LE STANZE DEL VETRO

*A joint project of Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Pentagram Stiftung*

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

18th April – 31st July 2016

**The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900-1937**

A collaboration between the MAK in Vienna and LE STANZE DEL VETRO

**curated by Rainald Franz**, Curator, MAK Glass and ceramics Collection, Vienna

***With over 300 works, mostly from the collection of the MAK, Vienna, the forthcoming spring exhibition at LE STANZE DEL VETRO will celebrate the birth of modern Austrian glassmaking in the period between the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the First Republic of Austria***

*The exhibition features glass works by the main protagonists of Viennese Modernism:*

*Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Leopold Bauer, Otto Prutscher,*

*Oskar Strnad, Oswald Haerdtl and Adolf Loos*

The exhibition ***The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900 – 1937***, curated by **Rainald Franz**, running **from 18th April to 31st July** on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, illustrates the great influence that the young Modernist Architects in Vienna exerted upon the development of artistic glass in the early 20th century.

With **over 300 works** from the collection of the **MAK – the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art** – as well as from private collections, it draws on the birth of the art of modern glassmaking in Austria between 1900 and 1937, a lively period spanning the final decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the First Republic.

This will be the second exhibition organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO – after the ‘Glass from Finland in the Bischofberger Collection’show – that focuses on the international developments of glass in the 20th century. LE STANZE DEL VETRO is a long-term joint initiative of ***Fondazione Giorgio Cini*** and Pentagram Stiftung devoted to studying the art of glassmaking in the 20th and 21st centuries.

At the dawn of the 20th century, a group of young architects - students of Otto Wagner at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna - developed a special interest in glass, which at the time was considered to be **the most modernist medium** in architecture, too.

The protagonists of the Viennese Modernism, internationally renowned today, such as **Josef Hoffmann** (1870-1956), **Koloman Moser** (1868-1918), **Joseph Maria Olbrich** (1867-1908), **Leopold Bauer** (1872-1938), **Otto Prutscher** (1880-1949), **Oskar Strnad** (1879-1935), **Oswald Haerdtl** (1899-1959) and **Adolf Loos** (1870-1933) launched the **first pioneering developments of modern decorative and functional glassmaking**, working in close connection with the furnaces, in order to fully understand the medium of glass.

The Viennese architects implemented the radical reformative movements - in terms of processes and materials - initiated by the Academy of Vienna and the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts (Wiener Kunstgewerbschule) through graduate schools (Fachschulen), like those of Steinschönau and Haida, centers of the Bohemian glass industry. The cooperation between architects and designers, as well as their contact with various Viennese glass manufacturers and intermediaries, including E. Bakalowits & Söhne, J. & L. Lobmeyr, and Johann Löetz Witwe, resulted in **radically new design concepts**. The architects worked at the glass furnaces themselves, in order to best exploit all the possibilities offered by the medium. This new approach was in line with the artistic reforms advocated by the **Wiener Werkstätte** (1903 – 1932) and the German and Austrian **Werkbund** (set up in 1907 and 1912 respectively), aiming to glorify the production process and foster the collaboration between art, craft and industry.

The exhibition features glass works together with preparatory drawings and period photographs in an original set-up, documenting the trends of the time, and the astounding impact that these radically modern objects had on the public. The layout of the exhibition also features examples of the Wiener Werkstätte’s wallpapers and textile designs by Koloman Moser, Josef Hoffmann, Dagobert Peche and Eduard Wimmer-Wisgrill, which complement the decoration of the glass objects. The exhibition chronologically traces the stages through which the art glass designed by the Viennese architects became a key feature and trademark in the major exhibitions of the period. Starting from the VIII Secession exhibition in Vienna from 1900 (**gallery 1**), and the founding of the Wiener Werkstätte in 1903 and its later production (**galleries 2 and 3**), the exhibition goes on to present the war and classicist glasses shown at the Werkbund exhibition in Cologne in 1914 (**galleries 4 and 5**), the glass works shown at the Exposition Internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris, in 1925, as well as the glasses from the 20s and 30s, including the *Trinkservice n. 248*, the **only glass service designed by Adolf Loos**, in 1931. The service is one of the most famous services by Lobmeyer, still in production today (**gallery 6**). **Gallery 7** presents the ‘***Boudoir d’une grande vedette***’, the glass room designed by Josef Hoffmann for the Austrian pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Exhibition, reconstructed by the MAK.

Following the exhibition *I SANTILLANA*, presented at LE STANZE DEL VETRO in 2014 and later at the MAK in Vienna, *The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900-1937*is the second collaborationbetween LE STANZE DEL VETRO and the MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art.

The essays in the catalogue of the exhibition – published by **SKIRA** – allow one to gain an understanding of the importance of the decision by Austrian Modernists to use glass as the most suitable medium to achieve new forms, surfaces and further effects. Moreover, the international symposium organized by the **Glass Study Center** at the Fondazione Cini on **6th May 2016** will offer a broad insight into the relationship between Austrian glass and Venetian glass.

The ‘**Glass Tea House *Mondrian***’ will be open to the public throughout 2016. The ‘Glass Tea House *Mondrian*’ is the first architectural pavilion designed by Japanese photographer **Hiroshi Sugimoto** in Venice.

Further information on the exhibition, the educational programs and other on-going activities are available at [**www.lestanzedelvetro.org**](http://www.lestanzedelvetro.org) and on the LE STANZE DEL VETRO **Facebook page**.

**Useful information:**

Production Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Pentagram Stiftung

Title **The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900-1937**

Curator **Rainald Franz**, Curator, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection, Vienna

Dates 18 April – 31 July 2016

Open 10am – 7pm, closed on Wednesdays

Venue LE STANZE DEL VETRO, Fondazione Giorgio Cini

Address Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

Ticket office free admission

Catalog Skira for LE STANZE DEL VETRO

Info info@lestanzedelvetro.org, info@cini.it

Web www.lestanzedelvetro.org, www.cini.it

**How to reach LE STANZE DEL VETRO:**

To reach the island of San Giorgio Maggiore you can take the Actv vaporetto (water bus) no. 2 to the San Giorgio stop from various starting points:

San Zaccaria (journey time approx. 3 minutes)

Railway station (approx. 45 minutes)

Piazzale Roma (approx. 40 minutes)

Tronchetto (approx. 35 minutes)

**For further information:**

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**Guided tours and educational activities**

**Free guided tours and educational activities** for schools will once again be available at LE STANZE DEL VETRO on the occasion of the exhibition *The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900 – 1937.* The program will offer tailored activities for different age groups, outings for families, special meetings with scholars and glass masters, and workshops for kids to explore **the lively and modern Viennese decorative motifs of the early 20th century**.

**Educational programs for schools**

***The Glass of the Architects rocks to the rhythm of the Viennese spring!*** is the title of the educational program offered to schools, which can be downloaded from [www.lestanzedelvetro.org](http://www.lestanzedelvetro.org) as **of 1st May 2016,** with all the information on the various programs for different age groups. Individual classes are invited to LE STANZE DEL VETRO for a guided tour to discover the works on show, followed by a practical workshop or an interactive discussion, with the help of multimedia and visual aids. The special inspiration incited by glass, the essential role of the glass masters and the creative processes are the themes from which the works are observed and described, with particular attention to the details of conception and contextualisation in the historic art scene.

The **youngest visitors** will have the exceptional opportunity to touch and hold the reproductions of some of the works on display, courtesy of Lobmeyr, the historical firm from Vienna, in order to better appreciate the weight, thickness and transparency of the glass works. **Older children**, after having carefully examined the works on show, will experiment with their creativity in a workshop focused on decorative patterns.

**Students from secondary schools** will learn more about the exhibition, comparing the Venetian and Viennese glassmaking traditions, with particular attention to the lively historical and artistic period of early 20th century Europe, and to the fruitful collaborations between the academies, intermediaries and craftsmen.

The school-to-work program, ***Speaking with Art*,** began at LE STANZE DEL VETRO in March and will run until the end of June. The program involves 29 students from Year 3 of the Liceo Artistico Statale in Venice, taking part in an experience which will enable them to learn how to express themselves in a work environment and develop creative projects.

**SUNglassDays - outings for families and kids**

***SUNglassDAYs***, the special Sunday outings for families, will resume **on** **Sunday 15th and 22nd May at 4.00pm, and on 5th and 12th June at 5pm**. On these occasions, LE STANZE DEL VETRO turns into a place of fun and discovery: while the parents are accompanied on a guided tour of the exhibition, kids and young visitors are offered a special workshop which varies each day.

Three ***Fuso-Fuso!!* events are scheduled on 29th April, 13th and 20th May, at 5pm,** featuring as special guests, experts in the history of modern architecture and glass, as well as glass engraving and production.

On 2nd June 2016, on occasion of the 150th anniversary of Italy-Japan relations, the **Glass Tea House *Mondrian*** – Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto’s first architectural work in Venice – will host a workshop for children to discover the traditional Japanese welcoming tradition through the reading of fairy tales.

All the activities are curated and organized by **Artsystem,** are **free of charge,** and can be booked through the **toll-free number 800-662477** (Monday-Friday 10am-5pm)or alternatively by email **artsystem@artsystem.it**.

**Fixed guided tours are also scheduled every Saturday** and **Sunday at 11am in English** andat **5pm in Italian** (for these, no booking is required).

For more information visit the *Education* section at [**www.lestanzedelvetro.org**](http://www.lestanzedelvetro.org)and stay updated with the LE STANZE DEL VETRO **Facebook page**.

**Comparison as Antidote**

Pasquale Gagliardi

*Secretary General of the Giorgio Cini Foundation*

As I observed in my introduction to the exhibition catalogue of Finnish glass, that exhibition — forming part of the project LE STANZE DEL VETRO originally intended to showcase twentieth-century Venetian glass — grew out of the awareness that the history of Venetian glass in the twentieth century, while outstanding worldwide, by no means exhausts the history of art glass, which has been expressed in other ways and cultivated in other places, producing other strands which can be usefully compared with the art of glass in Venice. This exhibition on Viennese glass follows the same direction and makes more explicit a precise epistemological choice — the comparative approach — that has always been part of the genetic heritage, so to speak, of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, while helping reduce the risk of self-referential narcissism, a possible deviation for initiatives crowned with such unconditional favor as exhibitions devoted to the artists and architects who have designed for Venini.

I realized there was a risk when I sought to understand the reasons for the success of these exhibitions, especially among the Venetians, who manifested their satisfaction in words and the attendance figures. I sought to explore the reasons for this attitude, in the way most congenial to me as a scholar of cultures, namely of the deepest motivations of human action. I intuitively grasped in many of the pleased comments what only some were able to express clearly: these exhibitions are important because for Venetians they are a mirror in which they recognize their history, their values, their identity, their superiority supported by indisputable successes — in the most diverse fields — of a centuries-old civilization. These gratifications conceal the subtle risk of regarding as universal one’s own values and one’s own aesthetic. I therefore applaud with conviction the exhibition *Il vetro degli architetti. Vienna 1900-1937* [The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900–1937], which makes for a fascinating comparison with both the exhibition *Il vetro finlandese* [Finnish Glass] and the Venini exhibitions, in particular those devoted to Tomaso Buzzi and Fulvio Bianconi.

In the first half of the twentieth century, in three different places — Italy, especially Venice and Milan, Finland and Austria (but similar developments were taking place in Britain, France and Belgium) — glass, this material with its extraordinary linguistic and metaphorical qualities, so acutely analyzed by Mario Codognato in his very fine essay *La pura vetrità*, played a prominent part in the renewal of the decorative arts and the creation of a “modern taste”. The comparison reveals that the instrumental potential (the uses) and expressive functions of this “new” material were explored and experimented with, using different methods, and yielded a wide range of purposes and outcomes in different countries, but as part of a process of reform that everywhere had the characteristics of a revolution rather than an evolution, a “break” that distanced itself from, or openly contrasted with, the traditions and established academic canons.

Beyond the intellectual advantages that the method offers, it seems important to emphasize that the comparative approach as an epistemological attitude also acquires a precise moral significance today: because in times of growing fundamentalism of various kinds and variously named (religious, ideological, aesthetic and so forth), the comparative exercise is the only possible antidote to their spread. And it is a decisive way of being faithful to the mission of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, which has always encouraged comparisons between disciplines, cultures and traditions.

I would like to conclude by expressing, on behalf of the President Giovanni Bazoli and the Management Committee of our Foundation, our gratitude to the MAK, which has made this exhibition possible, to Rainald Franz who has curated it impeccably, and to the trustees and all the staff of Pentagram Stiftung and the Fondazione Cini, who have spared no efforts to meet the exacting standards of excellence which distinguish every event produced by LE STANZE DEL VETRO.

**The Beauty of Glass**

Christoph Thun-Hohenstein *Director, MAK*

In spite of its impressive history, glass is still considered one of the most “modern” materials, due not only to its vast, and ever increasing, variety of uses but also to its being most representative of transparency as a guiding principle of enlightened and open democratic societies. High-rise buildings with glass-dominated curtain walls still appear to epitomize urban progress, eagerly embraced both in democratic parts of the world and elsewhere. In a similar vein, new trends such as the recent craze for micro houses in overpriced and dense cities like Tokyo make most innovative uses of glass, both vertically and horizontally. At the same time, the arrival of a new, digitally driven modern era — Digital Modernity — has sparked concerns that are literally related to the transparency that glass signifies: ubiquitous surveillance cameras and other digital tools recording our daily activities have given new urgency to the German notion of “gläserner Mensch”, referring to us humans being transparent like glass.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO has, from the outset, aspired to be a very special, even unique place dedicated to the immense art of glass, enabling us to contemplate glass in all imaginable shapes, colors, and shades — ranging from glaring clarity to erotic semi-translucency and mysterious opacity. Since its inception, it has practiced the highest art of exhibition-making, carrying us into the very heart of a material that does not stop surprising us with beauty and variety. It was therefore only a matter of time before LE STANZE DEL VETRO would cross paths with the MAK — Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art in Vienna and its world-class glass collection of over 7600 objects. After a first successful collaboration in the field of contemporary art that saw the MAK take over the exhibition *I Santillana*, presented by LE STANZE DEL VETRO and Fondazione Giorgio Cini, the Vienna modernist movement is a logical subsequent theme for a Viennese glass exhibition at LE STANZE DEL VETRO.

When looking at glass designed and crafted in a previous modernity, we are at a crossroads: do we just want to “consume” a gorgeous presentation of high-quality glass objects and then return to the restlessness and speed of our digitally driven existence? Or can we gain insight and lasting inspiration from contemplating the great art of glass? And if you hope for the latter, what might be learnt in Digital Modernity from experiencing the beauty of glass of a previous modernity for our own pacing and direction in life? Following the paths of thinking developed by the Berlin-based South Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han, one can argue that the truly beautiful resists consumption and can only be experienced through non-utilitarian contemplation. As soon as the beautiful is approached just as an object it loses the truth of its beauty and becomes part of the high-speed world of consumption. Contemplating the beautiful in objects of art allows us to reintroduce narrative in a world dictated by big data. What is more, such contemplation generates memories of the beautiful that continue to resonate within us long after we have left the physical exhibition...

The story becomes more complicated when considering applied art. Glass is a particularly fitting example to illustrate the Vienna Secession’s quest for a unity of the arts that puts the so-called “low” applied art, among them glass objects for actual use, at the same level as “high” fine art. The utilitarian nature of many glass objects did not limit, but in many cases spurred, the breathtaking creativity of the architects — an impressive number of the objects presented look like miniature buildings! In keeping with the Secession’s and Wiener *Werkstätte*’s philosophy, objects originally destined for daily use can easily transcend into fine art but equally lend themselves to contemplation while they are still in use as applied art objects. It is not the boundaries between disciplines that matter but the beauty radiating within, and emanating from, these precious objects, irrespective of their being fine or applied art or both.

Reflecting the significance of glass in Vienna 1900–1937 within the MAK’s collection, *The Glass of the Architects* is the story of passion for, and experimentation with, this delicate material that is both immensely generous in its possibilities and as fragile as our planet Earth. Truly contemplating outstanding glass art makes us better understand the delicate balance between fragility and beauty and its implications for daily life. The exhibition and this publication trace a compelling journey and develop new narratives inspired by the glass of the architects and designers of the Vienna modernist movement, be it by focusing on often revolutionary new forms supposed to express the new age or by following the critical emancipatory path taken by Adolf Loos.

I cannot praise enough Marie-Rose Kahane and David Landau for initiating this project and the Fondazione Giorgio Cini and LE STANZE DEL VETRO, together with the Pentagram Stiftung and their dedicated staff, for making it happen. My sincere thanks also go to Rainald Franz, Head of the MAK’s glass collection, for curating this exciting show and publication. I wish *The Glass of the Architects* the success it amply deserves. May it resonate with us for a long time and remind us that beauty is always fragile and requires endless human dedication for its survival — especially in our digital age!

**The Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900–1937**

Rainald Franz

*Curator, MAK Glass and Ceramics Collection, Vienna*

(Extract from the catalog essay)

*Towards a new materiality*

Art and architecture in Vienna around 1900 saw an explicit change in the approach towards the use of material. While the period of Historicism had fostered the reuse of former styles and the copying and imitation of decoration and material, a young generation of architects and designers set out for the search of a new purity and originality of design, form and material. Strongly influenced by international reformation movements in England, France and Belgium, they achieved the establishment of what was to become a Viennese style within the Modern Movement.This new style was made possible by the change of positions before 1900 in some of the leading art institutions in Vienna, fostering art and architecture.

In 1894, Otto Wagner (1841–1918) took the chair of the special school of architecture at the Vienna Academy of Arts from his predecessor, the neo-baroque architect Carl von Hasenauer. In his book *Modern Architecture*, first published as a teaching book for his pupils in 1895, one year after his start as professor, Otto Wagner stated that the new style (*Neustil*), had to represent the time and had to be a style of use (*Nutzstil)*. He condemned the search for an expression of an appropriate historicist style, which had led to a “whipping through every stylistic direction” (Durchpeitschen aller Stilrichtungen) during the last decades. In his view, the purpose of modern art and architecture was to offer forms, according to new material, new purposes, and new human demands, which had to lead towards a change or new development of existing forms.

In the same year, a group of young, like-minded artists and architects, among them several of Wagner’s students and co-workers, such as Joseph Maria Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann, Leopold Bauer, Koloman Moser and Gustav Klimt, banded together to form the Siebener-Club (Club of Seven). The Union of Austrian Artists Vienna Secession was founded within this circle in 1897. The stated goal of the Vienna Secession was to supplant the entrenched historical styles with a modern, middle-class and Austrian style. Based on the ideology of the English Arts and Crafts movement, which did not differentiate between fine and applied arts, grey everyday life was to be transformed by the devotions of art as applied to modern utilitarian objects and, by extension, to their users. Artists were called upon to clothe the entire human context in modern dress. In the final analysis, the individually created object vouched for its owner.

It is already in the preface for the second edition of his publication *Einige Skizzen* (1897) that Otto Wagner explicitly mentions the merits of some of his pupils at the Academy of Fine Arts, ”… fostering his work with artistic conviction and ceaseless enthusiasm”. Wagner became a member of the Secession and published in their magazine *Ver Sacrum*. Other cofounders of the Vienna Secession, like Koloman Moser, were to become teachers at the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts. In 1897 Arthur von Scala (1846–1909) at the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry and Felician von Myrbach (1853-1940), since 1899 at the affiliated School for Arts and Crafts, started their reformation activities as directors.

Scala, who had studied economics and languages in London, brought items from Britain to the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, such as glass designed by Christopher Dresser and works by Louis Comfort Tiffany purchased in Samuel Bing’s shop in Paris. He introduced glass artists like Émile Gallé to Vienna, reordered the collections and started the winter exhibitions, showing contemporary decorative arts in the museum, for which he earned the praise of Adolf Loos while being accused by the Kunstgewerbeverein (Society for Applied Arts) of suffering from the “English disease.” The museum sent out the recently acquisited modern objects in traveling exhibitions to the Special Schools all over the realm, supposed to foster the local crafts, by this disseminating the modern style and leading to new creations there.

As part of his plans for reforming the Vienna School for Arts and Crafts, the equally cosmopolitan Felician von Myrbach called in new young teachers like Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser and traveled to Britain in 1900 to study the principles on which Henry Cole (1808–82) had initiated the Schools of Design and the Glasgow School of Art. Josef Hoffmann accompanied him and was able to establish a lasting relationship with Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Charles Robert Ashbee. Their works were exhibited to great acclaim in Vienna for the first time at the eighth Secession exhibition, which was devoted entirely to arts and crafts, together with works of La Maison Moderne from Paris and of the Vienna School for Arts and Crafts. Mackintosh was to provide ideas for the silver workshop planned by Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser with the financial participation of Fritz Waerndorfer, later to become the Wiener Werkstätte. The impact of Art Nouveau and British Arts and Crafts and appropriate leading figures in Vienna paved the way for what was to become Viennese Modernism.

*Glass—Material of Modernist Expression and Architectural Form in Vienna 1900*

The School for Arts and Crafts in Vienna under the directorship of Felician von Myrbach had chosen glass as one of the materials of special interest in teaching. One of the fundamental reforms undertaken by the Kunstgewerbeschule at the time involved changes to the curriculum and goals of instruction. The students were no longer to be instructed solely in copying models but were to design new things and when possible to implement these designs themselves. The choice for glass was made due to the long lasting tradition of glass making in the North-Bohemian provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, also closely connected to the School for Arts and Crafts in Vienna by the so-called Fachschulen (Special Schools) in Haida and Steinschönau. Since the seventeenth century, glass making had become an important craft in Bohemia, which, due to the development of manufactures, fostered by aristocratic landowners like the counts of Harrach, Schwarzenberg and Kinsky, grew into a trade- and export-oriented industry in the nineteenth century.

The Arts and Crafts movement in the 1860s and the founding of the Austrian Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry and the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna, which soon fostered the development of the Fachschulen in the provinces, initiated further developments, also for the glass mills. The centers of glass industry in the Czech Lands in Haida, Gablonz and Steinschönau established a system of teaching for qualified artisans, which lead to a rise of technology, quality and style in the glass-works. The participation as exhibitors in world exhibitions since 1852 and studying examples of historic glass from Austria and Venice and avant-garde glass from France and England laid the solid ground for innovations in form, style and technique in Austrian Glass at the turn of the century. The system of glass manufactures working for firms in Vienna like J. & L. Lobmeyr and E. Bakalowits Söhne, who acted as commissioning retailers between them and the modern Viennese architects and designers, made new forms of glass possible. Glass became a material of multiplied and often unusual use in modern Austrian decorative arts for tiles, mosaics, lamps, windows, chandeliers.

The qualities of the material met the artistic aspirations of the artists and architects. In addition, exhibitions and the new approach towards architecture Otto Wagner and his school took, fostered the prominent role of glass as “modernist material”. Around the turn of the century, architects, as representatives of an artistic discipline that mediated between function and artistic expression, saw themselves as the guarantors of the visual reform of human daily life. Already in one of his early reviews of Viennese exhibitions in 1898, the architect Adolf Loos writes about *Clay and Glass.* In the text, which can be read as a pamphlet for the renewal of Austrian artisanship, Loos urges the glass artist and designer to work shirtless in front of the glass furnace instead of restricting himself to the drawing-table and makes a plea for the autonomy of the artisan.

A leader on this way towards a new relationship between designer and artisan is also soon to be found: in an article of the same year, Loos ascribes exclusively to Otto Wagner the capability of “being able to shed his architect’s skin—and slip at will into a craftsman’s skin. When he makes a water glass he thinks like a glassblower, like a glasscutter… Everything else, his entire store of architectural knowledge and ability, he has left in his old skin. There is only one thing he carries with him everywhere: his artistry.” Otto Wagner himself, in his book *Modern Architecture* proclaims that the modern social situation has made the artisan vanish in favor of the worker, who functions like a machine, leaving the field of decorative arts to the artists and in most part to the architects. Since Joseph Paxton had made sumptuous use of glass for his Crystal Pavilion in London, due to house the Great Exhibition in 1851, the material was a choice for modern architecture. In all of Otto Wagner’s buildings from the 1880s on, he uses glass in a modern way, e.g. glass stones to lighten sub terrain rooms in the floor or to cover vaulted roofs over inner courts. Moreover, Otto Wagner himself had designed silver-mounted glass objects for the Viennese silversmith Klinkosch, which were published in the magazine *Kunst & Kunsthandwerk*, edited by the Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna.

**Exhibited Works**

**Room 1**

***Towards a new Austrian Art Glass: establishing a new style***

The production of glass played an important role in Austrian Decorative Arts since the first half of the nineteenth century. The presentation of Austrian glass in the World Exhibitions since 1862 made it obvious that the traditional glass, rooted within the Biedermeier taste of the early nineteenth century, could no longer compete with modern British and French glass in form and decoration. The founding of the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry and the School of Arts and Crafts in 1864 and 1867 respectively, paved the way towards modern design education and established a system of special schools in the glassmaking provinces of the monarchy, to foster technical progress and aesthetic development in its production. Glass became the modern material in Viennese decorative arts around 1900. Young professors of the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts, such as Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann, started designing glass for retailers like E. Bakalowits Söhne, a member of the Secession himself, and showed the first examples of these pieces in the VIII Secession exhibition in 1900. They were followed by a group of young architects, many of them pupils of Otto Wagner - the first modern architect teaching at the Vienna Academy of Arts - such as Joseph Maria Olbrich, Leopold Bauer, and Hubert Gessner, who went to the glassworks and worked on their designs at the furnaces with the masters.

**Room 2**

***Establishment of the Style, Founding of the Wiener Werkstätte. Creative Years  for Bakalowits, Loetz and Lobmeyr***

Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser and Joseph Maria Olbrich not only worked as architects and designers for the Vienna Secession, but were also active as glass designers for services commissioned by the Viennese firm E. Bakalowits Söhne, produced in Bohemian glassworks.

E. Bakalowits Söhne sold the services via his merchants all over Europe and even in the United States. The Wiener Werkstätte was founded in 1903. The designs by Hoffmann are documented from 1906–15 by the invoice book of Johann Loetz Witwe and the cut-out paper patterns archive of the firm. After the founding of the Wiener Werkstätte, glass was ordered from Loetz to complement the early silverware and then as a product for the shops.

**Room 3**

***Austrian Glass 1910–13: Bronzit Glass, Wiener Werkstätte Glass***

It was not until 1910 that Josef Hoffmann started designing glass again. At the trade school for glassmaking and design at Steinschönau, the new Bronzit decoration was developed. Hoffmann designed several series in this technique with simple geometric decoration for the commissioning retailer J. & L. Lobmeyr in Vienna. The raw glass was made by the glassworks of Meyr’s Neffe at Adolf (Adolfov) and the decoration executed at Steinschönau by different painters after Hoffmann’s designs. Strict linear patterns contrast with a more complex division into sections with curved motifs and gold, stylized foliage decoration. Inspired by Hoffmann’s works, other artists started experimenting with black decoration on matte surfaces. Members of the Wiener Werkstätte, Urban Janke and Ludwig Heinrich Jungnickel, embellished the strict linear Bronzit decoration with animal figuration. Hoffmann established a long-lasting partnership working with J. & L. Lobmeyr.

**Room 4**

***The 1914 Werkbund Exhibition, Cologne and War Glass***

The 1914 Werkbund Exhibition, held in Cologne, provided the chance to show a representative selection of Viennese art glass in the glassware and ceramics showroom within the “Österreichisches Haus” designed by Josef Hoffmann. The room was dominated by products from Bohemian glassmakers, “… designed according to the models of Viennese artists”, as it reads in the catalogue. Eight -Viennese designers—Josef Hoffmann, Carl Witzmann, Arnold Nechansky, Dagobert Peche, Cesar Poppovits, Michael Powolny, Hans Bolek and Milla Weltmann, all trained architects except one—had designed 58 glasses, featuring enamel painting, gilding, overlay techniques, etching and cutting. The exhibition was a triumph of the newly founded “Österreichischer Werkbund”. The glasses shown are well ahead of their time, taking up aspects that the outbreak of the First World War was to subdue, only to come up again after 1918.

Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte, together with his pupils of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna, were urged by the government to produce patriotic goods during the First World War. Glass war tumblers were designed by Hoffmann and Dagobert Peche and decorated by pupils such as Kitty Rix and Reni Schaschel. Even scenes of warfare were used by Hoffmann and his circle to develop simple designs in contrasting colors with abstract motifs in linear and geometric style.

**Room 5**

***Classicist Period, Heavy colored glass by Josef Hoffmann***

In the cut glass, which was also to be shown in the Cologne Werkbund Exhibition of 1914, Hoffmann took up architectonic reminiscences from classicism and the Biedermeier period, in parallel with his building projects of the time. His glass designs drew more from the central European Bohemian tradition than from the Venetian one. He focused on colorless cut crystal glass. He also developed heavy cut glasses in bright colors, produced by the firm of Carl Moser, in Karlsbad, which were sold in the shops of the Wiener Werkstätte. In 1915, the Royal Imperial Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna was commissioned by the Ministry of Public Works to organize an “Exhibition of Austrian Art and Export Glass” so as to “come to the aid of the glass industry that is being pressed hard by the war”. The “Exhibition of Austrian Art and Export Glass” was also shown in Berlin in 1916 and Lobmeyr’s glass was present in the Österreichisches Kunstgewerbe exhibition shown in Stockholm in 1916–17.

**Room 6**

***Austrian Art Glass of the 1920s and 1930s***

After World War I, Austrian glass designers and their commissioning firms were forced to develop new relations with the producers abroad, as with the end of the war, the glassworks came to be situated in a new country. These factors contributed to the reorientation that occurred in the early 1920s. In addition to the fine so-called muslin glass, Lobmeyr pushed forward with the revival of enamel painting and new ways of glass cutting, while Michael Powolny found a contemporary adaptation of Venetian glass. Otto Prutscher resumed relations with Loetz in 1920, working with Fritz von Spaun, giving artistic advice and visiting the glassworks. The Wiener Werkstätte remained an important customer for glass products, with designers such as Hoffmann and Peche working for a new style in glass design. Classicist forms of cutting met with new materials. A decisive element was the reintroduction of muslin glass, also called “straw glass” by Lobmeyr. The first muslin glass design was made by the architect Oskar Strnad, a fellow teacher of Hoffmann’s at the Kunstgewerbeschule in 1916. One year later Hoffmann designed his drinking set *Patrician*, and his pupil and assistant Oswald Haerdtl took the development further in 1924 with his *Ambassador* *Service*. Both Hoffmann’s and Haerdtl’s services are still in production today.

***The 1925 Exhibition in Paris and Austrian Glass***

The Austrian Pavilion at the Exposition Internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris, designed by Josef Hoffmann in 1925, presented glass from Vienna as separate from that of the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy for the first time. It was a triumph for J. & L. Lobmeyr and its designing architects. Lobmeyr was the only firm with a separate room in the Paris Pavilion, designed by Oskar Strnad as a niche with shop window. Lobmeyr received the Grand Prix and was able to sell several of the glasses to international museums, proving that their products were in line with the international trend towards Art Déco, which this exhibition started.

In the late 1920s, studies of ancient glass-making techniques also led to creative experiments, which Michael Powolny pushed forward in his own glass-refining workshop at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna. Powolny knew how to paraphrase freely and in a modern sense the inspiration taken from the so called Hedwig glasses, leading to liveliness, which the smoky-topaz-colored glass batch supported in its light effects. Another technique, internationally introduced during the 1925 exhibition in Paris, was the new enamel painting.

In 1931 Adolf Loos designed his only drinking service (“no. 248”) for J. & L. Lobmeyr and Stefan Rath. Inspired by a drinking glass said to have been in the possession of Napoleon, he took up the shape of the straight cup, which harks back to Oskar Strnad’s glasses, and refined it with a diamond-diaper cutting in the bottom, the so-called “Steindlschnitt”. The “Loos Service” is one of the best-known drinking services by Lobmeyr and still in production today.

In the 1920s in Vienna, two young architects by the names of Fritz Lampl and Arthur Berger started their glass blowing firm, Bimini, with a new technique. They developed lamp-blown glass as their specialty, leading to a virtually new Art Déco aesthetic, that had been neglected in Northern glassmaking. Strongly based on the impressions of Venetian glass, Bimini added a new quality to Viennese glassmaking. The appeal of the figures, bowls and glasses lies in their stylized composition and fragility.

**Room 7**

***“Boudoir d’une grande vedette”, a Glass Room by Josef Hoffmann at the 1937 Paris World Exhibition***

In 1937 Hoffmann was asked to design a room for the Austrian Pavilion at the Exposition internationale des arts et des techniques appliqués à la vie moderne in Paris. Within the glass building which resembled a monumental showcase — designed by his former assistant at the School of Applied Arts, Vienna, Oswald Haerdtl — Hoffman’s “Boudoir d’une grande vedette”, as he called it, was the definition of a clichéd modern room: with mirrors on the walls, on the floor and sumptuous luxury furniture. J. & L. Lobmeyr delivered the glass for the room and a chandelier designed by Haerdtl and Hoffmann. The wall paneling was made of carved wood with a silver layering to support the glassy, bright, shimmering effect within the room. The boudoir can be seen as Hoffmann’s statement that presented glass as an appropriate material for modernist room design. In contrast to the totalitarian classicism as shown in the pavilions of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Republic in Paris 1937, Haerdtl and Hoffmann proposed glass in their building as counter position, very much in the taste of the International Style.

**Corridor**

***Modern Glass Design in Vienna. From Paper Cut to Autonomous Drawing***

Drawing was the means of communication between the designing architect, commissioning retailer and craftsman in the executing glassworks. The development of modern glass design in Vienna fell in place with the reforms of design teaching at the Vienna Academy and the Vienna Kunstgewerbeschule around 1900. Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser, having been appointed professors at the Kunstgewerbeschule in 1899 and as cofounders and exhibition designers for the Vienna Secession since 1897, started their work for glass manufacturers in these years. To simplify the designing process, Hoffmann and Moser developed new ways of sketching, far from the elaborate drawings Otto Wagner promoted for his architectural projects. They started using squared paper for their designs, which was to become a kind of hallmark for the silver workshop, planned with the financial participation of Fritz Wärndorfer, later to become the Wiener Werkstätte from 1903. The use of the squared paper ensured proportionality by giving a kind of module to the drawing, and liberated the draughtsmen from the necessity to provide three-dimensional renderings for the craftsmen. In the beginning, Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann took over the traditional way of sketching a glass object in a sketch book for the commissioning retailers, who then sent the drawing or a paper cut of it with notes on it and choice of color and material to the producing glassworks. Sketches like these were copied and blueprinted, a technique the Wiener Werkstätte continued, in order to keep the originals in the archive. Hoffmann developed new ways of designing glass, using the technique of tracing the designs with a transparent overlay. He even used simple cut-outs of bright, colored paper glued onto the drawing paper to fix his ideas for heavy cut glass forms. Through this he managed to execute individual autonomous drawings and cuts within a serial designing process. By studying the drawings – kept in the Wiener Werkstätte Archive, nowadays in the MAK and the Archive of J. & L. Lobmeyr – by the designing architects such as Dagobert Peche, Otto Prutscher, Oskar Strnad and Adolf Loos, one can appreciate the ideas of these modern glass designers.

***Ways of Showing Modern Glass in Vienna 1900–1937. Promotion and Exhibition***

Exhibition design developed as a special field in Viennese Modern architecture and remained an ongoing practice. Young architects such as Josef Hoffmann and Leopold Bauer started out as exhibition designers and interior decorators, before being able to realize their own buildings. Modern forms of glass also urged a new way of presenting the material: Hoffmann and Koloman Moser showed their new glass designs for E. Bakalowits Söhne in their own exhibition plans. Modern glass was featured prominently and highly acclaimed for its new form and decoration. Commissioning retailers for glass, such as E. Bakalowits Söhne and J. & L. Lobmeyr, felt the necessity to develop new ways of displaying glass in modernist forms with new showcases. Exhibitions heralded new designs and popularized them, and they were published and promoted by illustrated articles in art magazines. The Wiener Werkstätte (1903–32) and the German and Austrian Werkbund (founded 1907/1912) used exhibitions for the promotion of their ideas proposing close cooperation between architect / designer and craftsman. Both reformative movements worked with the commissioning retailers and producers of glass. The modernist material glass was not only the preferred material for architecture and exhibition design, but also the choice of architects willing to design new objects for everyday use in Modernist Vienna.

**LE STANZE DEL VETRO**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Glass Study Center**

In 2012, as part of the activities promoted by LE STANZE DEL VETRO, the Giorgio Cini Foundation, with the support of Pentagram Stiftung, established the *Centro Studi del Vetro* [Glass Study Center], within its Institute of Art History. The aim of the Glass Study Center is to progressively create a **general archive of Venetian Glass**, available to the national and international scientific community, in order to enhance and relaunch the art of glassmaking, particularly that of the 20th Century. The **archive of Venetian Glass** consists mainly of drawings, designs, correspondence and photographs from the Murano glassworks. There is also a **specialised library** with resources focussing on glass within the Art history library.

As of 2014 the **Institute of Art History**, **under the direction of Luca Massimo Barbero**, is focusing on enhancing and further promoting its archives - which include some unique items – as well as those of the library of the Glass Study Center. The archives of artists currently active on Murano have recently been acquired and digitised for consultation. The artists concerned are **Ginny Ruffner** (52 projects), **Peter Shire** (38 projects) and **Emanuel Babled** (over 16 large-scale projects). Moreover, the **Dino Martens Archive** for the Aureliano Toso glassworks between 1940 and 1965 (i.e. 345 designs for the Venice Biennale, the Milan Triennale and international exhibitions such as Brussels, Cairo, etc.) has been digitised.

Over the next few months the Glass Study Center will digitise the archive of the artist **Vinicio Vianello** (1923-1999). A key figure in the “Spatialism” movement, he prominently experimented with glass (see, for example, his celebrated “Atomici” vases) as well as with lighting and designs, which he exhibited several times at the Venice Biennale and the Milan Triennale; in 1957 he was awarded the Golden Compass. All of the Vianello documentation will be made available for consultation: 323 rolls each containing original drawings, tracing papers and projects, 820 photographs, index cards, reproductions of works, and 14 CDs with the complete press cuttings and publications on his production of glass art.

The forthcoming issues of *Saggi e Memorie*, the magazine published by the Institute of Art History, will include a new section on applied arts with the publication of the proceedings from the conferences on Napoleone Martinuzzi and Tomaso Buzzi, organized by the Institute of Art History through the Glass Study Center. The special role and importance of the Cini Foundation’s Glass Study Center is highlighted by the fact it attracts scholars from all over the world and maintains relations with major international institutions.

**The Glass Study Center archive and library are open to the public by appointment, from Monday to Friday: 9.30 am – 1.00 pm; 2.00 – 5.00 pm**

**Exhibitions organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO**

**and in cooperation with other museums since 2012:**

**Carlo Scarpa. Venini 1932 – 1947**

Curated by Marino Barovier

(26.08.2012 / 06.01.2013)

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

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

(05.11.2013 / 02.03.2014)

**FRAGILE?**

Curated by Mario Codognato

(08.04.2013 / 28.07.2013)

**Napoleone Martinuzzi. Venini 1925 - 1931**

Curated by Marino Barovier

(06.09.2013 / 06.01.2014)

**I SANTILLANA**

Works by Laura de Santillana and Alessandro Diaz de Santillana

(05.04.2014 / 03.08.2014)

**Tomaso Buzzi at Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier

(12.09.2014 / 11.01.2015)

**I Santillana**

MAK-Schausammlung Gegenwartskunst, Wien

(19.11.2014 / 29.03.2015)

**Glass from Finland in the Bischofberger Collection**

Curated by Kaisa Koivisto and Pekka Korvenmaa

(12.04.2015 / 02.08.2015)

**Fulvio Bianconi at Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier

(11.09.2015 / 10.01.2016)

**Laura de Santillana and Alessandro Diaz de Santillana**

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, Inghilterra

(02.05.2015 / 06.09.2015)

**Glass Tea House** ***Mondrian***

By Hiroshi Sugimoto

(04.06.2014 / still on view)