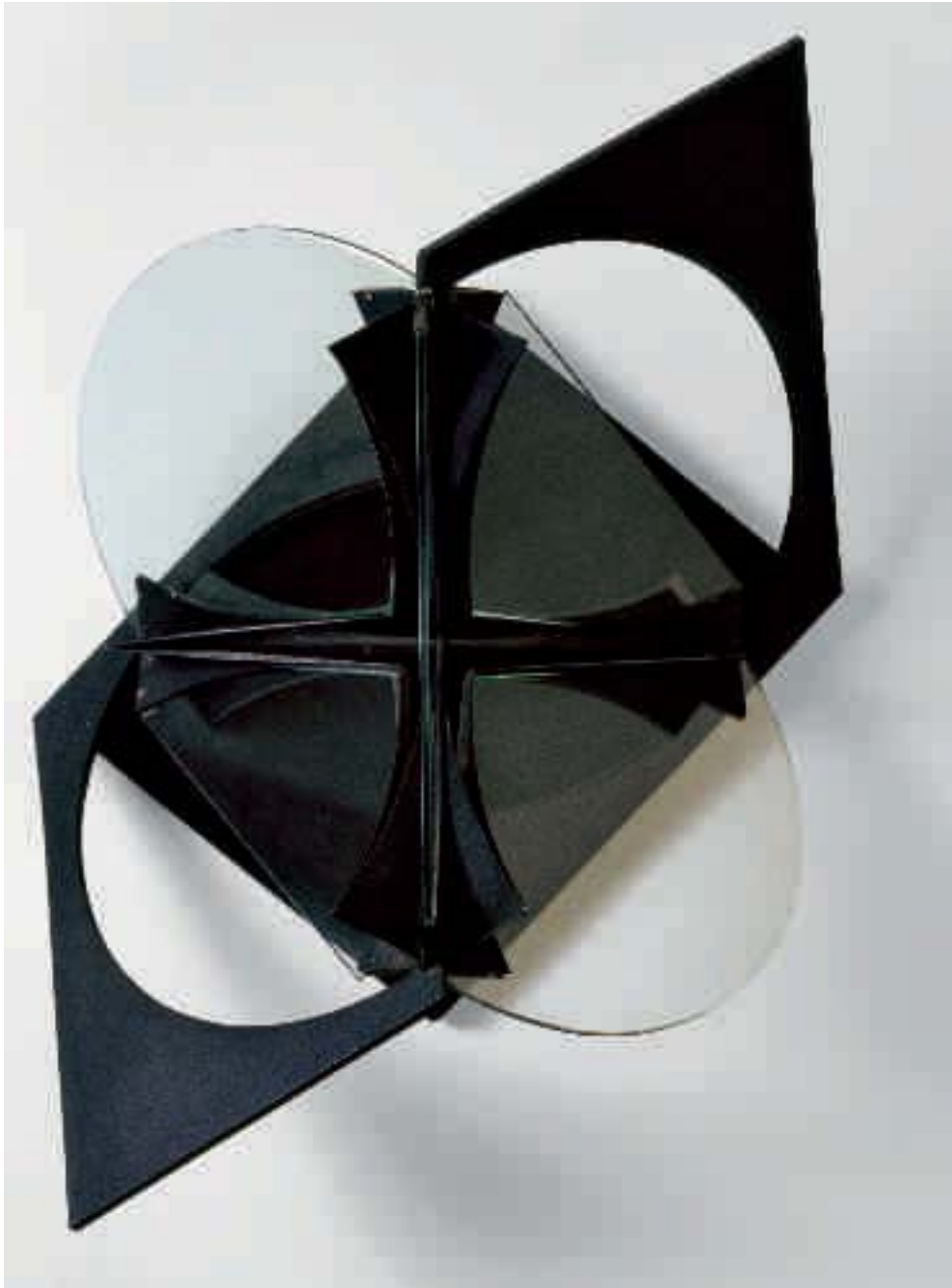
Glass, wax

30x300x150 cm

Courtesy: Private collection

Photo: © Archivio Penone and Francesco Allegretto





Anton Pevsner

Croce ancorata (La Croix ancrée), 1933

Marble, brass painted in black, crystal

Diagonal length 84.6 cm

76.2553 PG 60

Courtesy: Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice

(Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

Photo: David Heald © 2009 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation



Bettina Pousttchi

Cleared, 2009

Glass on mirrored plinth

150x200x220 cm

Courtesy: Buchmann Galerie, Berlin/Lugano

Photo: Francesco Allegretto

Robert Rauschenberg

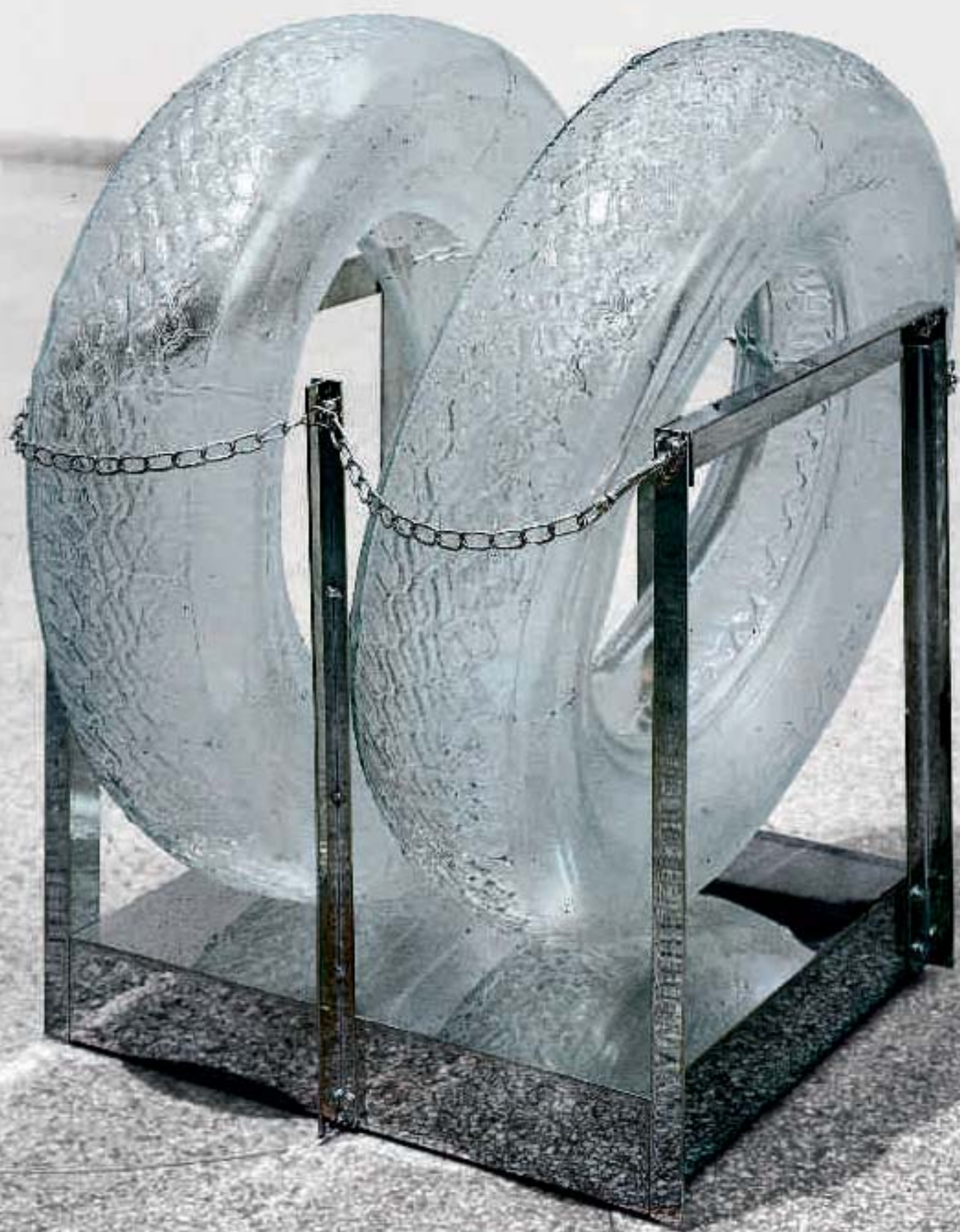
Untitled [Glass Tires], 1997

Blown glass and silver plated brass

76.2 x 71.1 x 61 cm

Courtesy: Estate of Robert Rauschenberg, New York

Photo: Geoffrey Clements



Man Ray

Pandora's Box, 1963

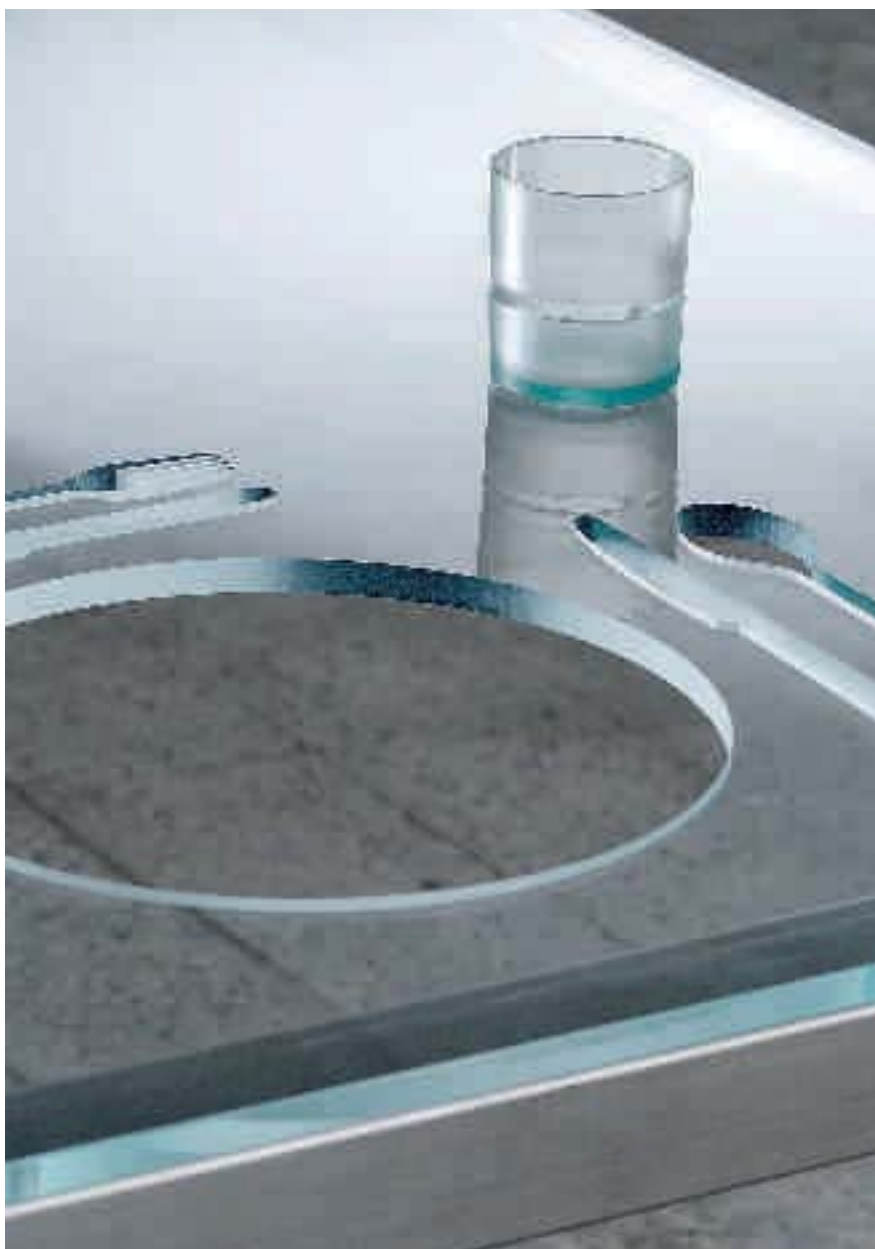
Stone and phial

4x1 1x4 cm

Courtesy: Fondazione Marconi, Milan

Photo: Paolo Vandasch





Silvano Rubino
addizione sottrattiva, 2009
Steel, fretworked industrial glass
Ed. 1/3
h. 80 x 400 x 100 cm
Photo: Francesco Allegretto





Rene Rietmeyer

Venezia, 2007

Glass

each box 42x12x16 cm

Courtesy: Private collection, New York

Photo: Studio Shinji Kimura



Sandro Sergi
Uccello, 1970
Murano glass
35x46x18 cm
Courtesy: Private collection, Venice
Photo: Francesco Allegretto



Kiki Smith

Black Eggs, 1998

Glass with acid wash

98 eggs, 4.4x7.6x5.7 cm to 8.3x12.1x8.9 cm each

Installation dimensions variable

Collection of the artist, *Courtesy:* PaceWildenstein, New York

Photo: Joerg Lohse, *Courtesy:* PaceWildenstein, New York

© Kiki Smith, *Courtesy:* PaceWildenstein, New York





Jana Sterbak

Transpiration: Portrait Olfactif, 1995

Glass

16x 28 x 14Ø cm

Courtesy: Galeria Toni Tàpies, Barcelona/Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan

Photo: Gasull Fotografia



Lino Tagliapietra
Attesa, 2009
Blown "battuto" glass
45x200x200 cm
Photo: Oliviero Zane



Koen Vanmechelen

The Accident, 2005

Murano glass, Mechelse Bresse stuffed, iron, robe, wood
60x35x45 cm

Courtesy: Moss Private collection, Miami

Photo: Francesco Allegretto and Alex Deyaert







Fred Wilson

Iago's Mirror, 2009

Murano glass

200x130x20 cm

Collection of the artist, *Courtesy*: PaceWildenstein, New York

Photo: Francesco Allegretto, *Courtesy*: PaceWildenstein, New York

© Fred Wilson, *Courtesy*: PaceWildenstein, New York

Kimiko Yoshida

Tombeau. Self-portrait (after Cardinal Barberini's Epitaph, Rome, 1646), 2005

Series of 18 self-portraits with 18 Murano glass letters

blown the size of the artist's face composing

the epitaph in Latin: PULVIS, CINIS ET NIHIL ("Dust, Ashes and Nothing")

Glass blower: Pino Signoretto, Murano

Life-size C-prints mounted on aluminum and acrylic

28x28 cm each

Courtesy: Guy Pieters Gallery, Sint-Martens-Latem

Photo: © Kimiko Yoshida



Chen Zhen

Crystal Landscape of Inner Body, 2000

Crystal, iron, glass

95x70x190 cm

Courtesy: Galleria Continua, San Gimignano/Baijing/Le Moulin

Photo: Ela Bialkowska



ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

JOSEF ALBERS

(Bottrop, Germany 1888 – New Haven, Connecticut USA 1975)

An accomplished designer, photographer, typographer, printmaker, and poet, Albers is best known as a pioneering abstract painter and color theorist. In the 1920s he became first a student and then a professor at Bauhaus, working mainly in glass and metal. In 1933, when the Nazis closed the school, Albers immigrated to the United States and joined the faculty of Black Mountain College, North Carolina, where he ran the painting program until 1949. Among his students were Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, Motherwell, and De Kooning. From 1950 to 1958 he taught at Yale University, New Haven. His influence was important for the “hard-edge” abstract painters, who drew on his use of patterns and intense colors, while pop and conceptual Artists further explored his interest in perception. In 1949 he began his most famous series *Homage to the Square* that, with a very strict approach to composition, explored the chromatic interactions of flat-colored squares arranged concentrically on the canvas, creating hundreds of paintings and prints. A major Albers travelling exhibition was organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, from 1965 to 1967, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, held a retrospective of his work in 1971, the first for a living artist.

ARMAN (Armand Pierre Fernandez)

(Nice, France 1928 – New York, USA 2005)

Arman studied in Nice and at the Ecole du Louvre in Paris. His oeuvre was strongly influenced by Duchamp's ready-mades and Schwitters's *Merzbild*, and, in turn, he became a strong influence on pop art. He displayed *Cachets* (assemblages of stamps and fabric) in 1954 and, *Allures* (imprints made with objects dipped in paint) in 1957, which were followed by *Coupés* (cut-up objects) and *Colères* (objects smashed and then mounted), artistic creation through destruction, an idea that compelled observers to re-evaluate their ideas on beauty. In 1960 he signed Pierre Restany's *Manifesto of Nouveau Réalisme*, supporting “new, sensitive, perceptive approaches to the real,” and started producing *Poubelles* (garbage cast in resin displayed in Plexiglas cases), which later evolved into *Accumulations* (arrangements of welded objects or everyday objects in showcases), with which the artist ironically questions the wasteful nature of mass-produced objects. In the 1980s and 1990s he returned to painting with a series of monochrome works that often used actual paint tubes in addition to the paint they contained, and completed monumental assemblages encased in concrete. He participated in Documenta 3 and Documenta 6 in Kassel as well as in the 1976 Venice Biennale, and had major retrospective exhibitions in 1991 at the Houston Museum of Fine Art, in 1998 at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, in 2002 at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Nice.

JEAN (HANS) ARP

(Strasbourg, France 1887 – Basel, Switzerland 1966)

A sculptor, painter, and poet, he studied in Weimar and Paris. He was part of the Blue Rider group, and then experimented with cubism. However, he soon began to evolve his personal whimsical style of abstract compositions through an organic, sensuous morphology and to experiment with automatic composition. After his success in the dada and surrealist avant-gardes in the 1920s, he founded the group Abstraction-Création in 1931, with the characteristic organic forms of his polychrome

relief carvings in wood and cut-paper compositions becoming more severe and geometrical. At the time he began to move towards fully three-dimensional sculptures, Arp insisted that his sculpture was “concrete” rather than “abstract” since it occupied space, and that art was a naturally generated shape. He always gave a high degree of finish to his abstract biomorphic sculptures in stone or bronze, such that the observer could experience the piece tactilely. In 1954 he won the Grand Prize for Sculpture at the Venice Biennale and was given important retrospective exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1958 and at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris in 1962.

BARBARA BLOOM

(Los Angeles, USA 1951. She lives and works in New York, USA)

She is a designer, installation artist, and photographer. Once she completed her studies at the California Institute of the Arts, she moved to Amsterdam and Berlin for many years. Known for her meticulously crafted works – both precisely detailed and flawlessly executed – Bloom has focused her research on the relationships between objects and images and the meanings implicit in their placement and combination. In her artwork, beauty is a premise for investigating illusion, fragility, and transience so as to expose the subliminal ideologies of modern visual culture. Her witty and elegant installations combine manufactured objects with ones that she has collected in her vast archives, and which challenge conventional perceptions with wry commentaries on the shifting notions of value and the practice of collecting, the desire for possession. Moreover, she examines the concept of the artist as an eccentric, narcissistic collector and curator of her own history, producing works of great visual glamour.

LOUISE BOURGEOIS

(Paris, France 1911. She lives and works in New York, USA)

In 1932, she entered the Sorbonne to study mathematics, but abandoned it for art and then attended Fernand Léger's atelier. In 1938 she married the American critic Robert Goldwater and moved to New York. Though her beginnings were as an engraver and painter, by the 1940s she had turned her attention to sculptural work. In 1945 she had her first solo show of twelve paintings, and in 1949 she first exhibited her sculptures at the Peridot Gallery, the *Personage* series, influenced by European surrealism; the exhibition was composed of groupings of abstract and organic shapes carved from wood. By the 1960s she began creating her works in rubber, bronze, and stone, with the pieces themselves becoming larger and the imagery more sexually explicit as she explored the relationship between men and women and the emotional impact of her troubled childhood. In the 1970s, she began to do performance pieces and expanded the scale of her three-dimensional work to large environments. In 1982 the great retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art confirmed her international standing. She represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1993.

SERGIO BOVENGA

(Genoa, Italy 1955. He lives and works in Genoa, Italy)

After his studies at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Genoa, he began using crystal and ashes to create his sculptures, but soon concentrating on an analysis of the microcosm as the equivalent of the macrocosm, and designing new space with a mirroring concave spherical space, the *Matrice Ottica*, which he created in 2000 and which aroused the interest of the European Space Agency (ESA). Once inside this space, the observer experiences a vision that denies the traditional one-point Renaissance

perspective to reach a three-dimensional oneiric multiplicity, enhancing the perceptions of oneself and of reality. Bovenga then used a violin, the "Guarneri di Gesù" (1743), which had belonged to Paganini, to analyze the vision of an object immersed in this spherical space. In recent years Bovenga has experimented with Murano glass to create his sculptures and his reflecting totems. He has held important solo shows at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Stockholm, in 2001, at the IX Biennale di Arte Sacra in 2004, and at the Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, in 2006 as well as participating that same year in the International Glass Art exhibition in Hsinchu City (China) and *Facing 1200°*, at MMKK in Klagenfurt (Austria).

DANIEL BUREN

(Boulogne-sur-Seine, France 1938. He lives and works *in situ*)
He studied at the Ecole des Métiers d'Art, and in 1966 was one of the founders of the group B.M.P.T. (together with Mosset, Parmentier and Toroni), whose "action-exhibitions" condemned bourgeois values and the closed system of the art market. His works are based on a repetitive "visual instrument," alternating vertical stripes of white with colored ones, of different materials but always of the same width: 8.6 cm. In the 1970s he abandoned painting for unauthorized installations in public spaces, and in the 1980s he created such permanent public architectural installations as the famously controversial *Les Deux Plateaux* at Palais-Royal, in Paris. By multiplying the points of view, he subverts specific models, reversing the perspective, and interacting with the space. His works are created *in situ*, using different materials (paint, glass, paper, metal and wood) that are combined to create complex wall or environmental structures, like the renowned *Cabanes Eclatées*, where his concern with historical and cultural backgrounds combined with the work-space-audience relationship has offered a new critical approach. He was awarded the Golden Lion as best national representative in the 1986 Venice Biennale and in 2007 received the Praemium Imperiale for painting.

LAWRENCE CARROLL

(Melbourne, Australia in 1954. He lives and works in Los Angeles, USA and Venice, Italy)
Although he considers himself a painter, most of his art portrays sculptural elements in a minimalist approach influenced by Rothko and Rauschenberg. His works are based on materials previously employed for some other purpose, and the signs of this use are still visible: the slow pace of his working process transforms the pieces into highly personal works, while losing nothing of their prior life. His use of subdued yet warm paints respects the original coloring of the material and emphasizes the shapes; a new wax skin allows the evidence of the earlier uses of the wood and canvas to show through. Carroll is similar to Giorgio Morandi for his interest in the essential complexity of modest everyday objects. His art requires time, both in the creative act and in the moment of fruition. It takes time for the stratified layers of paint to achieve their ultimate non-color. All the same, it takes some time before the observer's eye reads through the layers of sedimentation. In so doing, Carroll attempts to defy the superficiality and frenzy of our age. He participated in Documenta 9 in Kassel, and held a solo show in the Correr Museum, Venice, in 2007.

CÉSAR (César Baldaccini)

(Marseille, France 1921 – Paris, France 1998)
He studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Marseille and in Paris, where he moved permanently in 1946. His first sculptures used metal and plaster, intertwined wire and embossed aluminum foil. In 1952 he used welded metal to create his first solo exhibition

with the famous series *Animaux en ferraille*. In the 1960s he joined Nouveau Réalisme. Exploiting industrial and waste materials, he conceived his *Compressions* using aluminum car parts, and later his polyurethane *Expansions*. At the same time he created traditional pieces, like his bronzes of female nudes or the series of colored plastic *Pouces*. In 1976 a large traveling retrospective exhibition introduced his sculptures to the European public and confirmed him as one of the greatest French artists of the period. Recalling Duchamp's ready-made objects, César exhibited as works of art the mechanically compressed waste material from cars, cans, bullets, and aluminum, in which the interplay of light with the compressed aluminum creates a vibrant relationship of chromatism, space and volume. He participated in several editions of Documenta, Kassel, and in the 1956 and 1995 Venice Biennales.

SOYEON CHO

(Seoul, Korea 1974. She lives and works in New York, USA)
She studied sculpture at Seoul National University and received an MFA in 2004 from the School of Visual Arts in New York. In her work she uses everyday materials, such as plastic forks and q-tips, and a variety of discarded objects. Like the avant-garde artists of the twentieth century she rescues these items from the dull everyday life they represent and transforms them into light, color, and movement: the elements of a new dream landscape. Revealing her essence and dreams, she re-evaluates human potential and relationships. She has exhibited her work in numerous galleries and museums around the world, including the Seoul Arts Centre, Korea (2007) and the Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2008–2009).

TONY CRAGG

(Liverpool, United Kingdom 1949. He lives and works in Wuppertal, Germany)
Before graduating from the Royal College of Art in London in 1977, he worked as a lab technician at a materials research institute, where he was able to study the characteristics of materials. In 1977 he moved to Wuppertal, Germany. His early works from the 1970s are made mostly with found objects, which Cragg used to create wall or floor installations, questioning the difference between painting and sculpture, and testing techniques like stacking, splitting, and crushing. In later pieces the interest shifts to surface quality and manipulation and with unlikely juxtapositions of materials, processing solid materials into fluid and dynamic shapes. He has investigated the relationship between art and materials as well as that between art and science; he has played a leading role in the debate on the function and nature of sculpture. Cragg's artistic journey started with a fragmentary style that has evolved towards works of monumental dimensions. In 1988 he was awarded the Turner Prize and took part in the Venice Biennale. In 1994 he was elected a Royal Academician and in 2007 received the Praemium Imperiale for sculpture.

MARIE LOUISE EKMAN

(Stockholm, Sweden 1944. She lives and works in Stockholm)
A painter, set designer, and filmmaker, she started her career in 1967 and today is one of the best-known Scandinavian artists. In her several exhibitions both at home and abroad (e.g., Kulturhuset, Malmö Art Museum, in Stockholm, Musée d'Art Contemporain et Moderne in Geneva), she has displayed works whose witty and satirical quality reflect her interest in describing human behavior and contemporary society. She uses various materials (glass, wax, waste materials, cloth, oil paint, and gouache) and has successfully reclaimed such traditional

women's handcrafts as weaving and ceramics. Through an unconventional treatment of themes relating to a female's inner life, she analyzes the difference between sexes and describes the role of women in contemporary culture and society. She is the head of the Royal College of Fine Arts, Stockholm.

JAN FABRE

(Antwerp, Belgium 1958. He lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium) Fabre is a versatile personality: a visual artist, choreographer, film director, and writer who has achieved equal fame in each field. His work has an all-absorbing, interdisciplinary character. In Fabre's research, the study of the human body and its transformations prevail; he deals with the concept of metamorphosis through an extreme exploration of human corporeity. A kinsman of the famous entomologist Jean-Henry Fabre, he is attracted to the study of nature and has a real passion for the sciences, and entomology in particular. The use of insects is a distinctive feature of his work. He has also created a particular "bic blue" that he uses to coat different kinds of surfaces. Man, nature, and their mutual relations are his favorite themes. The many venues where his works have been displayed include the Venice Biennale in 1984, 1990, and 2003 and Documenta in 1987 and 1992 in Kassel. The Louvre hosted a considerable exhibition of his installations in 2008.

LUCIO FONTANA

(Rosario, Argentina 1899 – Comabbio, Italy 1968) Fontana first began to work in sculpture with his father, the sculptor Luigi, and later with A. Wildt at the Accademia di Brera in 1928. He then abandoned the figurative tradition, joining the artists of the Galleria del Milione (Lombard abstractionism), where in 1930 he held his first solo exhibition. In the 1930s, he went to Paris where he met Miró and Brancusi. In 1946 he began to develop his first spatial concepts (*Concetti spaziali*). In the essays *Manifesto Bianco* (1946) and the seven *Manifesti dello Spazialismo* (1947–1953) he supported the need to abandon both realism and abstractionism. He encouraged the use of modern technical means (e.g., artificial light, radio, TV) to generate shapes, colors, and sounds through space. He soon put his ideas into practice with the following: *Ambienti, Ambiente Spaziale con forme spaziali e luce nera* (1949) at the Galleria del Naviglio and the decorative neon tubes of *Costellazioni* at the 1951 Milan Triennale. With his renowned *Tagli* from 1958, he confronted the problem of space through cuts in the canvas. In the 1960s, he presented his last works: the cycles of *Nature, La Fine di Dio, and Eclissi*.

FRANCESCO GENNARI

(Fano, Italy 1973. He lives and works in Fano and Milan, Italy) A sculptor and installation artist, he creates images and objects, huge geometrical works, a complex mathematical and alchemical system that investigates the metamorphoses between life and lifeless matter. He often spends hours observing his objects in order to capture that decisive instant with his camera. In his opinion, only absolute observation can be separated from the individual human perception of space and time. In addition, he reveals a romantic notion of art, involving spiritual experiences and magical thinking. The snail on whipped cream in *Having oneself as a solo reference point* (2004) and his self-portraits are powerful examples of his output that he defines as "a single great work, which is a metaphysical landscape." Since 1999 he has taken part in several exhibitions at home and abroad, including his recent solo shows at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Saint-Étienne (France), at the Galerie Johnen in Berlin, and at the

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle (Belgium) in 2009.

DAN GRAHAM

(Urbana, Illinois, USA 1942. He lives and works in New York, USA)

Dan Graham began his art career in 1964, when he founded the John Daniels Gallery in New York: there he encountered minimalist artists and worked until 1965. He then started creating his own conceptual pieces. In this period, he began an ongoing series of photos that question the relationship between public and private architecture and the ways in which each space affects behavior. His work was very conceptual: he published a series of lists of words (*Scheme*, 1966) and articles, like *Houses for America* (1966–1967) where he compares American housing with forms of minimal art. In the 1970s, he became interested in filmed performances in which the audience participated. With his video-work *Present Continuous Past*, he slows the image in relation to the action. He has continued experimenting with the interaction between his works and the public with *Pavilions* (1978), where he installed glass and mirrors in gardens and open spaces. In the 1980s, he also collaborated with architects, carrying out projects such as the *Children's Pavilion* with Jeff Wall in 1989 and the cylindrical mirror inside a cube at the Dia Center of the Arts in New York.

RICHARD HAMILTON

(London, United Kingdom 1922. He lives and works in North End, Oxfordshire, United Kingdom)

He discovered his gift for drawing while working for a firm that made electric components; he then enrolled in the Royal Academy School of London. In the 1940s, he produced his first works, and held his first solo exhibition in 1950 while teaching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts; there he met Paolozzi and, with him, started the Independent Group, contributing to the development of pop art in Britain. In 1956 he made his first pop collage, the poster for the exhibition *This Is Tomorrow* at the Whitechapel Gallery. In the 1960s, he created a series of prints entitled *Swinging London*, a commentary on Robert Frazer and Mick Jagger's arrest for drugs. Several of his works are commentaries on social and political life of that time. In 1965, he carried out the pop version of Duchamp's *Le Grand Verre*. Three years later, he was the curator of Duchamp's greatest retrospective at the Tate Gallery. Keen to embrace certain types of technology within his art, Hamilton began creating computer-generated works in the 1980s. In 1968, he took part in Documenta in Kassel, where he returned in 1977 and 1997. In 1979, and again in 1992, the Tate Gallery hosted a great retrospective exhibition. In 1993 Hamilton represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale and was awarded the Golden Lion.

MONA HATOUM

(Beirut, Lebanon 1952. She lives and works in London, United Kingdom, and Berlin, Germany)

A British artist of Palestinian origin, Hatoum was forced into exile by the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975. Later she settled in London and studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art and after, at the Slade School of Fine Art. In the early 1980s, she began her career with performance pieces, later moving towards more mechanical installations using video, light, and sound. While mostly focusing on such confrontational themes as violence, oppression, and voyeurism, she often makes powerful references to the vulnerability and stamina of human bodies, and presents a very personal re-examination of minimalism

by introducing contrasting elements into an extremely strict structure. The influence of her native culture is very clear: war, physical vulnerability, and the patriarchal Lebanese society are countered with the British reality, becoming the subject-matter of her video work. She also deals with memory to narrate the painful relationship with her mother, and in time returned to minimalism in order to analyze the relationship between power and its systems of control. She has participated in the Turner Prize (1995), the Venice Biennale (1995 and 2005), and the Biennale of Sydney (2006). Solo exhibitions have been held at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (1994), Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1997), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (1998), Castello di Rivoli, Turin (1999), and the Tate Britain, London (2000).

HYE RIM LEE

(Seoul, Korea 1963. She lives and works in New York, USA, and Auckland, New Zealand)
Hye Rim Lee was born in Seoul, Korea. In 1993 she moved to New Zealand, where she graduated in Inter-media Studies at Auckland University. Working with 3D-animation technology, she investigates and questions computer gaming and cyber culture, and the role of art in the crossing of high technology with popular culture. Her work was initially rooted in the challenges facing the Asian community settled in New Zealand, but in 2002 she began her ongoing TOKI/Cyborg Project, in which she explores representations of a female character, TOKI, thus examining the way in which fictional, animated identities are propagated in contemporary popular culture. As regards the manipulation and perception of female sexual identity worldwide, she specifically challenges the conventions of the traditionally male-dominated worlds of game structure and 3D animation vis-à-vis the virtualized images of women. She has participated in major exhibitions in New Zealand, Asia, Europe, and New York.

CHARLOTTE HODES

(London, United Kingdom 1959. She lives and works in London, United Kingdom)
Charlotte Hodes studied Fine Art and Painting at the Brighton School of Art and the Slade School of Art. Hodes's work has been shaped by a study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections of fine art and decorative traditions, as well as practical research exploring the interface of old and new technologies, in particular combining digital and traditional collage techniques on canvas and ceramic surfaces, where the integration of pattern, form, and color becomes an important element in her work. Her central theme is the depiction of the female figure as a simplified motif, intertwined with collage fragments, domestic elements, computer icons, and ornamentation. This reflects a broader interest in how to juxtapose and construct images using the clash of old and new, historical and contemporary references. Exhibitions include solo shows at Benuni, Leighton, and Paisner, London (2001), the installation *Cacophony - A Cabinet of Vases* at Design Now Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2002); Galerie 88, Kolkata, India (2002) and Eagle Gallery, London (2006).

MIMMO JODICE

(Naples, Italy 1934. He lives and works in Naples)
One of the greatest figures in the history of Italian photography, he had a very difficult childhood. An orphan, he began working at the age of ten, and taught himself to be an artist. Then he came into contact with the Neapolitan academic circles. His early work consisted of paintings and sculptures, influenced by De Pisis and Viani. In the late 1950s, he took up photography, which has

been his main interest since the 1960s, where he has developed a novel vision of urban landscape and architecture. He abandoned traditional techniques for experimentation and became a key figure in and promoter of the international success of Italian photography: from Rome to Beijing, his works are found in the most important museums. In 2004, he exhibited at the Wakayama Museum of Modern Art in Japan, the Museum of Photography in Moscow, the MASP in São Paulo, and the MART of Rovereto and Trento, in Italy. In 2006, the "Federico II" University of Naples presented him an Honorary Degree in Architecture.

MARYA KAZOUN

(Beirut, Lebanon, 1976. She lives and works in New York, USA and Venice, Italy)
Marya Kazoun grew up in Beirut during the war years. In 1984 her family fled the war the first time by moving to Switzerland. Later she lived in Montreal with her family, where she became Canadian. She later returned to Beirut and completed degrees in Interior Architecture and Fine Arts at the Lebanese American University. In 2001 she moved to New York and completed an MFA in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts. Her works are mainly installations and performances; she uses 3D low reliefs, painting, drawing, and photo as a support for her installation pieces. Her art is a personal perception of reality. She creates worlds that are parallel to the one we live in. She explores the micro vs the macro, the extremely beautiful vs the extremely repulsive. She gave a voice to herself at five years old. Her art is an attempt to domesticate the dark. She uses very common materials like tissue and fabric, and transforms them and gives them another life. Her approach to art is strongly feminine, emphasized by her dexterity with materials and mastery of ancestral techniques like sewing and weaving. She took part in the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005 with a solo show *Personal Living Space*. Some of her participations include the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow), the Museum of Modern Art of Klagenfurt (Austria), the Sharjah Biennial 8 in 2007 with the *Crumbling Desert Castles* commission, the World Economic Forum in Davos 2008, Poznan Biennial in Poland 2008. Her work is currently in two exhibitions in this 53rd Venice Biennale edition: *Glasstress* and *Sant'Elena*.

JOSEPH KOSUTH

(Toledo, Ohio, USA 1945. He lives and works in Rome, Italy, and New York, USA)
From 1955 to 1964 he studied at the Toledo Museum School of Design under the Belgian artist Line Bloom Draper and at the Cleveland Art Institute. In 1965, he moved to New York, where he attended the School of Visual Arts. He soon expressed his creative genius through his conceptual works, influenced by the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, exploring the idea that language possesses meaning only in relation to itself. His first exhibition took place at the Museum of Normal Art, of which he was a co-founder in 1967, and was followed by his first solo show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York. After becoming the editor of *Art and Language*, he started to study philosophy and anthropology in the 1970s. For a number of solo shows from 1970 to 1974, he created classroom environments in which participants were given documents to read, and presented with texts or diagrams on the walls. The role of language and its relation to art has been the main object of his research, as shown by the important installations and publications presented at the most famous international events. He has repeatedly taken part in Documenta as well as the Venice Biennale and has received prestigious awards. The Università di Bologna awarded him an Honorary Degree in Humanities in 2001.

JANNIS KOUNELLIS

(Piraeus, Greece 1936. He lives and works in Rome, Italy)

He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome. In 1960, as a student, he had his first solo show titled *L'alfabeto di Kounellis*, at the Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome. In the 1960s, he introduced objects into his paintings as well as gold, earth, fire, sacks, and even live animals, and the canvas was replaced by doorways, bed frames, or windows. In 1967, he joined Celant's Arte Povera movement and exhibited live horses at the Galleria Attico in 1969. His installations have consisted of meat, lead, coal, propane torches, wooden objects, and so on. People, too, began to enter his art, adding a performance dimension to his installations. Historical and industrial sites became the venues where his work — a spectacular mixture of unorthodox elements — expressed the tensions and alienation of contemporary society along with its obscure and fragmented language. In the 1970s Kounellis continued to build his vocabulary of materials, introducing smoke, shelving units, trolleys, blockaded openings, mounds of coffee grinds, and coal as indicators of commerce, transportation, and economics. These diverse fragments speak to general cultural history, while combining to form within Kounellis's oeuvre a rich and evocative history of meaning. Since the 1980s, he has continued experimenting with combinations of odd materials and the ability to transform his immediate environment. His work has been shown all over the world.

RAIMUND KUMMER

(Mengerhausen, Germany 1954. He lives and works in Germany)

A sculptor and photographer, his artistic career began more than thirty years ago with his commitment to the debate on the conditions under which artists produce and exhibit their works. He was a pioneer in claiming new places for a new art, as evidenced by the 1978–1979 photo work *Skulpturen in der Strasse*. As advocated by the *Büro Berlin* in 1980, any location can become a venue for a work of art. After working with sculpture he turned to photography, employing the photographic medium to appropriate spatial situations and to integrate them into his artistic repertoire. In the mid-1980s, he developed an interest in three-dimensional images, an aspect of his photo sculptures, which evolved into actual installations. The photographic medium constantly interacts with his sculptures and installations, as a work tool, visual scribble, field experiment, image archive, and key source of creativity. The sculpture is compounded by its surroundings, and photography is transformed into an object. The space we actually see becomes itself a sculpture. Seeing and perceiving are the main focus of his study, in which an appeal to the five senses plays a great role and is at the core of Kummer's art.

FEDERICA MARANGONI

(Padua, 1940. She lives and works in Venice)

A sculptor and designer, a teacher and a lecturer active on the international art scene, she has explored the use of various materials and technological media. With a precise professional and cultural choice, in 1970 she set up her own design studio (Fedra Studio Design) in Venice and began experimenting with glass at many of the Murano furnaces. Besides designing objects for mass-production, she has created glass sculptures and large installations that combine video and neon light with glass. The use of electronic technology combined with that of glass has continued since the early 1970s, as in her glass-video sculpture *The Electronic Rainbow* (1997) and renders her work unique in the panorama of contemporary art. She has taught at Università Internazionale dell'Arte, Venice, and she has held summer workshops on glass as

an art medium for New York University in Venice. Her favorite topic is: "Art, Art & Craft, Design: Confrontation, Analysis, and Interactivity." She has exhibited at many museums and international shows, such as the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Hara Museum (Tokyo), and the 1997 Venice Biennale.

ORLAN

(Saint-Étienne, France 1947. She lives and works in Paris, France, and New York, USA)

Now a professor at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Dijon, she has been active in sculpture, photography, video art, installations, and performances since 1965. In 1977, her performance *The Artist Kiss* was a great scandal and in 1978 she founded the International Symposium of Performance in Lyon; she later published the *Manifesto of Carnal Art*. Her work is based on the concept of identity and investigates the relations between the body and new technologies. The battle against the commercialization of the female body is the starting point and core of all her work as a body artist. An extreme performer, she underwent several surgical operations in the early 1990s, and displays her body as a work of art in progress, in order to overcome an imposed idea of female beauty. ORLAN resolutely rejects the type of female desired by the logic of the market and capitalism as well as by male thoughts and needs. In 1998 she launched her ongoing *Self-Hybridation Project*, a survey of the different standards of beauty in various civilizations and historical eras. She has held several retrospectives, among which were those at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Étienne in 2007 and at the Tallinn Art Hall in Estonia in 2008.

JEAN-MICHEL OTHONIEL

(Saint-Étienne, France 1964. He lives and works in Paris, France)

Fond of metamorphoses and materials with reversible properties, Othoniel expresses his art through drawings, photographs, sculptures, and videos. In 1993 he introduced glass into his work and began to explore its properties. Transformations, the mutable materials, and their passage from one state to another reflect an essential element in his work: that of journey and memory. The notion of a wound or an injury is also at the heart of his art: in 1997, he created *Collier Cicatrice*, a small necklace made of red glass. He has participated in the most prestigious exhibitions of contemporary art, such as Documenta 9 (Kassel) in 1992, *Feminine/Masculin* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1994, *Heaven* at the Tate Gallery in Liverpool, and the Kwangju Biennale in Korea in 2000. His installations were displayed at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice in 1997 and 2006. In 2000, he created a permanent installation, *Le Kiosque des Noctambules*, for the centenary of the Paris metro. In 2003, he conceived *Crystal Palace* for the Cartier Foundation in Paris and for MOCA in Miami, working with glassblowers in Venice and Marseille to create enigmatic sculptures that incorporated jewelry, architecture, and erotic objects.

LUCA PANCRAZZI

(Figline Valdarno, Italy 1961. He lives and works in Milan, Italy)

He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence with Sol LeWitt and Alighiero Boetti, and has developed a multifaceted approach to art through painting, sculpture, photography, video, light-boxes, and large installation pieces. His *1:1* is a work on perception, overturning normal visions and spurring the observer's imagination; it is based on the statement of Florentine mathematician Corrado Brodi: "Nothing in this world is completely identical, for the reason that two bodies cannot take up one and the same place. Each body is identical to itself only."

The image reflected in a false mirror displays imperfections and distorted perspectives. What is seen and how it is seen are less important than the personal relationship between what the object and the observer. The central theme is an evolution of shapes and perceptions based on the deconstruction and reconstruction of an image by breaking up reality. In *High Definition*, he used 2"x2" Casamood tiles to recreate a tile mosaic of one of his photographs, with grouts matching each colored tile exactly, while blowing up the image on the other side of the room to give it a pixilated look. He has exhibited in important museums and galleries in Italy and abroad, such as the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2003 and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art in 2007.

ANNE PEABODY

(Louisville, USA 1967. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, USA)
She studied at the Cleveland Institute of Art program in Florence, Italy, at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. In 2004, she received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York, with an Alumni Thesis Award for her installation, the transposition of a stretch of the sidewalk outside her Brooklyn apartment onto silvered glass. The sidewalk, a faint impression of its former self, was presented as it had once appeared, on the ground. Thus Peabody transformed the gallery space into a magical reinterpretation of the familiar, her focus on the ethereal notions of memory and subjective consciousness. Peabody recognizes the impermanent nature of conscious life, an aspect well articulated in her earlier work. Given the nature of her chosen medium, light is a vital participant in the elusive compositions. Her works on silvered glass are created using a technique stemming from *églomisé*, a French glass-gilding technique popularized in the eighteenth century, whose ephemeral results emphasize the delicacy of the subject-matter, based for the most part on the realm of the subconscious and on the artist's dreams. In 2007, her installation for the 40th anniversary celebration of *Art in the Parks* was much appreciated. Her work is found in prestigious permanent collections such as the 21c Museum in Louisville, The Anaconda Aluminum in Lexington, Kentucky, and in the Berengo Studio of Murano, in Venice.

GIUSEPPE PENONE

(Garresio, Cuneo, Italy 1947. He lives and works in Turin, Italy, and Paris, France)
A key figure in the Arte Povera group, he has shown a never-ending interest in the main elements of this artistic movement, i.e., the body and nature. In the latter, he sees the source of pre-cultural forms that become meaningful through the cultural process. His materials are wood, stone, and resin: natural, simple, and humble. His most famous series, *Alberi*, was conceived in 1969 in order to "re-discover the trees within matter" by bringing the trees' growth rings to the surface and thus reveal their heart; *Alpi Marittime* (1968–1978) presents images of the artist in the act of interfering with natural elements by leaving indelible marks that will change over time. *Essere fiume 4* (1995–1996) represents a most radical action in the poetics of the artist: it consists of two identical stones, one natural, the other the result of human action. His work draws out existing forms with an awareness of the common vital force shared by all living beings and of the interaction between the inner and outer realms. In 2004 a retrospective exhibition was held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and he had another in 2008 at MAMbo, Bologna. He participated in Documenta, Kassel in 1972, 1982, 1987; in 2007 his work, *Sculture di Linfa*, inaugurated the new Italian Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale.

ANTON PEVSNER

(Orel, Russia 1886 – Paris, France 1962)
A Russian-born French painter and sculptor, the brother of the artist Naum Gabo, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kiev (1908–1910) and in St. Petersburg (1911). In 1912, he went to Paris where he saw cubist artworks; soon after he began to paint. In 1917, he and Gabo returned to Moscow, where Anton became a professor in the Fine Arts and Technical School, together with Malevich and Kandinsky. In 1920, he and Naum issued the *Realist Manifesto of Constructivism*. Pevsner settled in Paris in 1923: the two brothers were leaders of the constructivist members of Abstraction-Création; in 1946 he was one of the co-founders of the group *Réalités Nouvelles*. Pioneers of kinetic art, they developed an innovative use of the blowtorch to weld copper rods onto sculptural forms, resulting in a new marriage of art and mathematics. For his early sculptures, Pevsner used brass, copper, zinc, and celluloid; later he relied mainly on parallel arrays of bronze wire soldered together to form plates, which he joined to create intricate shapes. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, presented the exhibition *Gabo-Pevsner* in 1948 and a solo exhibition of his work in 1957. In 1958 he represented France at the Venice Biennale.

BETTINA POUSTTCHI

(Mainz, Germany 1971. She lives and works in Berlin, Germany)
A German-Iranian artist, she studied fine arts and film theory at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf and at the Whitney Museum in New York in the 1990s. Over the past ten years, she has worked with a wide variety of media: sculpture, photography, and video, always dealing with social and political issues. Her shots of everyday life express her social inquiry, both conceptual and intuitive. In her video work, the soundtrack and close-ups guide the observer to notice tiny details and compare the artist's view. For some time now, she has been working with the interim space between the moving and the still image. In her photo series and videos, she blurs the boundaries between cinematic experience and the photographic moment. The intersection between media, form, and content interest the artist because it questions the representation and relativity of the visible, thus undermining established orders of viewing, and raises the problem of the definition, depiction, and perception of "reality." Since 1997, she has participated in group and solo exhibitions. She has exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2003, at the Museum Domus Artium of Salamanca in 2007, and at the TENT Center of Visual Arts in Rotterdam in 2009.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

(Port Arthur, Texas, USA 1925 – Captiva Island, Florida, USA 2008)
In the late 1940s, he studied at the Kansas City Art Institute, the Académie Julien in Paris and, under Josef Albers, at Black Mountain College. While there, he met John Cage and the choreographer Merce Cunningham, and took part in the production of John Cage's *Theater Piece #1*. In 1949 he moved to New York, and then traveled in Northern Africa and Italy. In the 1950s, he created collage works and "combine paintings," works that incorporated painting and various objects. In the 1960s, he worked on set design for stage performances, especially of dance. In 1962, he made his first lithograph and incorporated the silk-screen process in his paintings. In the mid-1960s, he experimented with electronics and in 1966 co-founded Experiments in Art and Technology to promote cooperation between artists and engineers. His inventive and non-traditional art defies categorization. He expresses pathos in his paintings, but he was a conceptual artist who interacted with objects and

the environment, more as a reporter than a creator. He enjoyed combining paintings with music and performance and using ephemeral materials, electronics, and blueprints. His work is included in virtually every important international collection of contemporary art, and he received the Grand Prize for painting in 1964 at the 32nd Venice Biennale.

MAN RAY

(Emmanuel Radnitzky, Philadelphia, USA 1890 – Paris, France 1976)

From 1911 on, he studied at the Ferrer Center in New York, where he also frequented A. Stieglitz's gallery; held his first solo show and met Duchamp. In 1920 Ray helped Duchamp make his first machine, one of the earliest examples of kinetic art; the *Rotary Glass Plates* was composed of glass plates turned by a motor. That same year Man Ray, Katherine Dreier, and Marcel Duchamp founded the Société Anonyme, an itinerant collection that actually was the first museum of modern art in the U.S. In Paris from 1921 to 1940, he received many commissions for portraits and commercial work, and met Picasso and Dalí. A member of the dada and surrealist movements, in the 1920s and 1930s he participated in the most important events of both groups, made some films, and published his rayographs, photographic images created without a camera. He made them by placing objects on light-sensitive photographic paper, stressing the importance of light and shadow rather than the object itself, giving his work a profound look. Although he also produced paintings, sculptures, and collages, as well as constructed objects and photography, he sought to create a surrealist vision of the female form and began to utilize such techniques as solarization, dynamic cropping, over-enlargement, and over-development to pursue a dreamlike effect. In the 1950s and 1960s he held important solo shows in Paris and London and published his autobiography. The Museum of Modern Art presented his work in 1973.

RENE RIETMEYER

('s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands 1957. He lives and works in Miami, USA, and The Netherlands)

After completing his degree in Psychology in Austria, he moved to Greece and founded a private art academy. Since 1994, he has traveled and lived in several countries, concentrating on his creativity. After a figurative phase, in 1997, he developed the sculptural series *Boxes*, based on three-dimensional objects, most often painted on five sides, which he displays on the wall or on the floor in multi-part, variable installations. Although he works with various materials, such as concrete, metal, glass, silicone, and glue, he prefers oil paint and believes no work of art can be completely depersonalized and objectively emotionless. Though inspired by minimal art and new abstraction, the *Boxes* present variations in the formal abstract elements—color, shape, composition, surface structure, and material—attempting to making visible the subjectively felt effect of cities and landscapes. In 2002 he started the project *Personal Structures Time - Space - Existence* to discuss these topics with other artists, such as Kosuth, Opalka, and Weiner. Since 1996 his work has been shown in several museums and galleries in Europe, Japan, and North America.

SILVANO RUBINO

(Venice, Italy 1952. He lives and works in Venice, Italy)

He studied painting and fresco at the Istituto d'Arte and at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice. Since 1984 he has also created set and costume designs for theater and dance performances, with great scenic effect. His artistic activity includes large-format photography, video and installations, always aiming at relating the artwork to the

individual space, environment, and observer. His artistic research in glass has consisted of giving new shapes and dimensions to commonly used items. His glass works enhance the ambiguity of the material – in this case, glass but could be something else – and concentrates on forms. He gives his works a self-sufficient and autonomous life, exploiting the deceptive effects of the material. He has taught drawing and planning at the Abate Zanetti School of Glass in Murano. His works were presented in *Glass in the World Today* at the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Venice in 2004 and *In Perfect Scale* at the Galleria Michela Rizzo in 2006.

SANDRO SERGI

(Venice, Italy 1922 – Lido di Venezia, Italy 1998)

A versatile artist, he produced drawings, paintings, mosaics, and wooden, clay, and glass sculptures. In 1941 he finished his artistic training and later held his first solo show in Venice. In 1948 the Board of the Venice Biennale awarded him the 1st prize in drawing at the Mostra dei Giovani Artisti. In the 1950s, much appreciated by his mentors (Cadorin, Saetti, and Guidi) and critics, he was awarded the Graziano and Diomira Prizes. He was also the architect Carlo Scarpa's assistant at the Istituto Veneto del Lavoro. He began his teaching career. Considered part of Venetian Spatialism movement, he met such international artists as Bloc, Matta, Fontana, Spaulding, and Falkenstein through the art critic Morucchio. In 1961, he won the first prize in landscape at the Premio Internazionale Giorgione - Poussin, Castelfranco, Italy. In the 1960s, he began to express his artistic identity with a very personal "extra-formal" art based on his philosophical and spiritual view of the world. In the 1970s, he worked with the *Fucina degli Angeli*. He was a poet concerned with the interrelation of the micro- and the macrocosms. His entire work was based on the pursuit of the Unknown across intergalactic expanses, again represented though his glass works in the 1990s. He was a visionary and the unacknowledged forerunner of many contemporary themes. He held several group and solo exhibitions in Italy and abroad.

KIKI SMITH

(Nuremberg, Germany 1954. She lives and works in New York, USA)

The daughter of the sculptor Tony Smith, she began as a young girl by helping her father make cardboard models for his sculptures. Her work consists of sculptures, prints, and installations. In the 1980s, she abandoned the figurative tradition and produced objects and drawings based on organs, cells, and the human nervous system. Soon her work included animals, domestic objects, elements from folk tales and classical mythology. She is concerned with human nature and its philosophical, social, and spiritual aspects. She deals with life, death, and resurrection, a legacy of her upbringing in the Catholic Church. Recently her work has been inspired by the life of St. Genevieve. She represents the saint along with a wolf, thus investigating the symbolic relationships between humans and animals. In 2003, a retrospective of her prints was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, followed by exhibitions at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice in 2005, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2006, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2007. In 2005, she was awarded the prestigious Showhegan Medal for sculpture.

JANA STERBAK

(Prague, Czech Republic 1955. She lives and works in Montreal, Canada)

She moved with her family to Canada in 1968. She studied at the Vancouver School of Art and received her BFA in 1977 from

Concordia University in Montreal. Power, sexuality, and control are the main issues she addresses as well as the relationship between humans and technology. Her work involves the human body, which she wraps, clothes, and imprisons with wires and technological materials. Sometimes the performers are moved by remote control. Many of her sculptural garments are cage-like. The cultural heritage of her native country also plays an important role. Her work reveals irony, humanism, fantasy, and even black humor, derived from Czech authors like Kafka, Hasek, and Capek. She has shown in group and solo exhibitions worldwide. Her works are found in the most important international museums such as the Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, National Gallery of Canada, and the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, California.

LINO TAGLIAPIETRA

(Murano, Venice, Italy 1934. He lives and works in Murano, Venice, Italy)

He first approached glass under Archimede Seguso at the age of twelve; within a decade he had become a *maestro*. His fame has spread worldwide and, according to Dale Chihuly, he is "perhaps the world's greatest living glassblower." During his long career he worked with the most renowned glass furnaces of Murano. In 1979 he went to the US as a teacher at the Pilchuck School in Seattle, where he started a successful collaboration and exchange with American glass artists, including Dan Bailey and Dale Chihuly. In the 1990s, he received international recognition for his excellence in craftsmanship and his ability to merge the best of classic and contemporary design. His glass works are in the collections of the most prestigious glass museums around the world.

KOEN VANMECHELEN

(Sint-Truiden, Belgium 1965. He lives and works at Meeuwen, Belgium)

His works range from highly expressive paintings and drawings to photography, video, installations, works in glass, and a recurring wooden sculpture, all dealing with the theme of the chicken and the egg. These important symbols connect Koen's art to scientific, political, philosophical, and ethical issues, the subject of debates and lectures. His work can be defined by three main categories: *The Cosmogolem*, a powerful, wooden sculpture adopted around the world as a symbol for children's rights. The Golem represents the principle of man as creator; it was the starting point of all his work and is still an important pillar for him; *The Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP)*, the core of his extensive breeding program with chicken breeds from all over the world, meant to be merged into a new species, a universal chicken or Superbastard; and *Medusa*, where art meets science, the scientific part that used to be called *The Walking Egg* and can be considered the think tank behind the CCP. "Cross-breeding is the only thing," says Vanmechelen: "We need to cross-breed across boundaries if we want the world not to perish. We need to think cosmopolitical. Nothing is as beautiful as joining with other cultures and taking energy from this." He has held conferences all over the world and participated in the most important events of contemporary art.

FRED WILSON

(Bronx, New York, USA 1954. He lives and works in New York, USA)

He received a BFA from SUNY/Purchase and then worked in the education departments of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History. Since his

first solo exhibition in 1988, Wilson has created site-specific installations in numerous museums and cultural institutions throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. He has created new exhibition contexts, demonstrating how changes in context create changes in meaning and denouncing the manipulating interpretations of our cultural institutions, whose social, economic, and ideological power shape art and culture. In *Mining the Museum* (1992), he transformed the Baltimore Historical Society's collection in order to highlight the history of slavery in America. In 2003, when he represented the United States in the 50th Venice Biennale, he focused on the life of Africans in Venice from the fifteenth century to the present, creating a mixed-media installation, consisting of a suite of black glass sculpture, a black-and-white tiled room with wall graffiti from texts of African-American slave narratives, and a video installation of Othello projected backwards, thus addressing the racial, ethnic, and cultural issues historically related to social outcasts. He has represented the US at the Cairo Biennial (1992). His solo exhibition, *Fred Wilson, Objects and Installations 1979–2000*, traveled from 2001 to 2004 to eight national venues.

KIMIKO YOSHIDA

(Tokyo, Japan 1963. She lives and works in Paris, France)

In the 1990s, she studied at the Tokyo College of Photography, then at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie of Arles and the Studio National des Arts Contemporaines in Le Fresnoy, France. In 2005, she won first prize in "Self-portrait" at the International Photography Awards in New York. An artist and a photographer, her work centers mostly around self-portraits that create an intense dialogue with minimalist, baroque, anthropological, and ethnographic elements. In a 2003 series entitled *Marry me*, she presents herself as a bride in wildly contrasting cultural identities, evoking legends, dreams, and memories. She says: "I embody a bride who is paradoxical, intangible, and unwed, with identities which are simultaneously dramatic, fictional, parodic, and contradictory. In surpassing my experience as a fashion creator in Tokyo, I am creating almost monochrome self-portraits in order to present the virtual wedding of the unwed bride who, by turns, is a widow, an astronaut, Chinese, manga, Egyptian, and so on." Her beautiful pictures — classical in manner and rich in color — shock the viewer with their intensity and directness. They are the sublimation of her sad childhood marked by abandon and wandering. Since 2000, she has held solo shows in the most prestigious galleries and museums in Europe, Israel, and the US.

CHEN ZHEN

(Shanghai, China 1955 – Paris, France 2000)

Like Huang Yongping and Cai Guo-Qiang, he embodied the dynamic and versatile Chinese avant-garde that, frustrated by post-Maoist reform policies, left China in the mid-1980s. He moved to Paris in 1986, where he studied and then taught at the Ecole National Supérieur des Beaux-Arts. A painter, he soon turned to sculpture and installation art and began to work out his trans-historical utopian projection for pursuing harmony by difference. The human body, illness, and Chinese medical practices are the metaphors through which he explored different realities. He acted as a mediator, creating symbolic bridges between classical Confucian and Maoist China and the fractured energy of Western modernity. Confronting memories from his childhood with symbols of contemporary culture, he represented the complexity of cultural globalization, becoming a reference for new generations. His work has been shown at the Venice Biennale and in the most prestigious international venues.

GLASSTRESS

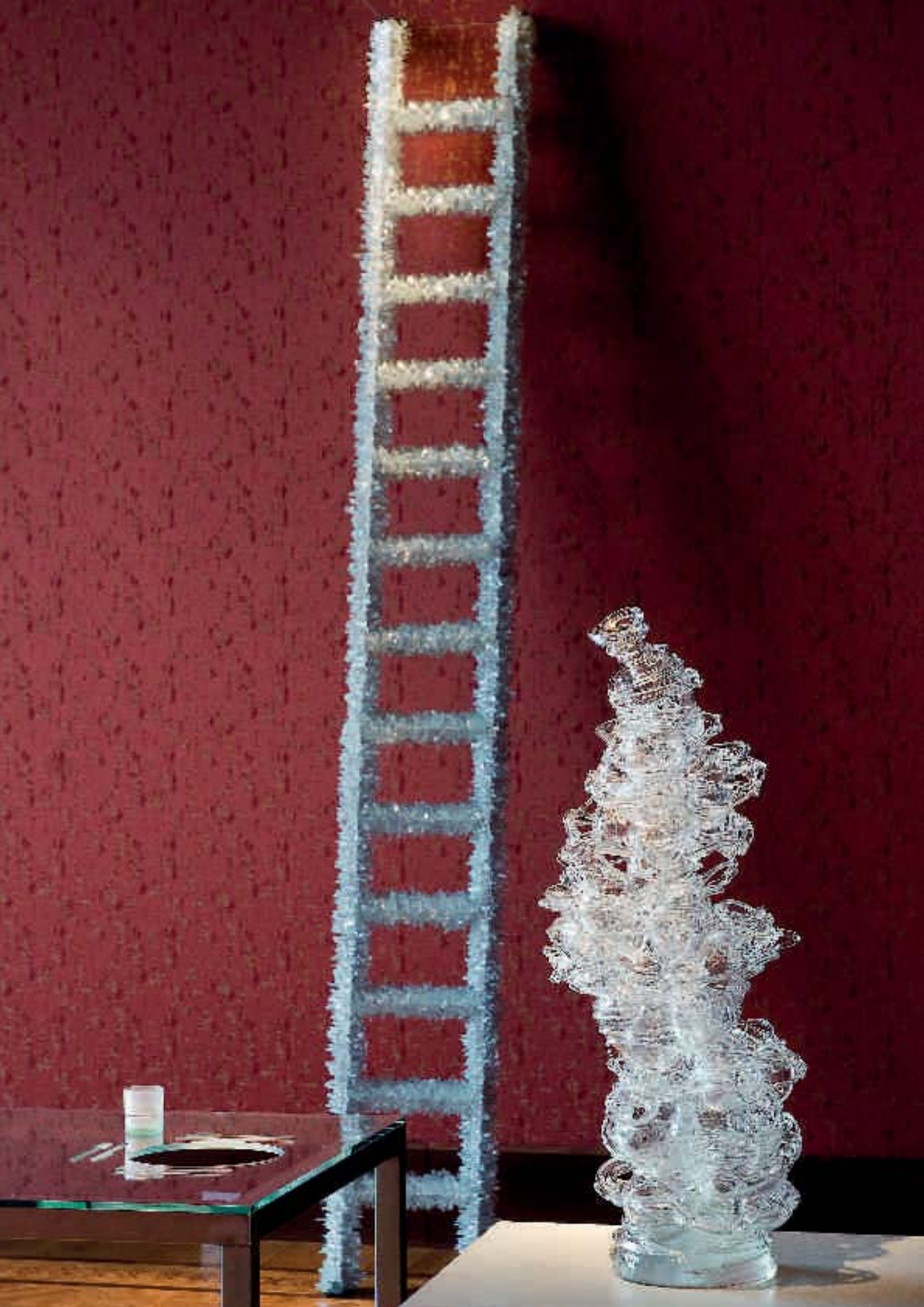
EXHIBITION

Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti
Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti

Scuola Grande Confraternita di San Teodoro

































GLASSTRESS

SPECIAL PROJECT

方案:

《黑匣子》

—— 献给中国近三十年出生的四亿独生子女

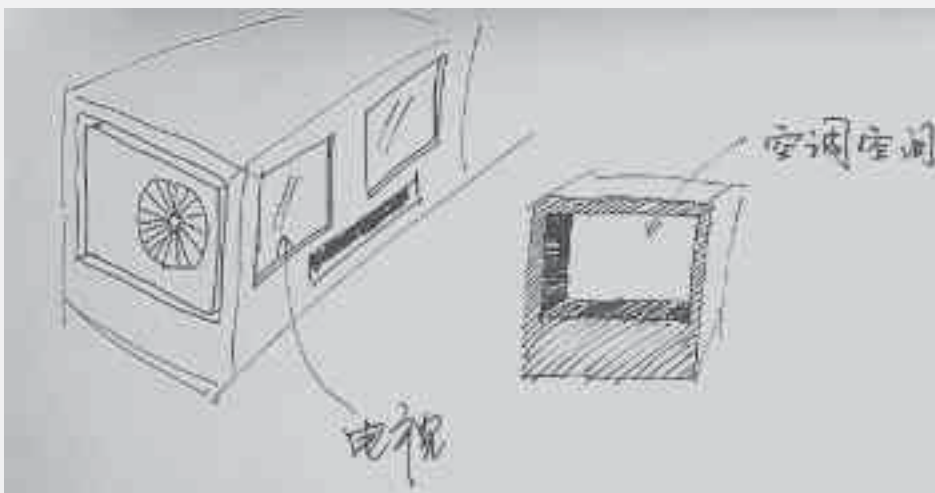
引言：时常，黑夜，幸鑫躺在床上，幸鑫问自己，幸鑫明天该干点什么……
回想，昨天，黑夜依旧。
在思维的将来与记忆的未来对比中，《黑匣子》呈现了出来。

创作时间： 2009年6月初至7月底

实施地点： 威尼斯双年展·澳门馆

计划材料：

- 1.作者自己
- 2.中国大陆《九年制义务教育》教科书（全套，数量约为150本）
- 3.长 2M × 宽0.9M × 高0.9M的铁箱一个
- 4.空调两台（分体、换气型空调）
- 5.电视两台（防水型）



铁箱子内部、外部示意图

作品过程：作者被封闭在铁箱子里，将《九年制度义务教育》教材（约150本书）上的字的数量数一遍，作品结束，作者被释放出来

来

（**数字的方式为：**每一页、每一行都用笔作下数过的字数的记录，直至数清约150本书上所有的字。

铁箱的封闭方式为：所有接缝均为焊接封死，没有任何缝隙也无出口。

开箱方式为：由助手用切割机将箱子切开一个洞，让作者钻出箱子。

作品的时间长度为：约49天。）



作者在箱内空间的比例与效果图

细节描述：1.由于箱子内的高度为0.0米，宽度为0.0米，长度为2米，作者只能躺或蹲在箱子里。

2.作品的日程安排为：

8:00起床

8:00-8:30做运动（尽可能的做扭腰、抬腿以便活血）

8:30-9:00进食

9:00-12:00数字

12:00-12:30做运动

12:30-13:00进食

13:00-14:00午休

14:00-17:00数字

17:00-18:00做运动

18:00-19:00进食

19:00-21:00数字

21:00-21:30做运动

21:30-22:00进食

22:00-08:00休息

- 3.铁箱为焊接封闭，密不透风，氧气由安装在箱内的两台空调供应。
- 4.作者的饮食与生活垃圾由安装在箱体上的一根软体导管交换、输送。
- 5.作品过程中箱子内主要呈现的材料为：穿着衣服的作者、书、笔、空调。其它隐藏的辅助材料为：用瓶子送进箱子的食品、水，封装后被送出的生活垃圾。
- 6.由于作品开始后，作者本人是被限定在一个完全失去自我保护能力的情况下，故在作品实施的约40天里，箱外必须随时有助手监护。

记录展示： 箱子内，两端角落里分别安装一台摄像头，并将摄像头分别与两台电视机连接，在箱外同步展示箱内现场。

作品背景： 众所周知，随着七十年代末开始的改革开放，整个中国大陆的物欲横流造成了人们价值观的错乱，同期计划生育政策的实施，让这之后出生的孩子变成了爱的焦点。没有人会预想到，这样的时期，这样的计划，为人类社会制造出了一个新的品种“独生人”。在这些年里，随着世界各地出现人口增长高峰，各国都因地制宜的实施了不同的人口计划生育政策，但据统计，至今还没有哪一个国家在人口控制方面比中国彻底与持久。

中国的这群“独生人”的特别之处在于，人类社会自有文明以来，从来没有那个国家，民族，在30多年乃至更长的时间

里，能使所有出生的人都是家中独子。（具08年底中国国家统计局数据显示，在1979年至2009年的30年里，中国大陆新出生了约4亿人口。另具美国人口普查局的数字显示，截至2008年12月29日，美国人口总数为3.0551亿，世界总人口为67.5036亿。）

独生，意味着传统家庭结构的改变。“我”从出生到死亡，没有感受过兄弟姐妹间的朝夕、携手、互助、关爱。而父母又把所有的希望寄予给了“我”，他们的“唯一”。这看似小小的变化产生的蝴蝶效应却使得人与人的感情链完全改变了。我想，爱与被爱的缺失会造出新的人际交往方式，如：不同的爱情、婚姻观念，新的父母、子女关系等等。这意味着随着这个群体陆续成为“祖国的接班人”登上历史的舞台，中国将又一次发生翻天覆地的变化。

1. 我出生前后：

1949年，新中国建立，中国大陆政治局面初步稳定

1966年开始文化大革命，大陆政治局势又一再动荡，至**1976**年，内部斗争才趋于平缓。

1979年，新一代领导人指出：要使中国实现四个现代化，至少有两个重要特点是必须看到的：一个是底子薄。第二条是人口多，耕地少。计划生育工作是一项战略性任务，一定要抓好。

1980年，党中央发表《中共中央关于控制我国人口增长问题致全体共产党员、共青团员的公开信》，提倡一对夫妇生育一个孩子。

1981年，成立了国家计划生育委员会。正式开始以制度方式实施计划生育。

1982年，计划生育被确定为基本国策，同年写入《中华人民共和

国宪法》。

2. 关于教育的法律：

(1). 《中华人民共和国义务教育法》：1986年4月，经全国人大四次会议通过的《中华人民共和国义务教育法》正式以法律的形式提出：“国家实行九年义务教育。”“国家、社会、学校和家庭依法保障适龄儿童、少年接受义务教育的权利。”“凡年满六周岁的儿童，不分性别、民族、种族，应当入学接受规定年限的义务教育。”

(2). 《九年制义务教育教材》：这是一部奠定了中国大陆80年以后出生的，乃至未来许多年出生的人的知识体系的书（包括价值观与世界观），且是唯一的一部书。他是由上一代或是称上几代人，为培养“祖国有用接班人”所精心撰写的历史性巨作。

3. 我所想的：在我看来，《九年制义务教育》=《九年制责任学习》。这里我需要声明，我绝不是在恶意反社会、反民族，毕竟一个永远不会改变的事实是“我是中华儿女”。决定做这个作品，不是想讨论《义务教育》本身有何问题。用这部《九年制义务教育教材》是因为它是奠定了我的价值观与世界观的书。（10岁以前，几乎上升到理论高度的所有知识都是从这部书里学到的。）我想也许是因为内心的孤独使我渴望向人述说些什么，也许因为“独生”我想标榜“我”的与众不同。

材料简介：

幸鑫，男，1981年5月生于中国·重庆。家中独子。今年，28岁，未婚。

《黑匣子》 实施计划书

一、具体展示方案

作品分为两部分

- 行为部分：**作者被封闭在铁箱子里数字，150本教科书上的字数完后，作者被释放出铁箱。（数字的方式为：每数一排字，在这一排的结尾用笔写下结果。）
- 装置部分：**计划在威尼斯并不宽敞的公共空间铺设一条轨道,它也许会是河床边，沙滩上，码头附近，公园的小径中，公园的草坪里，或是广场的墙角等。

轨道的具体数据为：

- 单根轨道，总长度44米。
- 接地面垫老式枕木。枕木宽度为0.7米。（枕木的作用为：稳定轨道，并保护地面不受磨损，使地面均匀受压。）
- 轨道的终端以轨道架设一个支架，并悬挂铁箱。支架高度为2.6米。

整个装置占用空间为：长44米，宽（轨道处0.7米、箱子处0.9米）高（轨道处0.35米、铁箱处2.6米）

轨道的铺设方式：轨道在国内被加工为1米一段，（包括制作支架的轨道，共计49根）



（示意图）

二、40天的生活计划

1. 作品时作者的日程安排为：

8:00起床

8:00-8:30做运动（尽可能的做扭腰、抬腿以便活血）

8:30-9:00进食

9:00-12:00数字

12:00-12:30做运动

12:30-13:00进食

13:00-14:00午休

14:00-17:00数字

17:00-18:00做运动

18:00-19:00进食

19:00-21:00数字

21:00-21:30做运动

21:30-22:00进食

22:00-08:00休息

（此安排每日重复，直至作品结束）

2 . 每日进食内容：

早餐：土司面包两片

肉肠一片

生菜若干

香蕉一只

牛奶200毫升

午餐：土司面包两片

肉肠一片

生菜若干

苹果一只

果汁200毫升

晚餐：土司面包两片

肉肠一片

生菜若干

橙一只

果汁200毫升

其它时间按身体需要饮用清水。

（此安排每日重复，直至作品结束）

方案于2009年2月13日星期五02：50完成

于2009年2月15日星期天15：30第一次修改

于2009年4月13日星期一10：25第二次修改

于2009年4月16日星期四10：37第三次修改



X I N G X I N



PROPOSAL FOR THE BLACK BOX

Dedicated to four hundred million Chinese only children in the past 3 decades

Preface:

Always, Xingxin lies on the bed in the dark night, asking himself what to do tomorrow afternoon . . . Thinking back, yesterday, the night was still dark. In the context of the future in thought and the past in memory, here comes *The Black Box*.

Time of creation:

From the beginning of June 2009
to the end of July 2009

Venue of work:

Macau Pavilion, Venice Biennale

Materials included:

1. The artist himself
2. The whole set of textbooks of "Nine-year Compulsory Education" in mainland China, covering all subjects with about 150 books
3. An iron box (2mx0.9mx0.9m)
4. Two detachable air conditioners
5. Two waterproof LED TVs
6. A reading lamp
7. A pencil

Process of the work:

The artist will be enclosed in the iron box in which he will count the characters in the textbooks of "Nine-year Compulsory Education" (there are about 150 textbooks). He will not be set free until he finishes counting, which will last almost forty days.

- The form of counting: The artist will note all the numbers of the characters on each line and on each page until he finishes about 150 textbooks.
- The form of sealing up the iron box: The iron box will be entirely welded up without any gap or exit.
- The form of opening the iron box: The assistant will make a hole on the box with the cutting machine so that the artist is able to get out.
- The duration of the work: About fifty days.

Description of details:

1. The inner size of the iron box is 0.9mx0.9x2m, that is to say, the artist can just lie or squat in it.

2. Timetable of the work:

- 8:00 get up
8:00–8:30 some exercise
8:30–9:00 have breakfast
9:00–12:00 count the characters
12:00–12:30 exercise
12:30–13:00 have lunch
13:00–14:00 take a break
14:00–17:00 count the characters
17:00–18:00 exercise
18:00–19:00 have supper
19:00–21:00 count the characters
21:00–21: exercise
21:30–22:00 have some snacks
22:00–08:00 sleep

3. Since the box is entirely sealed up, the oxygen will be supplied by the two air conditioners inside.

4. The food and trash will be piped in and out separately through a plastic tube which is fixed in the iron box.

5. During the process of the work, the main presented material will be the artist wearing clothes, textbooks, a pencil, and two air conditioners. Moreover, there are some concealed assistant materials, including food and bottled water, trash in plastic bags.

6. Once the artist enters the iron box, he will lose all the ability to protect himself because the iron box is entirely sealed up. That is to say, at least two assistants are in great need to stand by outside the box twenty-four hours a day during the following forty-nine days.

Presentation of the work:

There will be two cameras fixed in the two upper corners of box towards different angles, which are connected with 2 LED TV sets, so that the audience will be able to know what happens inside.

Backgrounds of the work:

As we all know, with the reform and opening-up policy at the end of the 1970s, people became more and more materialistic in China. Meanwhile, with the implementation of the one-child policy, children who are born in this period became the absolute focus point of love. Nobody will predicted that, a species was created under these two policies, that is the “only born man”. During these years, with the high increase of world population, almost all countries are working out different policies in accordance with local circumstances to control the population growth. However, it is estimated that the one-child policy in China has been the most engrained and sustained way to control population so far.

What makes the “only-born man” so special is that ever since the dawn of mankind, there haven’t been any nations or peoples who force their people to give birth to only one child. **(Figures from the National Statistic Bureau at the end of 2008 show that approximately 4 hundred million people were born in mainland China in the past three decades, between 1979 and 2009. Meanwhile, according to the American Census Bureau, as of December 29, 2008, the population of the United States totals 305.51 million, and the population of the world is 6.75036 billion.)**

Giving birth to only one child means the change of the family structure. As far as “I” am concerned, during my lifetime, I wouldn’t get any love, understanding, or help from my brothers or sisters while my parents would definitely put all their hopes on “me,” who is their “only” child. Actually, the butterfly effect of this little change alters the love links among people. I believe the lack of love experience will create new ways of interpersonal communication, for example, different outlooks of love and marriage, new relationships between parents and children, and so on. That is to say, when these generations, who are supposed to be the “successors of our motherland,” step into Chinese history, another round of earth-shaking changes will take place soon.

1. Before and after I was born:

In **1949**, the People’s Republic of China was founded, and the political situation in mainland China was preliminarily under control.

In **1966**, the Cultural Revolution started, and the political situation in mainland China was once again in unrest, through **1976**, the internal struggle tended to be easier, with the society returning stable.

In **1979**, a new generation of leaders indicated that in order to achieve the realization of the four modernizations, at least two distinguishing features should be pointed out: the weak economic foundations and the huge population with little arable land. Family planning policy became a strategic task that must be well-implemented.

In **1980**, Chinese Communist Party Central Committee called on Party and Youth League members to take the lead in having only one child (per couple) [open letter, September 25, 1980].

In **1981**, the State Family Planning Commission was founded, and the family planning was officially started in the manner of institution.

In **1982**, Family Planning was identified as the basic national policy and incorporated into the constitution of the People’s Republic that same year.

2. Laws about education:

(1) The Compulsory Education Law of the People’s Republic:

Adopted at the Fourth Session of the Sixth National People’s Congress on April 12, 1986, and amended at the Twenty-second Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People’s Congress. Chapter I, Article 2, “The state adopts the system of nine-year compulsory education.” Article 4, “All children and adolescents who have the nationality of the People’s Republic of China and have reached the school age shall have equal right and have the obligation to receive compulsory education, regardless of the gender, nationality, race, status of family property, religion, belief, etc.”

(2) “The Textbooks of the Nine-year Compulsory Education”:

This set of textbooks is the only book that paved the way for many peoples’ knowledge system (including outlook of world and value), especially those who were born after 1980 in mainland China. Moreover, it is a large-scale historic work that was meticulously edited by those previous generations to cultivate our “successors of the motherland.”

3. My thoughts:

In my opinion, the “Nine-year Compulsory Education” equals the “Nine-year Study Duty.” But I have to declare that, firstly, I don’t mean to attack our society or our nation, after all there is an unchangeable fact that I am Chinese. Secondly, the purpose of my work is not to discuss about the problems of “compulsory education” itself. Last but not least, the reason why I chose the textbooks of the “Nine-year Compulsory Education” is because I established my outlook of the world and values on it. (Before I was sixteen, almost all speculative knowledge is learned from this set of textbooks.) Maybe because of the loneliness in my heart, I want to tell something. Or maybe because I am the only child, I want to show off my uniqueness.

Personal information:

Xingxin, male, the only child in my family, who was born in May 1981, Chongqing China. Now I am twenty-eight, unmarried.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE BLACK BOX

I. Practical exhibit plan

The artwork is divided into two parts:

Part 1: Performance

The artist will be enclosed in the iron box to count the characters in those 150 textbooks, and he will not be allowed out until he finishes counting. (The form of counting is to note down the numbers of characters on each line and on each page.)

Part 2: Installation

It is planned to lay a railroad track in a relatively small public space, maybe along the riverbed or sand beach, near the dock, on park pathways or lawns, or in a corner of a square.

The concrete data of the railroad track:

- It is a one-bar track, and its total length is 44 meters.
- Old sleepers will be fixed on the ground (under the track), which is 0.7 meters in width. (The effect of sleepers is to stabilize the track and protect the ground from being damaged.)
- At the end of the track there is a stand (made of track), on which hangs the iron box. The stand is 2.6 meters in height.
- The whole installation will take up a space of 44 meters in length, 0.9 meters in width, and 2.6 meters in height.
- The form of laying the railroad track is to cut the track into forty-nine parts (including the track for stand), and each part is 1 meter long.

II. Practical life plan

Daily timetable for the artist:

8:00 get up
8:00–8:30 exercise
8:30–9:00 have breakfast
9:00–12:00 count the characters
12:00–12:30 exercise
12:30–13:00 have lunch
13:00–14:00 take a break
14:00–17:00 count the characters
17:00–18:00 exercise
18:00–19:00 have supper
19:00–21:00 count the characters
21:00–21:30 exercise
21:30–22:00 have some snacks
22:00–08:00 sleep
(This schedule will be repeated until the end of the work.)

Daily recipe for the artist:

Breakfast: Two pieces of toast, a piece of baked meat, some lettuce, a banana, 200 ml of milk.
Lunch: Two pieces of toast, a piece of baked meat, some lettuce, an apple, 200 ml of juice.
Supper: Two pieces of toast, a piece of baked meat, some lettuce, an orange, 200 ml juice.
Also, water is always supplied.

(This will be repeated until the end of the work.)

The proposal finished at 02:50 on February 13 (Friday), 2009.

The first revise was at 15:30 on February 15 (Sunday), 2009.

The second revise was at 10:25 on April 13 (Monday), 2009.

The proposal was finalized at 10:37 on April 16 (Thursday), 2009.



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