

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

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore  
13 April – 23 November 2025

# 1932-1942

## MURANO GLASS AND THE VENICE BIENNALE

Curated by Marino Barovier

*The second chapter of the exhibition program dedicated to the presence of Murano glass at the Venice Biennale examines the time period between 1932 and 1942, when Murano furnaces collaborated with artists and designers such as Carlo Scarpa, Flavio Poli and Dino Martens to showcase their best production*

The new exhibition organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO is **1932–1942 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale**, curated by **Marino Barovier**, which will run on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore **from 13 April to 23 November 2025**. The show is a further step of the exhibition program launched in 2024 dedicated to the history of Murano glass at the Venice Biennale and it examines the time period from 1932 to 1942, a time span corresponding respectively to the inauguration of the **Venice Pavilion** and to the last edition of the Biennale before the interruption caused by the Second World War.

Starting from 1932, Murano glass was featured at the Biennale in a **dedicated space**, i.e. the Venice Pavilion, built specifically for the **decorative arts** thanks to the collaboration between the Venice Biennale and the 'Istituto Veneto per il Lavoro'. The importance and the quality of the so-called 'minor arts' were thus officially acknowledged, and a selection of them was chosen to be presented to the general public at the Venice Art Biennale. This was a period of great creativity and experimentation with **materials** and **colours**, both through the revisiting of ancient techniques and the development of new glassmaking processes. Initially, mainly light transparent blown glass was proposed, together with **opaque glass** with vivid colours, while from the mid-1930s **heavy, thick glass began to take centre stage**, often embellished with bubbles, delicate colour nuances or with gold leaf applications.

Thanks to the recurrent staging of this prestigious event, such exhibits had a profound effect on Murano, which over the course of successive editions took the opportunity to present **its best glass productions**, making the most of the impetus provided by the Biennale. The Venice Biennale not only served as an outstanding showcase, but through its artistic vibrancy and international reach it provided fruitful exposure to glassworks and the world of artistic glass in all its complexity.

Among the furnaces, **Venini** stood out thanks to the collaboration with **Carlo Scarpa**, while **Barovier Seguso Ferro**, later **Seguso Vetri d'Arte**, availed itself of the partnership

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with **Flavio Poli**; the painter **Dino Martens** first collaborated with **Salviati** and **Successori Rioda**, and then with **Aureliano Toso**. **Salviati & C.** collaborated with painter **Mario De Luigi**, who signed his works under the pseudonym **Guido Bin**. **Ercole Barovier** realised the numerous series produced by the historic Barovier glassworks, which later became **Ferro Toso-Barovier**, and eventually **Barovier Toso & C.** Other glassworks that, in those years, exploited the potential of the glass medium were **Zecchin Martinuzzi**, **AVEM**, **Cirillo Maschio**, **Moretti Ulderico & C.**, **S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso**, **Fratelli Toso**, **V.A.M.S.A.** and **S.A.L.I.R.**, which proposed engraved glass works based on designs by **Franz Pelzel**.

The accompanying **catalogue** is edited by **Marino Barovier** and **Carla Sonego**, and benefits from their painstaking bibliographic and in-depth documentary research in the **Biennale's Historical Archive of Contemporary Arts** (ASAC) and in other public and private archives. The catalogue illustrates with vintage photos, drawings and documentary material what was shown at the Biennale in that period.

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

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

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## INFORMATION:

PRODUCTION	Fondazione Giorgio Cini and Pentagram Stiftung
TITLE	1932–1942 <i>Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale</i>
CURATOR	Marino Barovier
DATES	13 April – 23 November 2025
OPENING HOURS	10am – 7pm, closed on Wednesdays
VENUE	LE STANZE DEL VETRO, Fondazione Giorgio Cini
ADDRESS	Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice
TICKETS	Free entry
CATALOGUE	Marsilio Arte
INFO	<a href="mailto:info@lestanzedelvetro.org">info@lestanzedelvetro.org</a> , <a href="mailto:info@cini.it">info@cini.it</a>
WEB	<a href="http://www.lestanzedelvetro.org">www.lestanzedelvetro.org</a> , <a href="http://www.cini.it">www.cini.it</a>

## GETTING THERE:

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

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

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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## FREE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND GUIDED TOURS

From 19 April, **free guided tours** and educational activities for all ages are coming back to LE STANZE DEL VETRO, on the occasion of the exhibition **1932-1942 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale. Translucid Wizardry** are the exciting guided tours at fixed times for adults, scheduled for **every Saturday and Sunday**, at **11am in English** and **4pm in Italian**. The tours aim to retrace the beginnings of modern artistic glass work, exploring the key artists, techniques and subjects that have played a role in the history of the art of contemporary glassmaking in Venice.

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

Starting **from 26 April**, every last Saturday of the month, at 4pm, the free guided tour **Glass Portraits – Monograph on the Furnace** will lead you on a journey to explore the furnaces and the key figures featured in the exhibition.

### Educational activities for families

Starting **from 27 April**, at 4pm on every last Sunday of the month comes **Mani-fatture**, a series of events, each one different, dedicated to families. While the adults are guided on a tour of the exhibition, young visitors will have fun with readings and stories, coloring and collages, on a journey to discover the transparency and magic of glass.

The activities are **free of charge** but booking is necessary (at least two days before the requested date) by calling +39 041 8627167, lines open from Monday to Saturday, or send an email requesting further information to: [lestanzedelvetro.didattica@coopculture.it](mailto:lestanzedelvetro.didattica@coopculture.it)

### Educational activities for schools

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

Through guided tours and interactive workshops, children and teenagers will have the opportunity to explore glassmaking techniques, the distinctive properties of glass, and understand its significant role in the history of art and design.

Activities for preschool and lower primary school children include **Say Cheese, Group Photo!** – a creative experience that brings the artworks on display to life and tells their stories, and **Heart of Glass, What a Pair!** – a fun and imaginative workshop featuring a memory-matching game!

For primary school classes, we offer **Face-Vase**, which explores the phenomenon of pareidolia, and **Such a Long Story!**, where students can imagine and narrate the adventurous journey of a vase through fantastical worlds.

For lower secondary schools, we offer two exciting activities: **Once Upon a Time, There Was a Vase...** – this creative workshop invites students to craft a unique narrative filled with adventure, romance, suspense, and extraordinary characters, all inspired by the world of glass, and **This Year, We Will Design LE STANZE DEL VETRO!** – in this hands-on experience, students become exhibition designers, reimagining an exhibition room and creating an innovative, engaging display path that enhances the visitor experience. Finally, for upper secondary schools, students can participate in **Let Art History Inspire You**, a captivating journey that explores memory, connections, and the creative inspirations art offers, and **Suggestions... for Your Final Exam**, an opportunity for final-year students to explore exhibition-related topics in preparation for their exams, all within an immersive and stimulating environment, guided by an expert.

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### **Educational Day for School Teachers**

School Teachers are invited to a special **Educational Day** to learn more about our educational programs and visit the exhibition on **Tuesday, 15 April 2025**

4pm – for preschool and primary school teachers

5pm – for lower and upper secondary school teachers

To sign up: [lestanzedelvetro.didattica@coopculture.it](mailto:lestanzedelvetro.didattica@coopculture.it)

Educational program curated by

Elisabetta Riva and Ilaria Simeoni, CoopCulture

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## Murano Glass at the Venice Biennale 1932-1942

Marino Barovier

Curator

(Extract from the catalogue)

The inauguration of the Padiglione Venezia in the Giardini at Sant'Elena on 28 April 1932 – the same day as the opening of the 18th Venice Biennale – marked the beginning of a vibrant new period for Murano glass, which, for the first time, had found a dedicated space within the exhibition. From 1912 onwards, Murano glass had maintained a consistent presence at the Biennale, where it was exhibited alongside paintings and sculptures in various sections of the Padiglione Centrale until 1930. Initially represented by a small selection of pieces by individual artists, over the course of the 1920s, the Murano glassworks were given the opportunity to showcase their finest creations at this prestigious event, most notably in the 1928 and 1930 editions.

The need to support and promote Venice's artistic production, which had been impacted by the global market downturn, along with the interest of Biennale President Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata and Secretary General Antonio Maraini in expanding the scope of the exhibition beyond the fine arts led to the construction in 1932 of a pavilion dedicated to the decorative arts that was named after the city.

As Maraini notes in the 1932 exhibition catalogue, the success of the Mostra dell'Orafo held during the 1930 Biennale 'opened up the discussion for establishing a permanent section devoted to the decorative arts, with a particular focus on Venetian craftsmanship, while preserving the international scope emblematic of the Biennale.'

The project took shape with substantial financial and organizational support from the Istituto Veneto per il Lavoro and its president Beppe Ravà, resulting in the construction of a pavilion designed by architect Brenno Del Giudice. It was inaugurated in 1932 with an exhibition of glass, lace, and mosaics, the first in a series, as Maraini had hoped when he wrote the following lines: 'May the coming years bring forth more exhibitions, all sharing the same aspiration to explore products in depth and present the finest and most original examples. If, from this knowledge and the resulting competition, there arises any benefit to the advancement of Venetian art and craftsmanship, as well as to its global reach, we will feel we have achieved our long-desired goal'.

This edition saw a significant presence of Murano glassworks, invited to showcase a selection of their pieces, which had been chosen by the Executive Board with the assistance of an Artistic Advisory Committee. Overseeing the glass selection were Pietro Chiesa, a Milanese designer and entrepreneur who had exhibited his own glass pieces at several previous Biennales, and Giulio Lorenzetti, a Venetian critic. There were also exhibitors from elsewhere in Italy, like Luigi Fontana, alongside international representatives, including the Austrian company Lobmeyr and the French artist Maurice Marinot.

Ugo Nebbia suggested that when comparing Murano glassmakers 'to their foreign counterparts, we must agree that their ingenuity has never faltered, going hand in hand with the consummate skill that defines them [...]. Once again, we have put forward our leading firms, which have risen to [...] the occasion. Both the long-established names with a good reputation in the field of modern glassmaking and the newcomers, perhaps even those who have only recently come up with designs meeting modern tastes.' Ten firms exhibited blown glass, yet 'within this broad spectrum of innovative experimentation,' there were also examples of lampwork, *conterie* (tiny monochrome beads), *perle* (beads) and *murrine* (patterned slices of a complex cane) – the latter represented by Ulderico Moretti's works, which later appeared in Domus where they were accompanied by Chiesa's enthusiastic comments.

The pavilion featured a spacious, curved gallery – with two smaller rooms intended for lace at either end – in which glass took centre stage, exhibited in a series of low display cases and, more prominently, in large wall-mounted cabinets, alternating with a succession of mosaics. The two central display cases contained most of the Murano works, arranged by manufacturer to highlight both the production quality and the innovative directions pursued by the different glassworks.

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### Zecchin Martinuzzi

In January 1932, following the liquidation of V.S.M. Venini & C., sculptor Napoleone Martinuzzi – formerly the artistic director and a partner of the glassworks – along with engineer Francesco Zecchin, also a partner, parted ways with the firm, bringing their collaboration with Paolo Venini to an end. In August of that same year, they established their own glassworks, Zecchin Martinuzzi – Vetri Artistici e Mosaici, where Martinuzzi continued his research into glass, focusing on the use of cased glass and vibrantly coloured *pasta vitrea*. The glassworks made a successful debut at the 5th Milan Triennale in 1933, where it also presented a series of *pasta vitrea* figurines. The following year, Zecchin Martinuzzi participated in the Venice Biennale, exhibiting around fifteen vases and bowls, many displayed in vitrines dedicated to art textiles. These works, made from cased glass (red, *verdognolo*, amethyst, and white), featured iridized surface finishes or gold leaf applications. The glassworks also showcased vases and bowls in iridized *corallo* red, occasionally adorned with gold leaf, characterized by textured surfaces and minimalist forms.

### Venini S.A.

At the opening of the Padiglione Venezia in 1932, Venini S.A. participated in the mosaic section with ‘*La mano di Atlante*’, an original mosaic panel designed by Tomaso Buzzi, who also contributed to the event as the firm’s artistic collaborator. Following Napoleone Martinuzzi’s departure from the furnace in early 1932, Paolo Venini turned to his friend, the architect Buzzi, in preparation for the 18th Venice Biennale. This collaboration, which lasted until 1933, resulted in the *Turchese e nero* series, consisting of vases and bowls displayed at the centre of a large vitrine in the exhibit’s glass section. These pieces were crafted from cased glass with multiple layers of colour, which Martinuzzi had previously employed in certain Venini models in 1930. The designs featured strikingly minimalist forms, occasionally drawing inspiration from Persian bronze and silverware from the 10th and 11th centuries, as seen in the spouted vase. Some of the pieces exhibited in 1932, all distinguished by refined colour combinations, were also produced – possibly on commission – as a variant featuring a stylized zoomorphic decoration applied to the body.

### Moretti Ulderico & C

The inauguration of the Padiglione Venezia in 1932 saw Murano represented not only by furnaces specializing in artistic glass but also by firms producing glass canes and *avventurina*, such as Moretti Ulderico & C. The glassworks excelled in the creation of *vetri murrini* and reproductions of ancient glass, continuing a family tradition established by its renowned founder, Vincenzo Moretti (1835–1901), a glass technician for the Compagnia Venezia-Murano credited with the rediscovery of Roman-era mosaic glass. His legacy was carried on by his son Luigi (1867–1946) and later by his grandson Ulderico (1892–1956), co-owner of Moretti Ulderico & C., founded in 1927. The glassworks participated in both the 18th Venice Biennale in 1932 and its subsequent edition in 1934. The 1932 display was particularly extensive, featuring samples of *avventurina* (bowls, blocks, and plaques), assorted glass canes, and wheel-ground beads, alongside a selection of plates and bowls in mosaic glass inspired by Vincenzo Moretti’s late 19th-century works. These pieces, based on designs by Ulderico, were praised by Pietro Chiesa in *Domus* (August 1932), who noted that they were ‘far from fashionable in form, yet as beautiful as excavation glass’, exemplifying ‘a technique that has fallen out of favour but must be honoured again.’ In 1934, the furnace presented ‘thirty-three samples of Roman glass’ and some *avventurina* jewellery.

### C. Maschio

Founded in January 1932, Cirillo Maschio’s glassworks, ‘Vetri Artistici Muranesi C. Maschio’, debuted at the 18th Venice Biennale later that year, showcasing pieces designed by painter Giuseppe Chiacig, the firm’s artistic director. Some of Chiacig’s

designs drew inspiration from models by M.V.M. Cappellin & C., which had gone bankrupt earlier that year. Among the works presented at the exhibition, in addition to flowering branches and opaque glass fruits, was a series of four vases and a bowl in *lattimo* glass, cased in *cristallo* and adorned with *cristallo* glass applications, some featuring plant decorations. The furnace also participated in the 19th Biennale in 1934, presenting a small selection that included two black glass vases, bunches of grapes, and glass animals (a dog, lions, and foxes).

### S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso & C.

Having previously exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1930 with pieces designed by Guido Balsamo Stella, the S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso & C. glassworks participated in the Padiglione Venezia in both 1932 and 1934, presenting works by Murano architect and designer Vittorio Donà. In 1932, the display included a series of stylized blown-glass animals and vases, predominantly characterized by austere forms, with a few irregular shapes. The range produced for the 19th Biennale in 1934 was distinguished by a selection of thick transparent glass vases, bowls, and other pieces adorned with prunts known as '*mugnoni*'. Additionally, the showcase featured bowls made from glass canes. Following structural changes within the firm and its merger with Vetreria Barovier, the glassworks underwent a transformation in 1936, adopting the new name Ferro Toso-Barovier.

### Salviati & C.

As a result of numerous structural changes within the historic glassworks founded by Antonio Salviati in 1859, the firm changed hands in 1931, passing into the ownership of Mario, Renzo, and Olga Camerino, heirs of Maurizio, who had been the sole owner of the Salviati shops and mosaic production workshop since 1920. Salviati & C. was present at the Padiglione Venezia from its inauguration, participating in three consecutive editions of the Venice Biennale (18th to 20th edition). In the first two editions, the firm showcased glass designed by Murano painter Dino Martens, and in 1936, works by Guido Bin (pseudonym of painter Mario De Luigi). In 1932, the display featured a selection of transparent glass pieces – vases, 'amphorae', pitchers, and oil jugs – whose classical forms had been reinterpreted with a playful touch. Among these was a 'a bunch of grapes within cone'. In 1934, *Domus* magazine published a pair of vases in 'iridized *paglierino*' from Salviati's varied production. Characterized by soft, irregular lines, one had a hole in its body – a detail that would later re-appear in Martens's post-war designs for Aureliano Toso. Among the works making a strong impression in the 1936 edition were the *vetri musivi* designed by Guido Bin (Mario De Luigi), with some pieces exhibited in Venice and others at the 6th Milan Triennale, which was held almost concurrently with the Biennale. This series stemmed from De Luigi's interest in mosaics, already apparent in the panel *Il bagno*, created with his friend Carlo Scarpa using glass tesserae by Fratelli Donà and exhibited at the newly inaugurated Padiglione Venezia in 1932. The *vetri musivi* series was 'the result of costly and challenging trials and studies, using *paste vitree* capable of seamlessly bonding together to achieve the uniform surface fusion typical of traditional *smalti* mosaics' (G. Dell'Oro, 1936).

### AVEM

The AVEM glassworks (Arte Vetraria Muranese) was founded in January 1932 by a group of master glassmakers – including Antonio Luigi Ferro and his sons Ottone and Egidio, Galliano Ferro, and Emilio Nason – alongside the technician Giulio Radi, all of whom had previously worked at Successori Andrea Rioda. From its inception, the furnace exhibited regularly at the Padiglione Venezia, making its debut at the Venice Biennale with a series of transparent blown-glass pieces designed by Vittorio Zecchin. In subsequent editions, the glassworks presented a diverse range of works, ranging from transparent blown glass to opaque and *pulegoso* glass (1934-36), as well as small sculptures – some attributed to Emilio Nason – while gradually shifting toward the production of heavier glass. In 1940, Giulio Radi assumed the role of artistic director, focusing on experiments with gold and silver leaf, often combined with bands of colour



(Biennale 1940). By 1942, these techniques resulted in richly coloured *setificati*, satin glass pieces, which were exhibited at that year's Biennale.

### **S.A.L.I.R.**

Present at the Venice Biennale since 1930, S.A.L.I.R. (Studio Ars et Labor Industrie Riunite), which specialized in 'enamel and gold decorations as well as glass engraving', participated in every edition of the exhibitions from 1932 to 1942. Most of its engraved glass pieces were executed by the Bohemian engraver Franz Pelzel, a former collaborator of Guido Balsamo Stella, who became the designer and executor of the firm's models. On occasion, such as in the 1932 and 1934 exhibitions, Vittorio Zecchin also contributed to the creation of various pieces. At the 23rd Biennale in 1942, Zecchin presented a 'group of engraved glass pieces', displayed alongside an engraved vase designed by the painter Atte Gasparetto.

### **Scuola Abate Zanetti**

At the 22nd and 23rd Biennale (1940 and 1942), engraved glass was also represented by students from the Abate Zanetti school for artisans, a historic Murano institution founded in 1862 by Abate Zanetti as a design school for glassmakers. Vittorio Zecchin joined the faculty in the mid-1930s, teaching from 1936 to 1942, and becoming the school's director in 1940. The engraved glass pieces displayed at these editions featured decorative motifs designed by Zecchin and executed using wheel-grinding or diamond-point techniques. In 1942, 'cold-painted' glass pieces were also showcased. On this same occasion, the engraved vase *Voli sul mare*, crafted by Marco Varisco, was acquired by the Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia.

### **Fratelli Toso**

The historic Murano glassworks, founded in 1854, intermittently participated in the Venice Biennale, exhibiting at the 18th and 19th editions (1932–34) and again at the 21st and 22nd editions (1938–40). The 1934 exhibition stood out in particular, with a series of thick-walled glass pieces, in line with the latest trends. They included the *A spire argento* series featuring large *murrine* in a spiral pattern in a novel interpretation of this recurring motif in the Fratelli Toso catalogue. At the 1938 and 1940 exhibitions, however, the glassworks shifted its focus to more 'traditional' materials, presenting delicate, transparent blown-glass pieces, some designed by Vittorio Zecchin (in 1938).

### **V.A.M.S.A.**

This glassworks was founded in 1937 as a result of the transformation of S.A.V.A.M. (Società Anonima Vetri Artistici Murano), a company established in 1920. V.A.M.S.A. (Vetri Artistici Muranesi Società per Azioni), with the majority of shares now held by the Hreglich family, exhibited at the Padiglione Venezia in 1938, 1940, and 1940 (21st–23rd editions of the Venice Biennale). Thanks to the skills of Alfredo Barbini, a master glassmaker and minority partner since 1937, and the artistic direction of painters Erme Ripa (1938–39) and Luigi Scarpa Croce (1940–42), the glassworks presented an extensive range of works, mostly characterized by heavy glass pieces. They included a striking series of plates, displayed in 1938, featuring *sommerso* decorations and figures of fish, horses, and other motifs. The 1940 exhibition included an original interpretation of mosaic glass, as well as a series of *fumato* glass animals, a technique developed by Barbini. Additionally, small hot-modelled animals were used to embellish thick bowls, such as the ones exhibited at the 1942 Biennale.

### **Barovier Seguso & Ferro, Seguso Vetri d'Arte**

The Artistica Soffieria e Vetreria Barovier Seguso & Ferro, founded in 1933 by several master glassmakers who had left Vetreria Artistica Barovier the previous year, participated in the Venice Biennale in 1934 and 1936. In the latter edition, the furnace presented works designed by the artistic director Flavio Poli who had joined the company in 1934. For the *grigio oro* cased glass series, Poli collaborated with master Alfredo Barbini, who worked at the furnace for a short period. The 1936 exhibition also featured *sommerso* glass pieces,

including a spherical vase with *bullicante* layers – a decorative effect consisting of dense arrangement of small bubbles, achieved through a technique devised by Archimede Seguso. In 1937, following changes within the firm, the glassworks adopted the name Seguso Vetri d'Arte, with Poli, now also a partner, continuing as artistic director. In this role, he participated in the 21st and 23rd editions of the Biennale (1938 and 1942). The 1938 showcase included, among other pieces, a series of glass animals 'carved from a single block of broadly modelled glass' (*Domus*, July 1938). Some were distinguished by a corroded surface finish and/or executed in *verde nord*, as seen in several thick vases and bowls with soft, irregular forms. At the 1942 Biennale, the display again featured animals and heavy glass pieces in muted tones, such as *verde acqua di mare*.

### Aureliano Toso

The glassworks was founded in March 1938 by Aureliano Toso – formerly the administrator of Successori Andrea Rioda from 1932 to 1936 – under the official name 'Vetri Decorativi di Murano, Rag. Aureliano Toso.' From 1940 onwards, Toso relied on the creative vision of Dino Martens, appointing him as artistic director. The Murano-based painter was responsible for the extensive showcase presented at the 22nd Biennale that same year, where visitors could admire a variety of works including heavy *cristallo* glass pieces, many featuring twisted or spiral ribbing, enhanced by subtle hints of colour within the glass. Alongside these were glass pieces made with *zanfirico* canes, dominated – like the heavy glass pieces – by delicate hues.

### Venini S.A.

From 1934 to 1942, the glassworks participated in the Venice Biennale, showcasing numerous glass series, most of which resulting from the creativity of Carlo Scarpa, who collaborated with the firm on a regular basis during this period.

In 1934 and 1936, the company introduced striking heavy glass variations, including *sommersi a bollicine* (1934–36) and *corrosi* (1936), both distinguished by unique chromatic effects. Alongside these, Venini also presented pieces resulting from the revival or reinterpretation of traditional techniques, such as *mezza filigrana* and *murrina*. Thanks to a fruitful collaboration between Carlo Scarpa and Paolo Venini, the latter technique resulted in an innovative new version of the *Murrine romane*. The firm's continued experiments produced the *vetri pesanti* of 1938 – some of which made using the *incalmo* technique – as well as the striking display of products presented at the 1940 Biennale and, in part, at the 7th Milan Triennale, which was held almost concurrently. Among the works exhibited in Venice were the *tessuti* ('textiles'), a highly successful and original reinterpretation of glass canes. Inspired by Chinese lacquerware, the black and red *Laccati* series featured opaque glass in both monochrome and two-tone *incalmo* variations. The red colouring was achieved using glass granules or *conterie* (glass beads), also employed in the *Granulari sommersi* series and for the black *murrine granulari* bowls, speckled with opal globules.

The 1940 Biennale presentation stood out for a series of intensely coloured opaque *murrine* bowls whose polished wheel-ground surfaces contributed to the uniformity of both finish and design. Cold-working methods – such as grinding and engraving – were also used on thick transparent glass pieces with multiple layers of colour, with models featuring horizontal incisions or distinctive decorative motifs, including waves. At the 1942 Biennale, the display primarily featured blown-glass pieces decorated with threads, horizontal bands, or irregular polychrome patterns ('*pennellate*') standing out from the transparent surface. It also included transparent bowls with deliberately irregular forms featuring abstract black and blue (*zaffiro*) black motifs influenced by Bauhaus art.

### Ferro Toso-Barovier

Formed in April 1936 from the merger of Barovier with S.A.I.A.R. Ferro Toso, the glassworks participated in both the 20th and 21st editions of the Biennale (1936, 1938). At its debut exhibition, the furnace showcased large glass pieces distinguished by innovative colours created by Ercole Barovier, who was now responsible for the firm's

artistic direction. These thick, transparent glass pieces featured a streaky effect typical of *colorazione a caldo senza fusione* (colouring the glass while hot without melting) – a technique developed by Barovier himself and later patented by Ferro Toso-Barovier. They included the *crepuscolo* series made from brownish-grey glass, created by inserting metal filaments between two or more layers of glass, and the *gemmati*, featuring 'glass containing agglomerations of oxides and metallic powders'. The *gemmati* were presented in three chromatic variations: *autunno* (yellow-brown hues), *laguna*, and *marina* (both in shades of azure-grey and blue). This ongoing experimentation eventually led to the development of new types of glass such as *zaffiro* and *arabesco verde*, used for several models showcased at the 1938 Venice Biennale. Alongside these, the glassworks also presented thick *cristallo* glass with applied decorations, most notably the *rostrati* series – distinguished by small raised prisms covering the entire surface – which achieved significant commercial success.

### Barovier Toso & C.

The furnace, established following the transformation of Ferro Toso-Barovier in 1939, participated in the last two editions of the Biennale before its hiatus due to World War II (1940, 1942). These shows featured a number of new glass series designed by Ercole Barovier, including the *Oriente* series in 1940, which was distinguished by its vibrant glass with interwoven multicoloured canes and bands, embellished with silver leaf. The display also included numerous models from the *Rilievi aurati e argentati* series, made from thick glass with gold and glass grit ('*oromat rugiada*'), featuring relief impressions with gold or silver leaf applications. Also worthy of note were the *stelle aurate* (or *a lenti*) vases and a selection of pieces a *bolle con base aurata* (with bubbles and golden bases). The exhibition catalogue also referred to the *Groviglio*, *Spirale*, and *Rugiada* series, though there are no archival sources documenting their display in Venice. Instead, these pieces were showcased at the 7th Milan Triennale (6 April – 30 June 1940), which opened just over a month before the Venice Biennale. By 1942, production focused on thick transparent glass with internal decorations, seen in pieces like *A incroci iridati* and *Balloton interno*, and most notably in the *Superbolle* series, which featured large iridized bubbles suspended within the walls of the object.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



## 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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century Art in order to bring this medium back into the centre of the attention and discussion within the international Art scene.

The cultural initiatives of LE STANZE DEL VETRO focus not only on contemporary artists who have used glass as their artistic medium, but also on the main producers and on the major glass collections in the world. Since its opening, two exhibitions have been staged each year on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore. One in the spring, dedicated to the use of glass in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> century. All exhibitions of LE STANZE DEL VETRO are accompanied by a catalogue, available at the bookshop of LE STANZE DEL VETRO and online.

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

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

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

LE STANZE DEL VETRO





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

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

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

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

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

Guided visits to the Glass Study Centre archives can be booked by writing to [centrostudivetro@cini.it](mailto:centrostudivetro@cini.it).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
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**Exhibitions organized by LE STANZE DEL VETRO  
and in cooperation with other museums since 2012:**

**Carlo Scarpa. Venini 1932-1947**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(26.08.2012 / 06.01.2013)

**FRAGILE?**

Curated by Mario Codognato  
(08.04.2013 / 28.07.2013)

**Napoleone Martinuzzi. Venini 1925-1931**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(06.09.2013 / 06.01.2014)

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

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

**I SANTILLANA**

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

**Tomaso Buzzi at Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(12.09.2014 / 11.01.2015)

**I Santillana**

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

**Glass from Finland in the Bischofberger Collection**

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

**Fulvio Bianconi at Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(11.09.2015 / 10.01.2016)

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

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

**Glass Tea House *Mondrian***

By Hiroshi Sugimoto  
(04.06.2014 / 29.11.2016)

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

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

**Paolo Venini and His Furnace**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(11.09.2016 / 08.01.2017)

LE STANZE DEL VETRO





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

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

**Ettore Sottsass: The Glass**

Curated by Luca Massimo Barbero  
(10.04.2017 / 30.07.2017)

**Qwalala**

By Pae White  
(12.05.2017 / 30.11.2019)

**Vittorio Zecchin: Transparent Glass for Cappellin and Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(11.09.2017 / 07.01.2018)

**A Furnace in Marseille.****Cirva (Centre international de recherche sur le verre et les arts plastiques)**

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

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

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

**Glass of the Architects. Vienna 1900–1937.****A cooperation of the MAK and LE STANZE DEL VETRO**

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

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

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(10.09.2018 / 06.01.2019)

**Maurice Marinot. The Glass, 1911–1934**

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

**Thomas Stearns at Venini**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(09.09.2019 / 05.01.2020)

**Venice and American Studio Glass**

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

**The Glass Ark. Animals in the Pierre Rosenberg Collection**

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

**Tapio Wirkkala at Venini and Toni Zuccheri at Venini.****Two exhibitions at LE STANZE DEL VETRO**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(21.11.2021 / 13.03.2022)

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**FontanaArte. House of Glass**

Curated by Christian Larsen  
(04.04.2022 / 31.07.2022)

**Venini: Light 1921-1985**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(18.09.2022 / 08.01.2023)

The Gigantic Installations extended to 9 July 2023

**Bohemian Glass: The Great Masters**

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

**1912–1930 Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale**

Curated by Marino Barovier  
(14.04.2024 / 24.11.2024)

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