Fucina degli Angeli
Peggy Guggenheim and 20th-Century Artistic Glass



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edited by
Cristina Beltrami

PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION

Marsilio Arte



Preface

Mariët Westermann
Director and CEO,
Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Karole P. B. Vail
Director,
Peggy Guggenheim Collection

The Peggy Guggenheim Collection is delighted to present *Fucina degli Angeli: Peggy Guggenheim and 20th-Century Artistic Glass*, an exhibition organized by Cristina Beltrami, an art historian and independent curator. The first show dedicated to the Fucina degli Angeli since a presentation in 1992 at Ca' Pesaro, Venice's international museum of modern art, the exhibition reflects our ongoing commitment to reintroduce and reinstate some of the Venetian artists and activities that Peggy Guggenheim championed enthusiastically. Such projects have included exhibitions dedicated to Tancredi Parmeggiani in 2016–17, Edmondo Bacci in 2023, and Marina Apollonio in 2024–25, and are followed now by an impactful episode in the history of postwar Venetian artistic glass.

The Fucina degli Angeli ("Foundry of the Angels") was the brainchild of Egidio Costantini (1912–2007), a lover of glass eager to elevate the craft of glassblowing to the same artistic level as sculpture and painting. In 1953 he co-founded the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro with a group of Venetian artists on the island of Murano, famous for its glassmaking and foundries. In 1955, after the Centro had dissolved, he founded the Fucina degli Angeli, a gallery which owed its poetic name to Jean Cocteau, and its symbol of a star to Jean (Hans) Arp, two artists who were very close to Guggenheim. Costantini collaborated with Max Ernst, Lucio Fontana, Narita Katsuhiko, Gino Severini, and Yokoo Tadanori, among others; and drew inspiration from works by Georges Braque, Alexander Calder, and Pablo Picasso. Guggenheim supported Fucina in its direst moments, displayed the glass objects in her Palazzo, and contributed widely to its expansion with exhibitions, donations, and acquisitions in Europe and the United States.

We are grateful to all those who helped bring this project to fruition and extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Beltrami for her wholehearted commitment, sensitivity, and rigor in revealing a fascinating and significant Venetian moment in the annals of modern Italian art and craft. She has resurrected beautiful and unique glass works from archives and collections that have not seen the light of day for decades, or that have never been published. The accompanying catalogue is the first publication in which the Fucina's history and accomplishments are traced in full detail. Dr. Beltrami's essay on the complex background of Fucina degli Angeli and Costantini and his relationship with the artists he worked with is particularly insightful and revelatory. Our gratitude goes to the additional catalogue authors: Marianna Rossi, who deftly addresses the subject of the Centro Pittori del Vetro in its infancy, and Stefano Turina, for his perceptive essay on Japanese artists who contributed immensely to the success of Fucina degli Angeli. We commend Stephen Hoban as always for his fine editing skills, and we are pleased to collaborate again with the Venetian publisher Marsilio Arte. This fully illustrated publication includes countless reproductions, provides essential reading, and serves

as a valuable source of information for all those who are interested in Venice's heritage, and particularly this facet of twentieth-century artistic glass.

The successful outcome of all exhibitions requires goodwill, cooperation, and support. We warmly value all private and public lenders for entrusting us with their fragile works of art. We are immensely grateful to the Costantini family and the Estate of Egidio Costantini and especially the late Egidia Costantini, the founder's daughter, for opening their archive and collection so generously. Their trust, generosity, and dedication have played a pivotal role in preserving and passing on the legacy of the Fucina degli Angeli. Our thanks are also due to Antonio Comelli, Luigi Costantini, and Matteo Omura for their invaluable assistance and for making available the artworks, materials, and historical records that were essential to the realization of this exhibition.

For their loans of extraordinary works of art, we are beholden to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno; Historisches Museum Basel; Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg; MUDAC – Cantonal Museum of Contemporary Design and Applied Arts, Lausanne; Fondazione Musei Civici | MUVE, Museo del Vetro, Murano, Venice; and Fondazione Remo Bianco, Milan, as well as Galerie PRON, Paris; Galerie Marc Heiremans, Antwerp; The Paul and Suzanne Jenkins Foundation, and Ronchini – Contemporary Art Gallery, London; and also Luca Bombassei, Giorgio Cardazzo, Gabriele and Cristiano Colleoni, Antonio Cometa, Achille Passini, and Cherine Magrabi Tayeb, as well as those lenders who prefer to remain anonymous. We are truly fortunate to have benefited from their generosity and contributions that have made the exhibition so beautiful and comprehensive.

We are grateful to the Comune di Venezia for their patronage and enthusiasm for this Venetian project, and would like to thank Simone Venturini, Mayor of Venice, as well as Paolo Romor, Assessore all'Urbanistica e alla Cultura. We are deeply thankful for the financial support of the individuals, corporate members, and foundations who enthusiastically believed in this exhibition. As always, we praise EFG, the museum's long-standing Institutional Patron, the Guggenheim Intrapresae, whose corporate support allows the museum to develop its exhibition program, and in particular Apice for their additional support; as well as the Officinae Guggenheim. We express our deepest gratitude to the members of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Advisory Board, who sustain the museum in so many ways, as well as to the Fondazione Araldi Guinetti, Vaduz, for underwriting the educational activities of the museum. We are always appreciative of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection staff, which is listed elsewhere in the publication for their dedication and for implementing this project so successfully.

Twenty-three luminescent blue glass sculptures inspired by Picasso terracotta sculptures and executed by Fucina degli Angeli grace the window of Guggenheim's former bathroom in Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, overlooking the Grand Canal. In many ways, they have become emblematic of the museum and disclose Guggenheim's steadfast love for all things Venetian. We hope that the exhibition and publication provide just as much delight and curiosity for modern Venetian artistic glass as this marvelous art practice gave Peggy Guggenheim many years ago.

Acknowledgements

Cristina Beltrami

Curating this exhibition has been a deeply rewarding experience, and my first and heartfelt thanks go to Karole P. B. Vail, Director, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, who believed in this ambitious project: just as Peggy Guggenheim supported Egidio Costantini's Fucina degli Angeli, so Vail has made possible the telling of one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of twentieth-century artistic glass.

This exhibition, as well as its catalogue, would never have been as thorough without the generous support of Egidio Costantini's heirs, particularly Antonio Comelli and Luigi Costantini, the custodians of the Archive of the Fucina degli Angeli.

In terms of organizing the exhibition, I would like to thank the museums, foundations, private lenders, and galleries, mentioned already in the preface, that generously provided loans and archival materials.

The detailed account presented in the catalogue also benefited from the support of public and private archives, foundations, and libraries. I would particularly like to thank Paige Adair of The Portman Archives, Atlanta; Simona Martinoli and Misia Bernasconi of the Fondation Marguerite Arp, Locarno; Ramón Melero Guirado of the Museo Picasso, Málaga; Silvia Ardemagni, Maria Villa, and Valeria Morandi of the Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Milan; Elisabeth Thomas of the Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; Simone Zimbardi of the Musée national Picasso – Archives, Paris; Katie Domurat and Nancy T. Nichols of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Silvia Cruciani and Maria Tombini of the Matta Archives, Tarquinia; Chiara Pipino of the Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria Reale, Turin; Aglaja Kempf of the Fondation Oskar Kokoschka, Vevey; Aneta Zahradnik of the Oskar Kokoschka Centre, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Vienna; and Natalia Campell of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Zurich.

An exhibition is always a collective endeavor, and in various capacities I owe my gratitude to Laura Antifora, Marco Arosio, Amelie Bannwart, Luca Massimo Barbero, Elisabetta Barisoni, Silvano Belardinelli, Luca Bombassei, Caterina Dal Mas, Carola D'Ambrosio, Roberta Dell'Acqua, Cristiana Ferraresi, Elena Forin, Giovanna Forni, Eva Franciolli, Charlotta Hill, Maria Cristina Gasperini, Riccardo Gianni, Eliza Gregory, David Landau, Rafaella Loffreda, Silvia Mainardi, Naoko Ono, Fabio Pacifico, Andrea Piai, Marianna Rossi, Chiara Spangaro, Elisabetta Staudacher, Stefano Turina, Siobhan Wheeler, and Christian Witzig.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the staff of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, who have followed this project with extraordinary professionalism, enthusiasm, and generosity. To each of them goes my deepest gratitude.



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Curated by
Cristina Beltrami

Organized by

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Cover
Max Ernst, *Queen* (*Regina*), 1964 (cat. no. 26), detail

Back Cover
Max Ernst, *King* (*Re*), 1964 (cat. no. 25), detail

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Peggy Guggenheim's home, Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, 1964 (detail). Hanging from the ceiling: *Fish (Abyssal)* (*Pesce [Abissale]*), after Alexander Calder, after 1953. On the bookcase, from left: Jean (Hans) Arp, *Dove (or Amphora)* (*Colomba [o Amphore*], 1963), and *Three Graces* (*Tre grazie*, 1962–63); Max Ernst, *King* (*Re*) and *Queen* (*Regina*), both 1964. On the coffee table, Oskar Kokoschka, *Bacchants* (*Baccanti*, 1952–53)

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FUCINA DEGLI ANGELI

1.

The Fucina degli Angeli: A Twentieth-Century Glass Factory

Cristina Beltrami

"Above all glass is transparency, color in a variety of forms, nuances, and interferences otherwise impossible to achieve; it is reflection, interpenetration, plasticity, object, and also sculpture."
Enrico Crispolti, 1984[1]

In 1964 photographer David Lees captured an image of Peggy Guggenheim's living room in Venice featuring several works from Egidio Costantini's Fucina degli Angeli. Their presence highlights the relationship between the US collector and the Italian entrepreneur and gallerist, who, beginning in 1953, collaborated with some of the leading figures of the international art world to create original sculptures that mark a significant turning point in the history of Murano glass.

Guggenheim's involvement in the Fucina began in 1958,[2] at a time when Costantini's enterprise was struggling. Raised in post–World War I Venice and trained as a botanist, Costantini started working with glass after gaining experience in the coal furnaces in Carnia and, once back in La Serenissima, worked as a commercial agent for several glass factories. Among them was Ferro & Lazzarini, which, during the early 1950s, was the most open to collaborating with contemporary artists. Costantini experienced a vibrant period



fig. 2
Peggy Guggenheim (center) and guests at Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, 1964

fig. 1
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965 (detail)

in Murano, forging relationships with artists and the exceptionally talented master glassmakers who, in the years following World War II, developed new glassmaking techniques and, crucially, firmly believed in glass's potential as a medium for contemporary sculpture.[3]

This culminated in April 18, 1953, with the opening of the first exhibition of the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro, headed by Costantini, in the spaces of the Ferro & Lazzarini factory. The large-scale *I Mostra Internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano* exhibition on view at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome from May 1954, and the *Glaskunst von Murano* exhibition held in the fall of 1955 at the Gewerbemuseum in Basel followed. It was Costantini's first real encounter with the international art scene, as *Domus* promptly observed,[4] when, despite the Centro Studio Pittori letterhead, he was already operating as an independent entrepreneur for what Jean Cocteau in 1954 named the Fucina degli Angeli (Foundry of the Angels).[5]

However, despite collaborations with renowned artists, Costantini's enterprise struggled to cover its costs. Guggenheim's support was decisive, as she not only purchased several works but also introduced the Fucina to an international network of collectors.

In a letter from October 1963, Costantini revealed to Surrealist artist Max Ernst that "thanks to Mrs. Guggenheim, I have become more serene about my work, as finally in the future I will enjoy that moral support that all men who embark on new journeys are so much in need of."[6] That same year, Guggenheim wrote a dedication to Costantini in a copy of her 1965 memoir: "with much confidence in our collaboration."[7] In 1964, this confidence resulted in the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, organized at one of Venice's most important cultural hubs, the Sala delle Colonne of Ca' Giustinian. Guggenheim served as the show's fairy godmother, while Jean (Hans) Arp, by then an official artist of the Fucina, provided graphics for the cover of the exhibition catalogue. In the exhibition, as the introduction explained, "painting transformed into sculpture, and sculpture into painting, as color has found its form and form a chromatic expression free of uncertainty, artifice, chance, academism, and discomforting coldness."[8] In December 1964, Guggenheim signed the preface of the exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei*, held at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, where she recalled how she was "happy when Egidio Costantini asked me to help him create glass objects based on drawings by contemporary artists."[9]

Like a true fairy godmother, she also attended the opening of the exhibition in Rome at the Galleria dell'Obelisco in 1965, when the press announced the Fucina's next project, the *Sculpture in Glass* exhibition that











fig. 3
Egidio Costantini (second from left) and Peggy Guggenheim (right) at the opening of the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, Ca' Giustinian, Venice, June 1964

fig. 4
Poster of the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, Ca' Giustinian, Venice

fig. 5
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965

fig. 6
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965. From left: Jean (Hans) Arp, *Bride and Groom* (*Gli sposi,* 1964), and *Dolls* (*Pupi*, 1964); Max Ernst, *Poet* (*Poeta*, 1963)

fig. 7
Peggy Guggenheim in the dining room of Palazzo Venier dei Leoni with works of the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, after 1964

opened at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, on November 16 that same year.[10] The museum's director, Alfred H. Barr Jr., and the Conservator of the Paintings Department, Peter Selz, selected thirty-three works, focusing on three artists—Arp, Ernst, and Pablo Picasso.[11] Several photographs show the spare installation entrusted to Clyde R. Rich, Jr., who placed fourteen examples of Picasso's *Nymphs and Fauns* (*Ninfe e fauni*, 1964) in the central display case, modulating the blue scale of Arp's *Three Graces* (*Le tre grazie*, 1962).[12] Next to the first prototype of Ernst's *King* (*Re*, 1964), *Condor* (1954) in "milk-white with black markings"[13] after Picasso and Arp's *Dove* (*Colomba*, 1963) took center stage. Costantini was celebrated by *Time* as "a contemporary Venetian visionary out to restore the grandeur that was glass four centuries ago."[14]

Guggenheim's daughter, Pegeen Vail, also sent her congratulations for the New York exhibition, and later that year promised to send Costantini some drawings.[15] A few months after, her creation *Clementine* (1966, cat. no. 1) became the "object of great admiration" at the inaugural exhibition of the renewed Fucina degli Angeli.[16] The work comprises twelve boxes



in acrylic each framing a glass figure “young and alive, without a shadow of ‘research.’”[17] As her mother described, the figures exist “in a simple world of joy and color when they do the most commonplace things . . . live, dance, walk on the beach together, paint, and pose, take tea together, push children’s strollers in parks, totally unaware of each other’s presence.”[18]

In June 1966 the Fucina inaugurated its new spaces, also near San Marco on Calle Corona, featuring a minimal design by architect Ōmura Mikuni. Ōmura had traveled to Venice from Japan to attend the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia. At an evening event at Teatro la Fenice, he met Costantini’s daughter, Maddalena Costantini, whom he married in January 1966. He was soon involved in creating glass sculptures, such as *Architectural Forest* (*Foresta architettonica*, 1967), included in a solo show at Galleria Goethe in Bolzano in 1969; Guggenheim purchased a variation titled *Work no. 3* (*Opera 3*) (ca. 1968–69, cat. no. 83). Ōmura introduced Costantini to several leading Asian artists who gravitated toward Venice, a “second home” for people from the East, as painter and sculptor Roberto Crippa declared when referring to the significant presence of Japanese artists in the city.[19]

Unfortunately, the excitement of inaugurating a new site, coupled with the conviction of having “operated for art with capital A,”[20] were soon crushed by the devastating *acqua alta* (“high water” or “high flood”) of 1966, which caused significant losses to Costantini’s enterprise. However, it was at this moment of crisis that, with the support of a faithful network of international collectors that included Nelson Rockefeller,[21] Costantini gathered the courage to realize perhaps his most ambitious undertaking: Ernst’s *Immortal* (*Immortale*, 1967), a sixteen-square-meter glass chessboard that tackled a crucial issue for the entire Fucina operation—how in glass “issues of taste, of sterile elegance, are instantly surpassed.”[22] In 1967, critic Paolo Fossati, with his usual sharp insight, deemed this a necessary step in carrying glass beyond the limits of decorative art and breaking the aesthetic boundaries set by conventional notions of “beauty.”

Crippa, who briefly experimented with glass,[23] commented on the collective nature of the Fucina as shown at the Galleria Blu in Milan in 1968, where he pinpointed an essential feature of Costantini’s work in relation to glass’s age-old tradition: “It is fracture: glass becomes marble, oil, tempera, wood, a new medium at artists’ disposal.”[24]

fig. 8
André Verdet, “La fucina degli angeli,” in *Le Arti*, November 1968

Of course, this “new medium” required both an expert glassmaster and, often, a mediator who knew the potential and limitations of glass, ensuring that the finished product remained faithful to the artist’s original conception. The latter was Costantini’s main role in the early stages of the Fucina, as described by critic, dramaturgist, and occasional collaborator in the foundry, Berto Morucchio, who, in the catalogue of the *XXXVII Mostra della Fucina*, remembered “first of all the ability to render the representations of each artist not through mere inert and banal reproduction, arbitrary in its impossible mimesis. . . . Matter, hands, and the lungs of the executor are invested in a noble air of respect, and he leads, exalts, and adjusts them according to his intuition.”[25]

Guggenheim also contributed a brief recollection to the same catalogue: “Egidio Costantini came to me with his problems, and I was eager and able to help him. His work was even better than I expected. He is the only person in Venice to produce truly artistic glass sculpture since the eighteenth century. I followed his activity with great interest, and find it is constantly developing. His every success brings me immense joy.”[26]

Glass works on view in this exhibition were created in collaboration with Egidio Costantini, with the exception of *Fish (Abyssal)* (*Pesce [Abissale]*) after Alexander Calder and the sculptures freely inspired by the ceramics of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso.

1 Enrico Crispolti, “Costantini scultore in vetro,” in *L’immortale: I capolavori di Egidio Costantini della Fucina degli Angeli*, exh. cat., Palazzetto Eucherio Sanvitale – Parco Ducale, Parma (Parma: Grafiche STEP Cooperativa, 1984).
2 Archivio Fucina degli Angeli (AFdA), Venice, Fondo P. Guggenheim, Letter by Peggy Guggenheim to Pier Luigi Bormioli, August 30, 1977: “I have been following Egidio’s Costantini’s artistic production since as early as 1958 and regard him as the most skilled and accomplished living artist working with glass. . . . A man of sound principles, honest, generous, open, and always grateful towards those who help him, I hold him in the highest esteem.”
3 Cristina Beltrami, “1948–1958: il vetro, un materiale dell’arte,” in *1948–1958: Il vetro di Murano e la Biennale di Venezia*, eds. Marino Barovier and Carla Sonego, exh. cat., Stanze del Vetro–Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, April 19–November 22, 2026, (Venice: Marsilio Arte, 2026), pp. 30–39.
4 “Murano vetri d’arte,” in *Domus* 312, November 1955, p. 37.
5 See Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Nachl. O. Kokoschka 313.14, letters by Costantini to Oskar Kokoschka, December 14, 1954, January 27, 1955. A drawing by Kokoschka from March 1955 cemented the founding of Costantini’s enterprise. It features two angels traced in subdued colors grappling with an anvil, accompanied by the dedication: “For the Fucina degli Angeli and my dear friend Egidio Costantini, who was the first to fascinate me with Murano glass.” It belongs to the mythological dimension of contemporary graphic works such as *Love and Psyche* (*Amore e Psiche*,1955), also shaped by the artist’s wandering among archaeological excavations and Italian museums. See Denys Haynes, *Kokoschka’s Drawings from Antiquity* (Rome: Edizioni dell’Elefante, 1988); and *Kokoschka: I viaggi in Italia 1948–1963,* ed. Maria Elisa Tittoni (Rome: Edizioni dell’Elefante, 1992). The name *Fucina degli Angeli* translates as “Foundry of the Angels.”
6 AFdA Fondo M. Ernst, letter from Costantini to M. Ernst and D. Tanning, October 11, 1963. Guggenheim and Ernst were married from 1941 to 1943.
7 Peggy Guggenheim, *Una collezionista ricorda* (Venice: Il Cavallino, 1956).
8 Federico Castellani, untitled, in *IX mostra internazionale del vetro d’arte*, exh. cat. (Venice: Tipografia Commerciale, 1964), n.p.
9 *Vetri di artisti contemporanei*, exh. cat. (Milan: Galleria del Naviglio, 1964), n.p.
10 A.B., “Mostre d’arte. Sculture in vetro,” in *Il Messaggero di Roma*, July 9, 1965.
11 The Museum of Modern Art Archives, *Sculpture in Glass*, Press Release no. 120, November 18, 1965.
12 Ibid. “The pieces range in size from Arp’s *Three Graces*, three tall, slender, rounded forms in bright blue that stand about 30 inches high, to the smallest of Picasso’s group. . . . Blue tones—ranging from deep blue-violet to bright blue-green to very pale sky blue—are the most predominant colors used.”
13 Ibid.
14 “Venetian Glass Sculpture: Modern Artists, Ancient Medium; Crafts, Melodies for the Eye,” in *Time*, September 17, 1965.
15 AFdA, Fondo P. Vail, Card by P. Vail to E. Costantini, June 2, 1965: “Dear Mr. Costantini: I am very pleased that everything went well for you in America. I will make some drawings for glass as soon as I can. I am really looking forward to making some very beautiful things.”
16 AFdA, Letter by E. Costantini to Peggy Guggenheim, March 10, 1967.
17 Jean Cocteau, untitled, in *Pegeen*, 363rd exhibition of the Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, October 17–26, 1956.
18 Peggy Guggenheim, “Una visione candida,” in *La Biennale di Venezia: Rivista bimestrale*

arte cinema musica teatro 18, February 1954, p. 27.
19 Roberto Crippa, "Picasso in vetro," in *Corriere d'Informazione*, October 14–15, 1968.
20 AFdA, Venice, Letter by E. Costantini to Manfredo Borsi, March 4, 1966.
21 See *The Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection: Masterpieces of modern art*, ed. Dorothy Canning Miller (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1981).
22 Paolo Fossati, "Re e regina di vetro: Due mostre alla Martano: sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli e Prampolini," in *L'Unità*, December 6, 1967.
23 In 1968 Crippa created *The Sun* (*Sole*) in glass, on view at the major 1970 exhibition at Palazzo Ducale in Venice: "[Crippa] through the complex glass medium finds his best expressive qualities" in "Al Palazzo Ducale una rassegna di sculure in Vetro," in *Avvenire,* August 21, 1970.
24 Crippa, "Picasso in vetro."
25 Berto Morucchio, untitled, in *Fucina degli Angeli*, exh. cat. (Venice: Fucina degli Angeli, June 1970), n.p.
26 Peggy Guggenheim, untitled, in *Fucina degli Angeli* (June 1970), n.p.



fig. 9
Pegeen Vail next to *Clementine*, 1966, (cat. no. 1) at the opening of the new Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, June 1966



cat. 1

Pegeen Vail
Clementine
1966
Polychrome hot-modeled glass
Twelve parts; vitrine: 141 × 94 cm
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)

2.

The Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro in Murano (1952–1955): An "Unimaginable" Undertaking

Marianna Rossi

"Artists from around the world have seen their designs take shape in the air, embodied in a substance that itself seems like solidified air. The idea for this school became a reality in less than a year and is rejuvenating Murano's repertoire through the most singular experiments in modern taste," reported the Italian newsreel *La Settimana INCOM* on the inauguration and opening of the first exhibition of the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro, held in Murano on April 18, 1953.[1] The opening reception vividly conveyed the bold experimental spirit of an initiative already described, in words that would prove prophetic, as a "living forge where glass, painting, sculpture, and architecture are fused." It brought together authorities, critics, and artists amid works still enclosed in the muffle kilns and others already installed throughout the elegant, spacious rooms of the Centro's headquarters at the Ferro & Lazzarini glassworks, Fondamenta Navagero 75.[2]

Formally established in October 1952, the Centro had been founded by the owners of Ferro & Lazzarini and conceived by Egidio Costantini. Driven by the ambition to combine the use of glass with a purely expressive purpose to produce works of art by involving contemporary artists, Costantini had already spent several months orchestrating a collaboration between Ferro & Lazzarini and a small group of Venetian painters: Aldo Bergamini, Mario Carraro, Gino Krayer, Fioravante Seibezzi, and Armando Tonello, who would go on to serve on the Centro's executive artistic committee.[3]

fig. 1
Oskar Kokoschka with *Bacchants* (*Baccanti*, 1952–53), in his studio, Villeneuve (Switzerland), 1954



fig. 2
Trophies in Murano glass by (from left) Armando Tonello, Gino Krayer, Mario Carraro, Aldo Bergamini, and Fioravante Seibezzi, 1952

Initial contact with the group had been facilitated by Costantini's friendship with Krayer, who was the first to supply several drawings.[4] Krayer painted Surrealist works marked by desolate atmospheres and a suspended sense of unease, with stylistic affinities to Salvador Dalí and Yves Tanguy (see cat. no. 8). In glass, however, he would move from figurative subjects toward a distinctly *spazialisti* idiom, which he explored particularly from 1954 onward.

The actual "handshake" between the group of artists and the furnace's master glassmakers, especially Albino Carrara, came with the production of a series of "Murano glass trophies," presented as prizes at major Venetian events during the summer of 1952.[5] The association with events of broad cultural and tourist appeal proved an astute promotional strategy, raising the foundry's profile and showcasing Murano creativity in unfamiliar guises. The strategy not only earned recognition from the public and the press but, more importantly, aroused the interest and support of the city's institutions, prompting visits to the glass company by distinguished guests and fostering crucial exchanges that generated ideas and proposals for taking the work forward.[6] Encouraged by the collaboration of the five painters and supported in particular by the mayor of Venice, Angelo Spanio, and the president of the Venice Biennale, Giovanni Ponti, in late August Costantini began to draw up a program around which to structure the Centro's activities in 1953.[7]

The project became a reality in record time. A press conference on October 29, 1952, announced the founding of the new organization under Costantini's direction, together with plans to establish a permanent exhibition space and organize exhibitions in Italy and abroad. Letters sent in the weeks that followed document the first attempts to attract the leading artists of the day, who were asked to provide drawings and sketches that would be translated into works in glass for display at the opening, initially scheduled for March 21, 1953.[8]

Although replies from artists such as Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, and Pablo Picasso were slow to arrive, other artists agreed to participate, ensuring that the inaugural exhibition could go ahead, but in order to assemble the materials and allow the pieces to be produced the opening would have to be postponed until April 18.[9] Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka presented a large krater, *Bacchants* (*Baccanti*, 1952–53, cat. no. 2): Costantini later recalled him as the first artist to have "actively supported the Centro's 'movement'" in its nascent phase, and their collaboration and friendship would endure for many years. In *Bacchants*, archeological echoes combine with a luminous and unusual form in *cristallo*, with its handles set in inverted positions.[10] French architect Le Corbusier also responded promptly, presenting a three-color abstract composition entitled *Armonie architettoniche*. The following year he would supply the design for *Bucranio*, a work eventually executed in the 1960s and first exhibited at the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, organized in Venice, at Ca' Giustinian, by what would later become La Fucina degli Angeli.[11] Early in 1953, US sculptor Alexander Calder likewise accepted the proposal and sent notes and drawings for the much-admired *Fish* (*Pesce*, 1954). This evocative glass mobile was listed in catalogues under the title *Abyssal*, an allusion to the strange, caricatural sea creatures of the ocean depths. Its simplified forms, almost transformed into comic-strip imagery in anticipation of Pop aesthetics, also appear in *Flying Dove* (*Colomba volante*), shown in subsequent exhibitions and mentioned in correspondence from May onward.[12]

Other foreign artists accepted Costantini's proposal, among them the English sculptor Henry Moore, represented by two works based on a series of sketches for metal and wire sculptures produced in 1939.[13] Italian participants included Gino Severini, along with other figures from the Venetian art world, including Bruno De Toffoli, Virgilio Guidi, and Bruno Saetti.[14]

Although the publicity surrounding the Centro's debut had sparked a heated dispute in the local press between Costantini and several glass manufacturers, who were rather hostile to granting the venture any validity, its earliest results marked a decisive break with established Murano practice and opened the way to further developments that helped fuel the broader critical debate on the decorative arts at the time.[15] An article published that same spring in *Sele Arte*, edited by the art critic Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, highlighted the "considerable importance" of the newly established organization,



fig. 3
Promotional brochure of the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro, Venice, 1953





fig. 4
Virgilio Guidi, *Spatial* (*Spaziale*, 1953), n.d.

fig. 5
Poster of the exhibition of Fred Fay, Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, September 1955

which, by contributing to the "liberation of glass as an expressive medium," exemplified the "modern outlook" that now regarded the distinction between art and craft as obsolete.[16]

Building on the inaugural exhibition, the subsequent shows held that year—the *Mostra d'arte internazionale di vetri disegni e pitture del Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro di Murano*, in Perugia in October, and an exhibition of the same name that opened in Treviso in December—presented largely the same works in glass, paintings, sketches, and drawings by the artists already involved. Together, they confirmed an orientation toward promoting the work of art in glass, "no longer in a secondary position" relative to painting and sculpture, as Guidi wrote in the preface to the Perugia catalog.[17]

The 1954 season, launched on a new organizational footing, marked the culmination of the venture and the full realization of the new "movement in glass sculpture." Internal friction led to the severing of all ties with Ferro & Lazzarini early that year, and the Centro's headquarters were transferred to Venice, in Campo San Luca 4149. At the same time, having secured the support of several other glass manufacturers, the institution put its definitive structure in place. Among the Centro's members, De Toffoli, Guidi, and Saetti joined the existing committee of artists chaired by Krayer, while the other participants were designated "active collaborators." An "Honorary Committee and Friends of the Centro," composed of public officials, critics, and journalists and acting as guarantor of its activities, reaffirmed the support of institutions and influential figures in Venetian cultural life. The program thus continued, still under Costantini's direction, as he cultivated contacts with artists through meetings, travel, and sustained correspondence.[18]

These efforts culminated in the *I Mostra Internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, a major exhibition held between May and June that year at the prestigious Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome. It set the seal on the Centro's work, bringing with it a new constellation of collaborations, foremost among them Picasso, who had enthusiastically agreed to take part in the preceding months and had sent his first drawings, then Braque, Chagall, Fred Fay, Pedro Flores, Fernand Léger, and Baltasar Lobo.[19] The Italian participants also included Gianni Dova, Renato Guttuso, Riccardo Licata, and Dino Martens. Among the works exhibited by members of the committee,



fig. 6
Installation plan for the Fucina degli Angeli, Campo Santi Filippo e Giacomo, Venice, ca. 1955, tempera on paper, 40 × 62 cm. Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

Krayer's *spazialismo* was exemplified by the iconic *Stratospheric* (or *Flying*) (*Stratosferico* [or *Volante*], ca. 1955, cat. no. 7).

After several further exhibitions at the Venice Lido and in Padua between late summer and the fall of that year,[20] the program seemed to falter, only to resume with *Glaskunst aus Murano* at the Gewerbemuseum in Basel, which opened in September 1955. The exhibition included emblematic works by artists already firmly associated with the Centro, such as Gio Ponti's abstract cup *Lights* (or *Rays*) (*Luci* [o *Raggi*], 1954, cat. no. 3), previously shown in Rome, as well as previously unexhibited pieces demonstrating an openness to collaborations with other Swiss artists. These included Walter Bodmer's eccentric *Asymmetrical Cat* (*Gatto asimmetrico*, 1955, cat. no. 5), whose figurative treatment nevertheless revealed the artist's attempt to explore graphic forms close to abstraction. Both works were acquired for the museum's collections, together with a work in glass after Picasso, *Goat* (*Cabrita*, 1954–55, cat. no. 9), an extension of his ceramic models of the same period. Although the Basel exhibition established the Centro's success abroad and received significant press coverage, it also coincided with the effective end of the venture, marked by Costantini's resignation. Aggrieved by further friction with several members, which had evidently been ongoing for some time, he relinquished the direction of the institution at the close of the exhibition.[21]

Even so, despite attempts to salvage the pioneering initiative launched two years earlier, Costantini had already been nurturing the idea of a "small gallery" of his own. The gallery, already named Fucina degli Angeli by the end of 1954, opened in April 1955 at Campo Santi Filippo e Giacomo.[22] Through the end of the 1950s, as an early small catalogue published in 1957 attests, the "small exhibition room," conceptually linked to the Centro's aspirations for the renewal of the art of Murano, initially displayed ceramics, enamels, lacquer works, and paintings by artists associated with Costantini, in addition to works in glass. Earlier collaborations with Picasso and Kokoschka were renewed. Kokoschka was represented by the large, engraved plate *Italian Woman* (*Donna italiana*, 1956–57, cat. no. 13), which bears the same subject as the glass bas-relief. Ties with local artists such as Bergamini and Krayer were also renewed. At the same time, new relationships were forged with other major artists, most notably Jean Cocteau. Cocteau, who had been in contact with Costantini since the previous year, suggested the gallery's iconic name and later supplied designs for whimsical, poetic works in glass, expressions of his highly personal mythology.[23]

In these new premises, fitted out with a "restrained and modern" sensibility, as an evocative period photograph of the Fucina's broad display windows attests, the visionary enterprise thus began, henceforth devoted to what Peggy Guggenheim would later recall as an "art form halfway between sculpture and glass."[24]

1 Archivio Luce Cinecittà, "I pittori dell'arte del vetro," *La Settimana Incom*, no. 00940, May 7, 1953.

2 Quote from *Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro*, brochure, Murano [1953]. Contemporaneous press coverage identifies the following artists as participants in the first exhibition of the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro: Aldo Bergamini, Alexander Calder, Mario Carraro, Joseph Cantré, George Creux, Gladys Rockemore Davis, Leon Desmet, Bruno De Toffoli, Virgilio Guidi, Peter Hurd, Oskar Kokoschka, Le Corbusier, Paul Manship, Wenter Marini, Georg Mestermann, Luciano Minguzzi, Henry Moore, Marco Novati, Aldo Patocchi, Gio Ponti, Bruno Saetti, Jean Saverys, Gino Severini, Zoltan Szekely, and Edgard Tytgat. Other notable figures present included the gallerist Carlo Cardazzo, the collector Arturo Deana, Astone Gasparetto, secretary of the Istituto Veneto per il Lavoro, and Giovanni Mariacher, director of the Musei Civici di Venezia. "Domani la rassegna dell'Arte nel Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, April 17, 1953; F. Cast., "L'inaugurazione a Murano del Centro Studio del Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, April 18, 1953; "Incontro dell'Arte col Vetro al Centro Studio di Murano," *Il Gazzettino*, April 19, 1953; *Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro*, [1953].

3 AFdA, folder "Inizio mia attività Arte"; Musée national Picasso-Paris, Archives, 515AP/E/1039/6, typescript containing a transcription of the article published in *Gazzettino Sera*, October 30–31, 1952.

4 See *Egidio Costantini: Il maestro dei maestri* (Brussels: Espace Medicis, 1990); Nino Berruti, Maria A. Serena, *Vetro, Un amore: Biografia di Egidio Costantini* (Trento: Edizioni Arca, 1993).

5 The first Murano glass cups created as trophies by the Venetian artists working with Ferro & Lazzarini were *Ardimento*, by Fioravante Seibezzi, presented to the French aviator Jacqueline Auriol, a guest in Venice for the Second International Aeronautical Exhibition of Venice; *Tempo e moto*, by Aldo Bergamini, awarded as first prize at International Air Week; *Cinema*, by Gino Krayer, and *Interpretazione*, by Mario Carraro, presented respectively to the best foreign performer and the best Italian performer at the 13th Venice International Film Festival; and *Alta Moda*, by Armando Tonello, awarded to the most distinguished fashion house at the Fourth International Festival of High Fashion and Costume in Film. Following the success of these creations, another five trophies were produced in the summer of 1952 for the first international dance tournament organized by the Venice Casino. Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice (AFdA), folder "Inizio mia attività Arte": Cinque artistiche coppe muranesi per le manifestazioni veneziane," *Il Gazzettino*, July 26, 1952; "Coppe trofei diplomi a piloti e costruttori," *Gazzettino-Sera*, July 28–29, 1952; "Simpatica riunione di artisti e artigiani," *Il Gazzettino*, August 2, 1952; "Incontro . . . a tavola di artisti e artigiani," *Gazzettino-Sera*, August 2, 1952; "Trofei muranesi ai campioni del ballo," *Gazzettino-Sera*, August 26–27, 1952.

6 AFdA, folder "Inizio mia attività Arte": "Critici registi e attori in visita all'isola del vetro," *Gazzettino-Sera*, August 30–31, 1952; "Giornalisti italiani e stranieri in visita all'isola del fuoco," *Italturismo*, September 4, 1952; "In visita a Murano il Ministro on. Piccioni," *Gazzettino-Sera*, September 12–13, 1952.

7 AFdA, folder "Inizio mia attività Arte", letter from Aldo Bergamini, Mario Carraro, Gino Krayer, Fioravante Seibezzi, and Armando Tonello to E. Costantini, September 24, 1952; letter from Giovanni Ponti to E. Costantini, October 6, 1952.

8 AFdA, Fondo M. Chagall, letters from E. Costantini to M. Chagall, November 12, 1952, January 23, 1953, and February 6, 1953; Musée national Picasso-Paris, Archives, 515AP/E/1039/6, letter from French Consul Gérard Gaussen to Pablo Picasso, December 13, 1952, and letter from Egidio Costantini to Pablo Picasso, January 23, 1953; "In merito alla polemica sul Centro dell'Arte nel Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, May 1, 1953.

9 AFdA, Fondo M. Chagall, letter from Giovanni Lazzarini to M. Chagall, March 2, 1953.

10 Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Nachl. O. Kokoschka 313.14, letter from Egidio Costantini to Oskar Kokoschka, November 11, 1954.

11 In early February 1953, Le Corbusier sent Costantini photographs and color images to guide the production of the sculpture *Armonie architettoniche*. A painted wooden maquette was also sent from Paris but was held at customs and released only after diplomatic intervention, reaching Murano in early April. In addition to the letters and designs for *Bucranio* sent to Costantini in May 1954, further information about the work emerges from correspondence between the two men in April and May 1965. In these letters, Costantini informed the architect that the piece had been completed and suggested that it be delivered to Peggy Guggenheim's home at Palazzo Venier dei Leoni. Le Corbusier subsequently wrote to Guggenheim himself, arranging for an assistant from his Paris studio to collect *Bucranio*. AFdA, Fondo Le Corbusier, letters from Le Corbusier to the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro, February 3, 1953, September 13, 1954, and October 7, 1955; correspondence between Costantini and Le Corbusier, April 4 and May 17, 1965; letter from E. Costantini to the Fondation Le Corbusier, October 29, 1966. See also Elke Allgaier, *"Glaskunst aus Murano": Zur Geschichte des Centro Studio Pittori und der Fucina degli Angeli*, PhD. dissertation, University of Zurich, Faculty of Philosophy, Karlsruhe, 2004.

12 From the 1940s onward, the fish was a recurring motif in Calder's mobiles; see *Calder: Dreaming in Balance*, eds. S. Pagé, D. Buchhart and A. K. Hofbauer, exh. cat., Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, April 15–August 16, 2026 (Paris: Fondation Louis Vuitton, 2026), pp. 213–19.

In April 1954, Costantini asked Calder for permission to reinterpret in glass the figure from the mobile *14 Wurzel*, reproduced on the cover of a catalogue the artist had given and inscribed to Costantini during a meeting in Paris several months earlier. The work was intended for exhibition in Rome the following month at the *I Mostra Internazionale del Vetro d'Arte di Murano*, yet it does not appear in the catalogue. AFdA, Fondo A. Calder, letters from A. Calder to E. Costantini, February 20, March 14, May 12, and July 25, 1953; letter from E. Costantini to A. Calder, April 24, 1954. See *I Mostra Internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, exh. cat., Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, May 22–June 13, 1954 (Rome: De Luca Editore, 1954).

13 AFdA, Fondo H. Moore.

14 AFdA, Fondo V. Guidi, correspondence between E. Costantini and V. Guidi, November 12, 1952; December 19, 1952; December 30, 1952; February 24, 1953; March 20, 1953; Fondo B. Saetti, correspondence between E. Costantini and B. Saetti, November 12, 1952; December 19, 1952; December 24, 1952.

15 "Un ordine del giorno di produttori del vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, April 29, 1953; "In merito alla polemica sul Centro dell'Arte nel Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, May 1, 1953; "Ancora sul Centro dell'Arte nel Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, May 5, 1953.

16 Astone Gasparetto, "Antico e moderno nella vetraria di Murano," *Sele Arte* 6, May–June 1953, pp. 29–34. For the relationship among art, craft and industry in the 1950s, see *Forme Nuove in Italia*, ed. Triennale di Milano and the Compagnia nazionale artigiana (Rome: Bestetti, 1957).

17 *Mostra d'arte internazionale di vetri disegni e pitture del Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro di Murano – Venezia*, exh. cat., Palazzo Gallenga, Perugia, October 15–25, 1953 (Venice: Stamperia Zanetti, 1953); *Mostra Internazionale di vetri, disegni e pitture del Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro di Murano*, exh. cat., Sala dell'Ispettorato Scolastico, Treviso, December 23, 1953–January 6, 1954 (Treviso: Arti grafiche Longo & Zoppelli, 1953); "Rassegna del centro Muranese a Palazzo Gallenga di Perugia," *Il Gazzettino*, October 9, 1953; G.B. Scarpa, "Murano può ancora dire una parola di pura Bellezza," *Il Gazzettino*, December 28, 1953; F. Cast., "Nella magia del vero opere di insigni Maestri," *Il Gazzettino*, January 9, 1954.

18 The organization of the Centro was described in detail, together with lists of names, in a letter sent by Costantini to Kokoschka. It comprised the "members," namely the eight artists; Costantini himself as director; an administrative officer and a press officer; the "auditors," three figures who probably performed representative functions, including the collector Arturo Deana, who also served on the "Honorary Committee and Friends of the Centro," which numbered thirty-eight members; the "active collaborators;" and, finally, the Murano glass manufacturers and master glassmakers engaged in producing the works. Although the document did not provide a specific list of the latter, their identities could be inferred from the catalogue of the *I Mostra Internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano* held in Rome in 1954. In addition to Ferro & Lazzarini and Albino Carrara, responsible for works produced previously, it listed the glass manufacturers Dalla Venezia & Martinuzzi, I.V.R. di Mazzega, Archimede Seguso, Alberto Toso, and Aureliano Toso, and the master glassmakers Aldo Bon (Polo), Angelo Bon, Luigi Martens, Francesco Martinuzzi, Ermanno Nason, Archimede Seguso and Ferdinando Toso (Fei). Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Nachl. O. Kokoschka 313.14, letter from Egidio Costantini to Oskar Kokoschka, February 2, 1954; letter from Gino Krayer to Oskar Kokoschka, February 2, 1954.

19 Musée national Picasso-Paris, Archives, 515 AP C 98, letter from Egidio Costantini to Pablo Picasso, May 11, 1954; F. Cast., "La Vallauris del vetro sarà Murano per Picasso," *Il Gazzettino*, April 1, 1954; *I Mostra Internazionale*, 1954.

20 *Mostra Internazionale Vetro d'Arte Murano*, exh. cat., Galleria "La Chiocciola", Padua, October–November 1954 (Venice: Stamperia già Zanetti, 1954); "Vetro d'arte al Lido," *L'Unità*, August 25, 1954; "Mostra del Vetro d'arte al Lido di Venezia," *Il Popolo di Roma*, August 28, 1954; "Pittori nell'arte del vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, August 29, 1954; "Mostra internazionale del vetro," *L'Unità*, August 30, 1954; "'Prima' alla Mostra del Vetro," *Il Gazzettino*, August 30, 1954; "Mostra del vetro d'arte," *Voce Adriatica*, August 31, 1954; F. Cast., "Vetri di Murano," *Il Gazzettino*, September 7, 1954; "Artisti di dieci paesi attorno a un Picasso di Cristallo," *Messaggero Veneto-Udine*, September 9, 1954; O.B., "Pittura e scultura nel vetro di Murano," *Il Gazzettino*, October 23, 1954.

21 *Glaskunst aus Murano*, exh. cat., Gewerbemuseum, Basel, September 6–November 20, 1955 (Basel: Benno Schwabe & Co, 1955); W. Müller, "Maler formen Glas," *Sie und Er*, 1955, p. 4; M. Netter, "Glaskunst aus Murano," *Werk*, 1955, pp. 405–10; "Glaskunst aus Murano," *National Zeitung*, September 7, 1955; "Moderne Kunst aus buntem Glas," *Basler Nachrichten*, September 7, 1955; M. Netter, "Reformation in Murano: Moderne kunst aus buntem Glas," *Die Weltwoche*, September 16, 1955; H. D., "Plastik aus farbigem Glas," *Schwäbische Laudeszeitung*, October 18, 1955; A. Schultze Vellinghausen, "Weltbegegnung in Gläsern: 'Glaskunst aus Murano 'im Baseler Gewerbemuseum," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 31, 1955; U. Seelmann-Eggenbert, "Kunst von der Insel des Kitsches," *Mannheimer Morgen*, October 27, 1955; L. Z., "Glaskunst aus Murano," *Basler Woche*, November 11, 1955. See Allgaier, *Glaskunst aus Murano*, pp. 222–23.

22 In a letter of December 1954, Costantini wrote to his friend Kokoschka: "As a first piece of news, I can tell you that 'my' little gallery will be christened 'LA FUCINA DEGLI ANGELI'." Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Nachl. O. Kokoschka 313.14, letters from Egidio Costantini to Oskar Kokoschka, December 14, 1954, and January 27, 1955; E. Duse, "'La Fucina degli Angeli' inaugurata a Venezia," *Corriere d'informazione*, April 22–23, 1955.

23 *La Fucina degli Angeli a Venezia* (Padua: Stampa Rotografica, 1957).

24 Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Nachl. O. Kokoschka 313.14, letter from Egidio Costantini to Oskar Kokoschka, January 27, 1955; *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, exh. brochure, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 19, 1964–January 7, 1965, (Milan 1965).









cat. 2

Oskar Kokoschka
***Bacchants* (*Baccanti*)**
1952–53
Hot-modeled *cristallo* glass (Manufacturer: Albino Carraro – Ferro & Lazzarini; sandblasting: Giuseppe D'Alpaos – S.A.L.I.R.)
21 × 36 × 24 cm
Galerie Marc Heiremans, Antwerp

figs. 7–8
Oskar Kokoschka, Drawings for *Bacchants*, 1952–53, pencil on paper, 1953
recto and verso



fig. 9
Egidio Costantini holding *Lights* (or *Rays*) (*Luci* [o *Raggi*], 1954, cat. no. 3) by Gio Ponti at *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1954

cat. 3

Gio Ponti
***Lights* (or *Rays*)**
(*Luci* [o *Raggi*])
1954
Polychrome blown glass
(Manufacturer: Ermanno Nason - I.V.R. Mazzega)
Diameter: 24 cm, height: 36.5 cm
Historisches Museum, Basel



fig. 10
Peggy Guggenheim,
“La raccolta Guggenheim
a New York,” in *Le Arti*,
May 1969



fig. 11
Peggy Guggenheim at home,
Palazzo Venier dei Leoni,
Venice, 1975. Hanging from
the ceiling: *Fish (Abyssal)*
(*Pesce [Abissale]*), after
Alexander Calder, after 1953





cat. 4

Fish (Abyssal)
(*Pesce [Abissale]*)
after Alexander Calder
after 1953
Polychrome glass,
wire, and metal
63 × 112 cm
Giorgio Cardazzo Collection,
Milan





cat. 5

Walter Bodmer
Asymmetrical Cat
(*Gatto asimmetrico*)
1955
Hot-modeled blue blown glass, details in *lattimo*, coral, and black glass
32.5 × 20 × 20 cm
Historisches Museum, Basel

cat. 6

Walter Bodmer
Asymmetrical Cat
(*Gatto asimmetrico*)
1955
Pencil, charcoal, and pastel on paper
50 × 34.5 cm
Historisches Museum, Basel



fig. 12
Walter Bodmer observing his *Asymmetrical Cat* (*Gatto asimmetrico*, 1955) at the exhibition *Glaskunst von Murano*, Gewebermuseum, Basel, 1955



fig. 13
Gino Krayer (center) between his *Stratospheric (or Flying)* and Peggy Guggenheim at the exhibition *Sculture in vetro*, Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, 1968



fig. 14
Gino Krayer, *Stratospheric (or Flying)*, 1953, n.d.



cat. 7

Gino Krayer
Stratospheric (or Flying)
(Stratosferico [o Volante])
1953
Polychrome hot-modeled blown glass
(Manufacturer: Archimede Seguso—Archimede Seguso)
Diameter: 28 cm, height: 49 cm
Galerie Marc Heiremans, Antwerp

cat. 8

Gino Krayer
Untitled
1950s
Oil on plywood
14 × 21 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice



3.

Braque, Chagall, and Picasso: Ceramics as a Visual Source

Cristina Beltrami

It is not unusual for ceramics to precede works in glass as maquettes or, more accurately, as plastic precursors. This is especially true of the sculptures created during the early years of the Fucina degli Angeli.

This process underlined Pablo Picasso's involvement with the Fucina starting in 1954, when ten of his sculptures were included in the *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano* at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome and mentioned by Egidio Costantini in a letter from May 1954: "the first two works by Picasso are almost ready, the rest will follow very soon to be exhibited in Rome."[1]

As suggested by their titles, these works evoke the sculptural universe modeled for the kilns of Vallauris since 1946, which circulated in Italy through a series of refined publications and the exhibition *Pablo Picasso: Ceramiche*, held at the Galleria del Naviglio in 1951 with an introduction by Lucio Fontana.[2] Thus, *Goat*, *Amphora* (*Anfora*), *Water Carrier* (*Portatrice*), *Bull* (*Toro*), *Flamenco*, *Water Carrier* (*L'acquaia*), *Burlesque* (*Burlesco*), *Centaur* (*Centauro*), and *Condor*, modeled by the talented masters of Murano in 1954,[3] are translations in glass of the homonymous ceramics published in high-quality black-and-white reproductions in *Pablo Picasso au Musée d'Antibes* by André Verdet (1951), a copy of which is held in the Archives of the



fig. 1
Pablo Picasso at home with *Precious Amphora* (*Anfora preziosa*, 1959–61), La Californie, Cannes, 1961

fig. 2
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965



fig. 3
Pablo Picasso, Untitled (Study for *Centauro*, a Project for a Sculpture in Glass [Studio per "Centauro", progetto di scultura in vetro]), March 25, 1954. Crayon, graphite and ink on paper. Private Collection, Houston, courtesy of McClain Gallery

Fucina in Venice.[4] Thirty-nine of Picasso's ceramics were also exhibited at the landmark 1953 solo show in Rome[5] and reproduced in the *Rivista della Biennale di Venezia* issue dedicated to him, in which critic Marco Valsecchi's essay opened with a sharp reproduction of the enigmatic *Condor*.

The exchange between Costantini and Picasso thus developed between 1952 and 1955 through exchanges between Italy and France. In December 1952 the artist was invited to take part in the exciting adventure of the Centro Studio Pittori.[6] Multiple actors likely played the role of intermediary: the expert Venetian dealer Carlo Cardazzo, who was in contact with Picasso at least since the 1951 exhibition, certainly played a crucial role; as did Arturo Deana, the private collector and owner of La Colomba restaurant in Venice, who frequented Picasso's home in Vallauris.[7] Several artists who were directly involved in Costantini's project from the beginning, including Marc Chagall, Oskar Kokoschka, and the Spaniards Pedro Flores and Baltasar Lobo, for different reasons were in contact with Picasso and may have served as connections.

This all came together in March 1954, a date marked on the copy of a drawing that recently resurfaced in a private US collection that confirms Costantini's visit to Vallauris, a location that was well-known in Italy thanks to a celebrated documentary by Luciano Emmer.[8] From that first 1954 visit, organized to show the artist the first glass experiments,[9] Costantini returned to Venice with a copy of *Faunes et Nymphes de Pablo Picasso* (1952),[10] edited by Verdet, to draw inspiration for a series of sculptures, which he worked on diligently from 1956.[11] This resulted in a group of numerous creatures from a lost world that Verdet later described as "miniature Greek deities."[12] A later version in acid-etched blue glass was photographed in the 1960s in Palazzo Venier dei Leoni—Peggy Guggenheim's home—as well as in a display case of the exhibition *Sculpture in Glass*, held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1965.

During the postwar period, Picasso settled in the South of France and turned to playful mythological subjects and works inspired by the boundless vitality of the Mediterranean. Compositions such as *Young Faun*, *Joy of Life: Pastoral*, and *Still Life with Fish and Fruit-bowl*—all dating from 1946 and held at the Musée Picasso, Antibes—were the basis for other glass sculptures with more essential forms playing on the medium's transparency. These include *Water Carrier* (*Acquaiola*, 1960), a version of which the Galleria del Naviglio exhibited in 1964, while the decorative terracotta panel *Still Life with Fruit-bowl and Summer Vase* (*Nature morte au compotier et au vase été*, 1948), which was the formal forerunner of *Precious Amphora*, photographed by Irish photographer Edward Quin at the artist's residence, La Californie, in 1961. The Venetian critic Giuseppe Marchiori noted that *Joy of Life: Pastoral* "is conceived in terms of surface and could unfold around the curve of a vase, also due to the decorative nature of the design and its delicate proportions"[13]—a reflection that refers to ceramics but that can easily be applied to glass.

The process of translating preexisting ceramics into these freely inspired reinterpretations also worked for two other leading figures of the Fucina's first phase, Georges Braque and Chagall, who were both involved in the Centro Studio Pittori. Despite a drawing from 1954 dedicated to the "Centre d'étude de peinture de l'art verier de Murano,"[14] Braque's *Encounter* (or *Lovers*) (*Incontro* [o *Innamorati*) (after 1954) is certainly rooted in the renowned ceramic plate published in the volume of the exhibition held at the Galerie de l'Orfèvrerie Christofle, Paris, in November 1951.[15] Indeed, a copy of the rare book is held in the Fucina's archives and clearly functioned as a maquette: the stark contrast of the two figures in profile and the two-dimensional nature of the subject make it a perfect model for translation into glass. Chagall also appears to have handed five drawings to Costantini, who was visiting Vence, France, in 1954.[16] In the fall of the same year, Chagall likely traveled to Murano,[17] where, "seduced by Murano's secrets, he seized thongs and spatulas and, with the help of a master glassmaker, started modeling glass himself."[18]

1 AFdA, Fondo P. Picasso, Letter by E. Costantini to J. Pellegrini, May 11, 1954.
2 *Pablo Picasso: Ceramiche,* catalogue of the 115th exhibition of the Galleria del Naviglio, December 22, 1951–January 4, 1952.
3 Ermanno Nason created the 1954 works by Picasso for I.V.R. Mazzega; by Ferdinando Toso (Fei) for the Alberto Toso foundry; by Aldo Bon (Polo) of Aureliano Toso; by Francesco Martinuzzi (Checo) for the Dalla Venezia & Martinuzzi foundry, and by Archimede Seguso for the homonymous foundry.
4 André Verdet, *Pablo Picasso au Musée d'Antibes* (Paris: Éditions Falaize, 1951). The copy held at AFdA features a dedication by Jos Pellegrini, custodian of the Musée Grimaldi d'Antibes, which Costantini visited the same day he met Picasso at Vallauris: "Musée Grimaldi, Antibes, il 26/3/1954. To my great friend Egidio Costantini, with lots of love."
5 *Mostra di Pablo Picasso: Catalogo ufficiale*, ed. Lionello Venturi, exh. cat., Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome, October 2–November 24, 1953 (Rome: De Luca, 1953).
6 Archive of the Musée national Picasso-Paris, 515AP/ E/ 1039/ 6, Letter by the French Consul, Gérard Gaussen, to Pablo Picasso, December 13, 1952.
7 Paolo Rizzi, "Contributo critico" in *Capolavori della collezione Deana*, 1973, pp. 33–42. The press remembered both at the opening of the Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro, "'Prima' alla Mostra del Vetro," in *Il Gazzettino*, August 30, 1954. Arturo Deana was also a member of the Comitato d'onore al Centro Studio Pittori from its inception (Zurich, Zantralbibliothek Bestellung, Fondo Oskar Kokoschka, list of the "Comitato d'onore e amici del Centro," February 2, 1954).
8 *Pablo Picasso a Vallauris* by Luciano Emmer, 1954, is the result of the film director's lengthy stay in Vallauris the previous year.
9 See *Egidio Costantini: Il maestro dei maestri*, 1990, p. 158: the two works handed to Picasso were two versions of *Flamenco* and *Owl* (*Gufo*).
10 AFdA, Venice, Fondo Picasso: A. Verdet, *Faunes et Nymphes di Pablo Picasso*, 1952. The copy features the dedication: "A Egidio con affecto Vellauris le 26.3.45" ("To Egidio with Love, the 26-3-45"), to which a different hand added "pour le verres" ("for glass"). Most importantly, the abbreviated inscriptions annotated in the margins of the sculptures are clearly legible, making them suitable for translation into glass.
11 Musée Picasso, Paris, Archive, Letter by E. Costantini to P. Picasso, August 14, 1956: "In recent times I have begun the creations, interpreting your creative intentions in the most appropriate way; you must, however, bear in mind that the 'translation' is carried out through photographs, some of which are not very clear, and all of which are seen from only one side."
12 AFdA, Fondo A. Verdet, manuscript by André Verdet, n.d., p.1.
13 Giuseppe Marchiori, *L'ultimo Picasso*, (Venice: Alfieri, 1949), p.10.
14 AFdA, Fondo G. Braque, photograph copy of the original drawing.
15 See *L'Asiette peinte*, exh. cat., Orfèvrerie Christofle, Paris, November 1951 ([Paris]: Tip. Jean Raimond Crès, 1951) n.p. The same year, editor Jacques Damase published the elegant volume *Sculture de Braque* (with a preface Stanislas Fumet), in which works such as *Hymen*, a plaster sculpture carved in 1939, reveal how frontal portraits recurred in Braque's practice.
16 AFdA, Venezia, Fondo M. Chagall, letter by E. Costantini to M. Chagall, September 21, 1954. Costantini "chased" Chagall until November 1952 (AFdA, letter by Costantini to Chagall, September 12). They met in Paris in March 1954, and again a few months later in Vence, when Chagall handed him five drawings whose translation into glass proved more

problematic than expected, as Costantini informed him in September of that same year that the sculptures “came out of the annealing furnace broken.” (AFdA, letter by Costantini to Chagall, September 21, 1954).

17 M. Brun, “Retour d’Italie: Marc Chagall dotera sa chapelle de Vence d’un autel en verre du Murano,” in *L’Aurore*, December 28, 1954. The article specifies how in Murano Chagall had exchanges with master Ermanno Nason at the I.V.R. Mazzega glass factory.

18 R. S., “Fianco a fianco coi ‘maestri’ gli artisti calati a Murano,” in *L’Unità*, November 21, 1954.



cat. 9

***Goat* (*Cabrita*)**
after Pablo Picasso
1954–55
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent blown *cristallo* glass, details in *lattimo*, red, and amethyst glass
(Manufacturer: Ermanno Nason – I.V.R. Mazzega)
33 × 42 × 17 cm
Historisches Museum, Basel

fig. 4
Condor, after Pablo Picasso, on view at the *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1954





Le ceramiche
di Picasso



fig. 5
Marco Valsecchi, "Le ceramiche di Picasso," in *La Biennale*, April–June 1953

fig. 6
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965. From left: Max Ernst, *King*, and *Condor*, after Pablo Picasso



cat. 10

Condor
after Pablo Picasso
1954
Hand-modeled and hot-modeled black, *lattimo* blown glass, cased in *cristallo* glass
52 × 20 × 45
Private collection, Milan

fig. 7
Innamorati, the first attempt to translate Georges Braque's ceramic works into glass. Installation view, *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1954



fig. 8
L'Asiette peinte, exhibition catalogue, Galerie Orfèvrerie Christofle, Paris, 1951





cat. 11

Encounter (or Lovers)
(*Incontro [o Innamorati*)
after George Braque
after 1954
Semi-iridescent *cristallo* and black mold-shaped glass
(Manufacturer: Ermanno Nason—I.V.R. Mazzega)
34 × 37 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice

fig. 9
From left: Egidio Costantini and Jean Cocteau with a version of Oskar Kokoschka's *Italian Woman*, Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, 1958

fig. 10
From left: Oskar Kokoschka and Egidio Costantini with a version of the artist's *Italian Woman*, Venice, 1955







cat. 12

Oskar Kokoschka
Untitled (*To the Fucina degli Angeli* [*Per la Fucina degli Angeli*])
March 18, 1955
Pencil on paper
28 × 22.5 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice

cat. 13

Oskar Kokoschka
Italian Woman
(*Donna italiana*)
1956–57
Polychrome mold-shaped glass
36 × 28.5 × 5.5 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



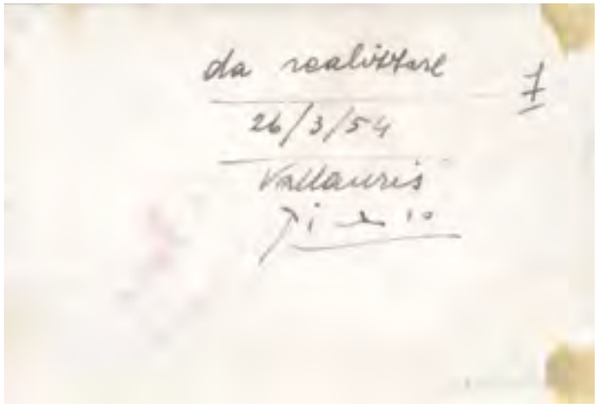


fig. 11
Pablo Picasso signing
Precious Amphora
(*Anfora Preziosa*, 1959–61),
La Californie, Cannes, 1961

cat. 14

Precious Amphora
(*Anfora preziosa*)
after Pablo Picasso
1959–61
Hot-modeled blown *cristallo* glass, details in semi-iridescent black glass
49 × 26 × 15 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne









figs. 12–13
Card reproducing Pablo Picasso, *Vaso di donna con anfora* (1947–48), to be used as a maquette; signed by the artist, March 26, 1954

cat. 15

***Water Carrier* (*Portatrice d'acqua*)**
after Pablo Picasso
1960
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent blown *cristallo* glass, applied elements in amethyst glass
Diameter: 22 cm, height: 41.5 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne

cat. 16

Flamenco
after Pablo Picasso
ca. 1960
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent *cristallo* glass, applied elements in black glass
56 × 17 × 27 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg





fig. 14
From left: Egidio Costantini and Pablo Picasso with a version of the artist's *Flamenco*, Vallauris (France), 1954

cat. 17

***Faun* (*Fauno*)**
after Pablo Picasso
ca.1960
Hot-modeled blown *cristallo* glass, details in blue and orange glass
37 × 40 × 19 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg



cat. 18

***Bacchus* (*Bacco*)**
after Pablo Picasso
ca. 1960
Hot-modeled blown *pagliesco* glass, details in red and aquamarine glass
37.5 × 30 × 20 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg



cat. 19

***Bacchus* (*Bacco*)**
after Pablo Picasso
ca.1960
Hot-modeled blown *cristallo* glass, details in green and coral glass
Base, diameter: 17.8 cm, height 15.5 cm;
51.5 × 27 × 22 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





cat. 20

Centaur (*Centauro*)
after Pablo Picasso
ca.1960
Hot-modeled orange blown glass
35 × 22.5 × 18 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



cat. 21

Centaur (*Centauro*)
after Pablo Picasso
1962
Polychrome hot-modeled blown glass, details in amethyst glass
35 × 23 × 21 cm
Galerie Pron, Paris





cat. 22

Nymphs and Fauns
(*Ninfe e fauni*)
after Pablo Picasso
1964
Hot-modeled blue glass, acid corrosion
Twenty-three parts, height: 10–30.5 cm each
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim, Foundation, New York)





fig. 15
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965, with *Nymphs and Fauns* (*Ninfe e fauni*, 1964) after Pablo Picasso





figs. 16–17
André Verdet, *Faunes et Nymphes* de *Pablo Picasso* (Geneva: Editions Pierre Cailler, 1952)













fig. 18
Peggy Guggenheim with *Nymphs and Fauns* (*Ninfe e fauni*, 1964, cat. no. 22) after Pablo Picasso, Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, 1964

4.

Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning's Surrealism

Cristina Beltrami

The connection established "through the dear Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim"[1] between Max Ernst, his wife Dorothea Tanning, and Egidio Costantini dates to 1963, when the gallerist visited the couple in Huismes, France. Ernst created his first works in glass in January 1964 and showed them at the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte* at Ca' Giustinian that summer.[2] Here, a selection of his *Masks* were displayed alongside prototypes of the *King* and *Queen* (*Re*, *Regina*, 1964, cat. nos. 25, 26) and the impressive *Poet* (*Poeta*, 1963, cat. no. 24), which in 1965 critic Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco described as "an unsettling figure blown in glass and endowed with a subtle red core, while externally the golden droplets generate powerful luminous vibrations."[3] The word "poet" is the key to understanding Ernst's practice. As Paolo Marinetti, the enlightened driving force behind the Centro sperimentale of Palazzo Grassi, observed: "Max Ernst should be discussed as poetry: Poetry is Water. He is a poet when he is a revolutionary; a poet when he is bourgeois; and he remains a poet also into adulthood because he preserves the imagination and freshness of a child."[4] The large-scale 1966 solo exhibition at Palazzo Grassi in Venice was a pivotal moment in the collaboration between Ernst and Costantini. The artist and Tanning spent several days in the city, visited Murano,

fig. 1
Peggy Guggenheim with Max Ernst's *Poet* (*Poeta*, 1963), at the opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965

cat. 23

Max Ernst
***Zoomorphic Couple* (*Couple zoomorphe*)**
1933
Oil on canvas
91.9 × 73.3 cm
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)



fig. 3
Exhibition announcement,
The Imagery of Chess,
Julien Levy Gallery, New York,
December 1944



and most importantly signed pages from the exhibition catalogue, transforming the photographic reproductions of several works into glass projects. The first was the image used for the invitation and the cover of the catalogue jacket, translated as a complex sculpture in glass and plexiglass titled *Three Goddesses* (*Tre dee*, 1968), also visible in a photograph of the Galleria Blu in Milan from 1968. The Fucina elaborated the same subject to create the heads of *Goddess* (*Dea*), which exist autonomously from the prototype and include the version in green glass and iridescent *cristallo* glass (1968, cat. no. 30), and one from 1969 in slightly gilded and iridescent *cristallo* glass, in the holdings of the Lowe Art Museum of the University of Miami.[5]

Following the same process, the painting *Archetype II* (*Archetipo II*, 1959) served as a model for a series of masks cast in 1964 in polychrome glass. Mounted on metal structures, they were presented in a variety of display configurations. A version from 1968, *Archaic* (*Arcaico*, cat. no. 29), owing to its standing form, became the emblem of the Fucina's renovated spaces.

In 1966, Tanning turned to glass and entrusted Costantini to create the large *Katchina* (1967, cat. no. 31), clearly a glass version of the pendant exhibited at Galerie Le Point Cardinal in Paris, whose catalogue served once again as a maquette.[6] In July the following year, Costantini notified Tanning that "Katchina is ready and it's a small gem"[7]—a sculpture of about forty centimeters, in solid *cristallo* glass, closely corresponding to the metal model. The appeal of the Kachina dolls[8] was particularly strong among artists of the early twentieth century, especially in the United States. Created through simple means by Native Americans, these objects embodied a primordial force comparable to masks from Africa for the European avant-garde.



fig. 4
Opening of the *XXII Mostra di sculture in vetro. Max Ernst e Mark Tobey*, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro, Venice, July 1967

figs. 5–6
Egidio Costantini delivering Max Ernst his *Immortal* (*Immortale*) at home, Seillans (France), December 1967

Despite the damage caused by the 1966 *acqua alta,* Costantini did not abandon his most ambitious project involving Ernst, *Immortal* (*Immortale*), which was completed in 1967[9] and debuted in the presence of both artists at the Ca' Pesaro – Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, Venice, in an installation-driven display. A monumental glass chess set designed by Ernst—a passionate chess player—*Immortal* was complete with thirty-one pieces positioned in the final move of the famous game played between Adolf Anderssen and Lionel Kieseritzky in London in 1851, known as the "Immortal Game." The maquette for each element dated to 1944, when Ernst created a chess set for the exhibition *The Imagery of Chess* at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York.[10] It was intended as a two-person face-off on a table that Surrealist artist Xenia Andreyevna Kashevaroff created especially for the occasion, and it also served as a model for a series of wooden multiples, one of which Ernst gifted to Costantini (1944, cat. no. 27).

In May 1967 work must have been progressing well, since Costantini described in detail the color of the thirty-two elements: "16 in bluish light-blue glass and 16 in dawn-pink glass,"[11] the latter chosen over the initially proposed "uranium yellow."[12] In July Costantini assured the artist he would send him a version of the chess set after the Venice exhibition:[13] it is likely that two of the blue glass elements are those visible in a portrait of Karlheinz Bauer in his home in Seillans, France, from the following year.

The three pieces featured in this exhibition are prototypes for *Immortal* in full form. If the *Pawn* in blue is to be regarded as a trial version dating to 1967 (cat. no. 28), the ruby-red *Queen* and the *King*, with its green *sommerso* layer, were created earlier, in 1964; the press—ignoring the project's concept—initially mistook the *King* for "a giant rhinoceros horn."[14] Indeed, they were already visible in several photographs of the Huismes residence in France, plausibly from October 1963, as well as in Peggy Guggenheim's living room in the 1960s, and later in the display of the Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1965.

Immortal was a cyclopean task that put both the Fucina's finances and Costantini's health at risk. However, the project filled him with pride for "having realized what seemed an impossible dream."[15] The work debuted at the *XXII Mostra di sculture in vetro* at Ca' Pesaro – Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna in Venice, on July 22, 1967, at a time in history when chess was enjoying considerable attention; the game's popularity was bolstered by the International Congress scheduled to take place in Venice at Palazzo Vendramin Calergi in October that same year, which hosted the Soviet champion Tigran Petrosian. Ernst's chess set became the symbol of the event.[16] A few weeks later, *Immortal* was presented at Galleria Martano in Turin,[17] where Paolo Fossati, drawing on a definition by André Verdet that spoke of a game fit "for Maya emperors and Pharaoh kings,"[18] detailed how the "sense of ritual and hieratic monumentality of these sculptures" is determined by their "still transparency, dense with shadows."[19] The same exhibition also featured Tanning's *Katchina,* which underscored the exhibition's Surrealist nature.[20]

The following year, commenting on the rooms of the Galleria Blu in Milan, Marco Valsecchi described how the "fabulous glass blocks hold within them the gleam of geological crystal." [21] On the same occasion, Roberto Crippa interpreted the "surreal chess game" as a "philosophy of life that breaks the shackles of convention."[22] That year, Verdet also wrote of "a game for space pioneers and future passengers of intersidereal platforms, where gravity does not exist,"[23] It was the sheer size of the installation and the physical weight of the work that most impressed the public and the press. Art critic and then director of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Bologna, Franco Solmi, discovering the chess set at the Galleria Forni in January 1969, wondered whether Ernst, the "diabolical alchemist," may have created "a new mystery, a new dimension."[24]

1 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, Letter by E. Costantini to M. Ernst and D. Tanning, October 11, 1963.
2 *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, exh. cat, Ca' Giustinian, Venice, June 21–July 29, 1964 (Venice: Tipografia Commerciale, 1964) n.p.
3 Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, "C'è il mito e il fuoco nel vetro scolpito: La Fucina degli Angeli in una mostra romana," in *Avanti,* July 20, 1965.
4 Paolo Marinotti, "Max Ernst: oltre la pittura," in *Ernst: Oltre la pittura*, exh. cat., Palazzo Grassi – Centro internazionale delle arti e del costume, Venice, June 17–October 2, 1966 (Milan: Rizzoli, 1966), n.p.
5 See entry on the museum website, https://emuseum.as.miami.edu/objects/15585/dea.
6 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, Dorothea Tanning. *Peintures récentes petitessculptures d'or*, exh. cat., Le Point Cardinal, Paris, May 24–late June 1966 [Paris, 1966]. The catalogue bears the autograph inscription: "4/10/66 Authorization for my dear friend Egidio Costantini to create a glass work. Dorothea Tanning."
7 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter by E. Costantini to D. Tanning e M. Ernst, July 6, 1967.
8 See J. W. Fawkes, *Hopi Katcinas Drawn by Native Artists*, Bureau of America Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1899–1900 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904). In the specific context of Surrealism, it is well known that Ernst collected Kachina dolls and Guggenheim also admired them (she even named one of her Pekingese dogs "Kachina"), as evidenced by photographs taken in her New York apartment between 1941 and 1942. See Peggy Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutch, 1979) p. 273, and photo catalogue (Ernst).
9 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter by E. Costantini to D. Tanning and M. Ernst, July 6, 1967.
10 *The Imagery of Chess: A Group Exhibition of Paintings, Sculpture, Newly Designed Chessmen, Music, and Miscellany*, exh. cat., Julien Levy Gallery, New York, from December 12, 1944. On this occasion Max Ernst also presented the plaster sculpture *The King Playing with the Queen* (1944), which features elements later recognizable in the 1967 glass chess set.
11 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter from E. Costantini to D. Tanning, May 2, 1967.
12 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter from E. Costantini to D. Tanning, April 3, 1966.
13 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter from E. Costantini to D. Tanning, July 6, 1967.
14 Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, "C'è il mito e il fuoco nel vetro scolpito."
15 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter from E. Costantini to E. Ernst, September 9, 1967.
16 Sandro Meccoli, "I giocatori di scacchi al congresso di Venezia," in *Corriere della Sera*, October 14, 1967.
17 *XXIII Mostra della Fucina degli Angeli: Sculture in vetro*, Galleria Martano, Turin, November 15, 1967–January 10, 1968.
18 André Verdet, untitled, in *XXIII mostra della Fucina degli Angeli,* Turin, 1967, n.p.
19 Paolo Fossati, "Re e regina di vetro, Due mostre alla Martano: sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli e Prampolini, in *L'Unità,* December 6, 1967.
20 Marziano Bernardi, "Sculture in vetro da Ernst a Picasso," in *La Stampa*, November 17, 1967.
21 Marco Valsecchi, "Il fuoco e il vetro creano stupende sculture," in *Tempo*, October 26, 1968.
22 Roberto Crippa, "Picasso in vetro."
23 André Verdet, "La force des anges," in *Les Lettres françaises* 129, March 13–19, 1968, n.p.
24 Franco Solmi, untitled, in *La Fucina degli Angeli: L'Immortale*, exh. cat., Galleria Forni, Bologna (Bologna: Grafis, 1969), n.p.



figs. 7–13
Silvano Belardinelli and glass master Ermanno Nason working on Max Ernst's *Poet* (*Poeta*), Vetreria artistica Nason & Scarpa, Murano, 1962








cat. 24

Max Ernst
***Poet* (*Poeta*)**
1963
Hot-modeled amber and amethyst glass, with applied elements in amethyst glass (Manufacturer: Ermanno Nason)
Diameter: 10 cm, height: 50 cm
Mudac, Collection de la Ville de Lausanne



cat. 25

Max Ernst
***King* (*Re*)**
1964
Hot-modeled *cristallo* glass,
green *sommerso* layer,
and black ground glass
Diameter: 20 cm,
height: 54 cm
Mudac, Collection de la Ville
de Lausanne





fig. 14
Peggy Guggenheim at the opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965. In the background, *King* (1964) by Max Ernst

fig. 15
Opening of the exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 1964. From left: *King* (1964) and *Bauta* (1963–64) by Ernst

fig. 16
Max Ernst, *Immortal* (*Immortale*, 1967), on view at Galleria Martano, Turin, November 1967



fig. 17
From left: Max Ernst and Egidio Costantini with glass prototypes of *King* and *Queen*, both 1964, [Huismes (France), 1966–67]





cat. 26

Max Ernst
***Queen* (*Regina*)**
1964
Hot-modeled red blown glass
Diameter: 18 cm, height: 48 cm
Mudac, Collection de la Ville de Lausanne

cat. 27

Max Ernst
Chess pieces
1944
Wood
Five parts: *King* (diameter: 4.5 cm, height: 11.5 cm), *Queen* (diameter: 4.8 cm, height: 14.2 cm), *Knight* (9.5 × 6.8 × 4.7 cm), *Rook* (diameter: 5 cm, height: 5.8 cm), *Pawn* (diameter 4.8 cm, height: 4.8 cm)
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



fig. 19
Egidio Costantini (center) positioning *Immortal* by Ernst, Galleria Blu, Milano, October 1968



fig. 18
Opening of the exhibition *XXIII Mostra della Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria Martano, Turin, October 1967. On view, *Immortal* by Max Ernst

cat. 28

Max Ernst
***Pawn* (*Pedone*)**
1967
Hot-modeled blue glass
Diameter: 25 cm, height 29 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice







cat. 29

Max Ernst
***Archaic* (*Arcaico*)**
1968
Polychrome mold-shaped glass and metal
Multiple elements, width: 47 cm each; 173.5 × 81. 9 cm overall
Egidia Costantini Collection, Venice



fig. 20
Max Ernst, *Archetype II* (*Archétype II*, 1959), exhibition catalogue, *Max Ernst: Oltre la pittura*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1966



fig. 21
Opening of the exhibition *L'immortale*, Galleria Blu, Milan, October 1968. On view Max Ernst, *Three Goddesses* (*Tre dee*)



fig. 22
Max Ernst: Oltre la pittura, exhibition catalogue (Venice: Palazzo Grassi - Centro Internazionale delle Arti e del Costume, 1966)

cat. 30

Max Ernst
***Goddess* (or *The Jolly*)**
(*Dea* [o *The Jolly*])
1968
Hot-modeled green glass and *cristallo* glass, semi-iridescent with acid corrosion
42 × 28 × 20 cm
Galerie Pron, Paris





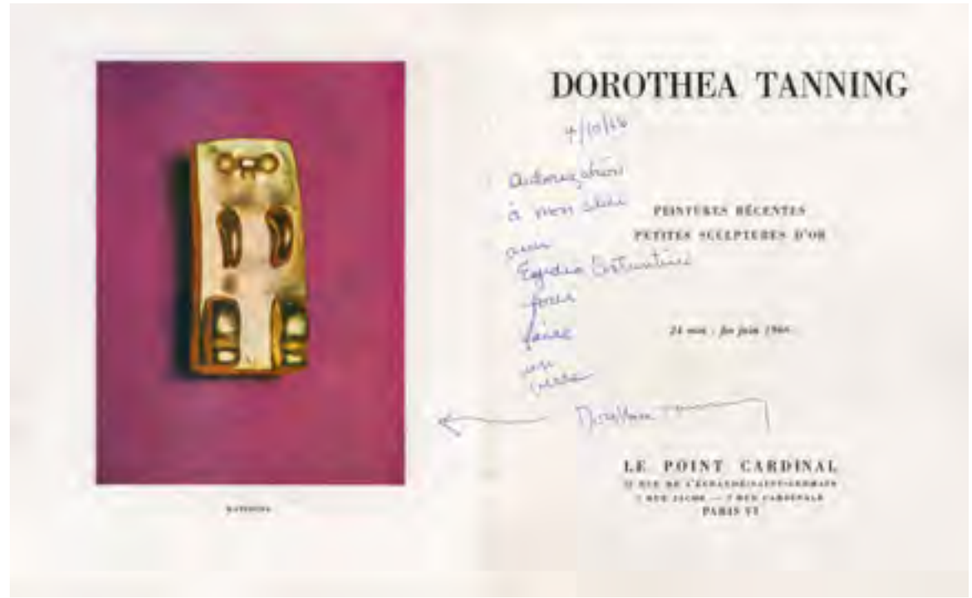
cat. 31

Dorothea Tanning
Katchina
1967
Hot-modeled solid glass, details in *lattimo* and black glass
42 × 18 × 11.5 cm
Mudac, Collection de la Ville de Lausanne

fig. 23
Max Ernst, Dorothea Tanning, and Egidio Costantini in Ernst's studio, Huismes (France), 1963



fig. 24
Frontispiece of the exhibition catalogue *Dorothea Tanning: Peintures récentes petites sculptures d'or* (Paris: Le Point Cardinal, Parigi, 1966)



5.

Jean Cocteau and *Le Flûte de Pan*

Cristina Beltrami

In a letter from August 1956, Egidio Costantini showed gratitude to Pablo Picasso: “Thanks also to your warm interest, I have received a visit from the ‘poet’ Jean Cocteau, who assisted the creation in glass of one of his drawings and authorized me to interpret some interesting projects of his.”[1]

Indeed, a series of photographs from 1955 show Cocteau in Venice, a city he was already well acquainted with,[2] admiring sculptures by Gino Krayer and Oskar Kokoschka. He also turned to glass in the first half of 1956, signing a detailed agreement with Costantini for the creation of “no. 17 original drawings by Jean Cocteau that the Fucina degli Angeli will execute, i.e., transform into Murano glass” in July.[3] This likely produced the vase *Three Eyes* (*Tre occhi*), sometimes titled *Trinity* (*Trinità*) or *Encounter of visages* (“incontro di volti”[4]). The sculpture *Three Eyes* (ca. 1960, cat. no. 41), which features a motif traced in ruby red that contrasts the slightly irradiated body of the vase was created slightly later. It revisits a well-known lithograph from the early 1960s (cat. no. 42) that hearkens back to the motif of the mirror and doubles, which was central to Cocteau’s poetics.[5]

The friendly relationship between Cocteau and what, from 1965 onward, he referred to as “famille angélique”[6] also transpires through a series

fig. 1
Jean Cocteau in Venice,
ca. 1958

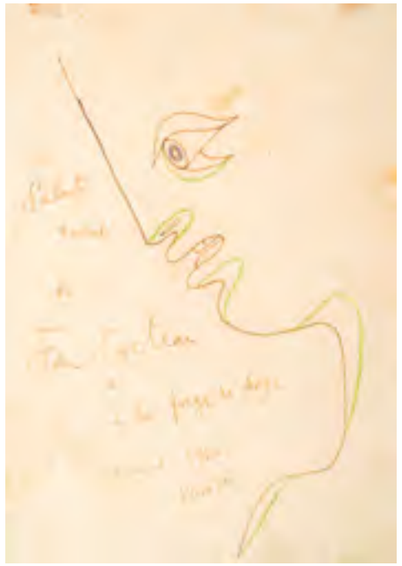
cat. 32

Jean Cocteau
Untitled (*Pour protéger Egidia*)
Mid-1950s
Pencil on letterhead paper
25 × 29.5 cm
Egidia Costantini Collection, Venice



cat. 33

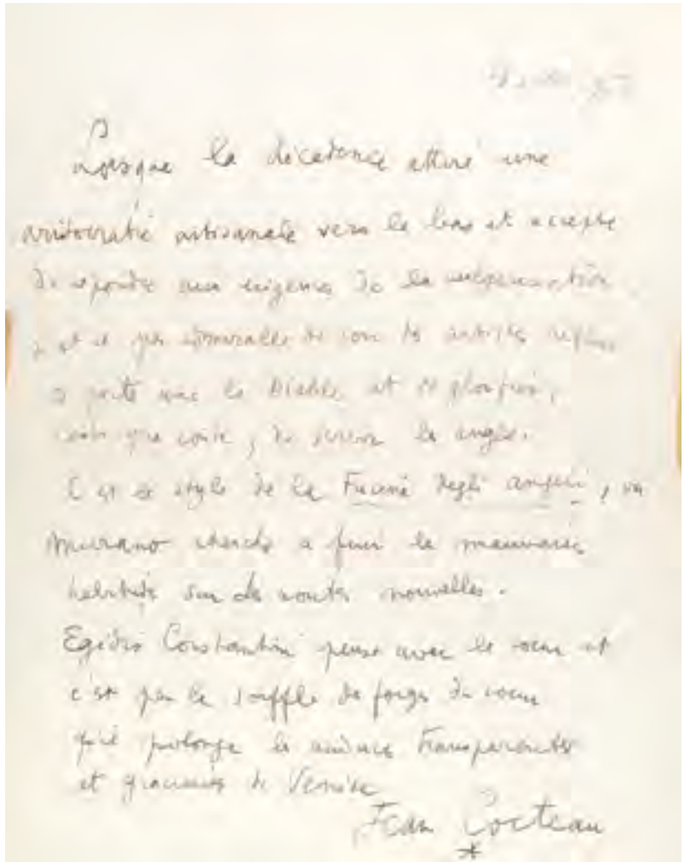
Jean Cocteau
Untitled (*Salut amical de Jean Cocteau à la forge des Anges*)
July 18, 1956
Pencil on paper
22.5 × 15.5 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice



cat. 34

Jean Cocteau
Untitled
(*A Attenrico. Souvenir de Jean Cocteau*)
1957
Pencil on letterhead paper
26 × 19 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice





of drawings that the artist gifted to Costantini. These include the angel "to protect Egidia" (Untitled [*Pour próteger Egidia*], mid-1950s, cat. no. 32), Costantini's daughter, and the profile portrait dated July 18, 1956 (Untitled [*Salut amical de Jean Cocteau à la forge des Anges*], cat. no. 33), which is similar to drawings from the same period, such as the renowned *Les Fiancés*, or to the background figures of the wall decoration for the *Salle de marriage* in the town hall of Menton (1957–58).

In 1957 the magazine *Domus* featured the Fucina in two articles, both mentioning those "glass curiosities," which included the anthropomorphic *Goblet* (*Bicchiere*, ca. 1957, cat. no. 38) and *Large Goblet* (*Bicchierone*), *Narrow* (*Stretta*, 1957)—a vase with multicolor filigree decoration that was among the loans to the Biennale from the Mario De Luigi collection in 1972—and the ironic *Against the Evil Eye* (*Contro il malocchio*, ca. 1955), a sculpture also on view in the display window of the first premises of the Fucina degli Angeli in Campo San Filippo e Giacomo.[7]

That same year, the artist completed the decorations of the Chapelle Saint-Pierre in Villefranche-sur-Mer. This was accompanied by a sumptuous publication, a copy of which entered the holdings of the Archive of the Fucina with a dedication reading "to Egidio Costantini his friend Jean Cocteau x 1957," testifying to their friendship and mutual admiration while also providing a source of models for glass sculptures, such as *Cyclops* (*Ciclope*, 1957), with which Cocteau posed at Villa Santo Sospir in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat in 1957. Halfway between a face and a candelabrum, *Cyclops* derives from the

cat. 35

Jean Cocteau
Letter of October 4, 1958
26 × 20 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 36

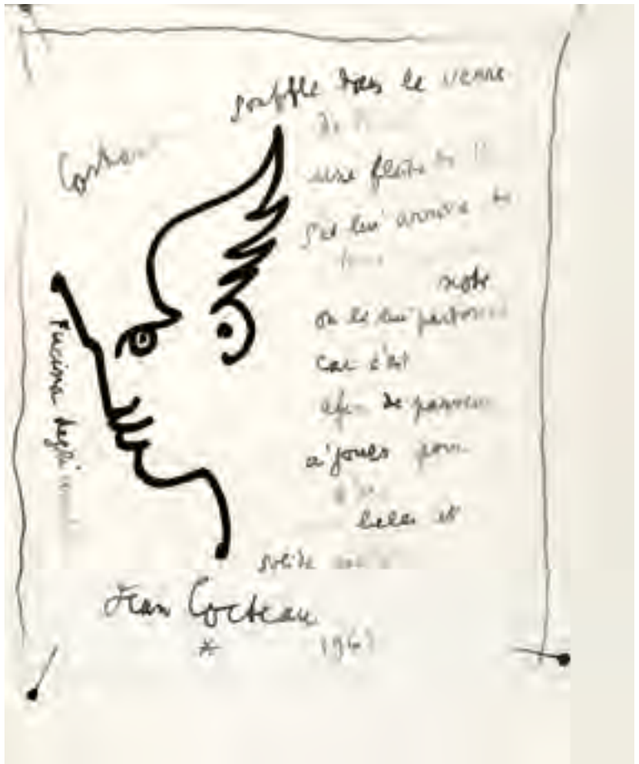
Jean Cocteau
Untitled (*Costantini souffle dans le verre*)
1963
Pen and felt-tip pen on paper
26 × 20 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 37

Invitation card to *Les Innamorati*, Galerie 65, Cannes, with inscription from Jean Cocteau to Attilio Costantini
July 15, 1961
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice

complex decorative cycle in the French chapel, replicated in several variations, such as *Cyclops* (or *Halberd*) (*Ciclope* [o *Alabarda*], 1960, cat. no. 43) and the monumental-scale version that was also on view at the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte* at Ca' Giustinian in 1964.

In July 1958 Cocteau was back in Venice—he stopped at Hotel Bauer, where he held a photoshoot with yet another version of *Goblet* and entrusted Costantini with a new series of drawings.[8] A drawing dedicated to Costantini (*Maquette pour Costantini*, 1960) is related to the *Janus* (or *Bifrons*) (*Giano* [o *Bifronte*], 1962, cat. no. 45), a complex amethyst glass sculpture, hand blown and decorated with polychrome glass filaments and mounted on a metal support. With two faces, one facing the future and the other the past, Janus is the god of beginnings and transitions, a theme that evokes Cocteau's mythological universe. The sculpture anticipated the spectacular creatures that populate works from the 1960s, such as *Billy Goat* (*Caprone*, 1961), *Billy Goat* (or *Lucifer*) (*Caprone* [o *Lucifero*], 1962, cat. no. 44), and the more articulated *Dream* (*Sogno*, 1964, cat. no. 46)—three sculptures indebted to a sketch from 1961 recorded in the Archive of the Fucina.[9] Compared with the drawing, *Billy Goat* and *Dream* maintain the highly dramatic flame, fixed to a metal base, while *Billy Goat* (or *Lucifer*) opens at the top and appears more like a development of the anthropomorphic glass created in 1965, blown on a larger scale and with the addition of large horns decorated with contrasting glass filaments. Both *Billy Goat* (or *Lucifer*) and *Janus* were on view at the 1964 Ca' Giustinian exhibition, reaffirming the artist's ability to transform everything into "light, humorous, and pure inventions"[10] a year after his passing. Thus, the head of Mercury Cocteau drew for Costantini in 1963 (Untitled [*Costantini souffle dans la verre*], cat. no. 36) almost assumed the character of a farewell, granting him one of the most poetic definitions of his role in the history of art: "Costantini blows into the glass of Venice as if with Pan's flute."














figs. 3–10
Jean Cocteau with glass master Ermanno Nason, Murano, ca. 1957

1 AFdA, Fondo P. Picasso, letter by E. Costantini to P. Picasso, August 14, 1956.
2 In 1944 Edizioni del Cavallino published *Canto Fermo* (1953) by Cocteau, reprinted in 1953 in *Immagini di Venezia* by Ferruccio Leiss. Thus, Cocteau demonstrated a refined sensitivity for the city in which "I see only lions flying, horses on rooftops, and pigeons strolling back and forth, their hands clasped behind their backs." Jean Cocteau, "L'autre face de Venise, ou Venise la gaie," in Leiss, *Immagini di Venezia* (Milan: Guarnati, 1953), p. 9. Cocteau had also known Peggy Guggenheim since 1938, when the patron showed his work in London. See Kenneth E. Silver, "Jean Cocetau: The Juggler's Revenge," in *Jean Cocteau: The Juggler's Revenge*, ed. Kenneth E. Silver, exh. cat., Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, April 13–September 16, 2024 (Venice: Marsilio Arte, 2024), pp. 11–12.
3 AFdA, Fondo J. Cocteau, letter of agreement between E. Costantini and J. Cocteau, July 19, 1956.
4 Ibid.
5 Silver, *Jean Cocteau: The Juggler's Revenge,* pp. 67, 148. A photographic portrait of the artist at Villa Santo Sospir in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat shows a ceramic plate adorning the fireplace, with decoration similar to the *Three Eyes* vase, demonstrating how Cocteau replicated the same themes across different media.
6 AFdA, Fondo J. Cocteau, letter by J. Cocteau to E. Costantini, July 23, 1956. *Famille angélique* translates as "angelic family," a reference to the name of Costantini's enterprise Fucina degli Angeli.
7 "Fucina degli Angeli," in *Domus* 327, February 1957; and "Notiziario Domus: Vetri disegnati da Jean Cocteau," in *Domus* 328, March 1957.
8 AFdA, Fondo J. Cocteau, Letter by E. Costantini to J. Cocteau, August 21, 1958.
9 AFdA, Fondo J. Cocteau, photograph of a sketch by Cocteau from 1961.
10 Duilio Morosini, "Jean Cocteau disegnatore. Il gusto della 'trovata'," in *Paese Sera*, October 12, 1964.



cat. 38

Jean Cocteau
***Goblet* (*Bicchiere*)**
ca. 1957
Blown glass with amethyst canes, details in polychrome and *lattimo* glass
Diameter: 9 cm, height 18.5 cm
Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, Museo del vetro di Murano, Venice



fig. 15
From left: Emilia Dain, Jean Cocteau, and Maddalena Costantini with a version of Cocteau's *Goblet*, Hotel Bauer's Grand Canal terrace, Venice, 1958



fig. 16
Jean Cocteau, *Goblet* (*Bicchiere*), Hotel Bauer's Grand Canal terrace, Venice, 1958

cat. 39

Jean Cocteau
Cover and frontispiece of *La Chapelle Saint Pierre: Villefranche Sur Mer*, 1957
Printed book (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher)
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice









cat. 40

Jean Cocteau
Cover and frontispiece of *La Salle des Mariages Hotel de Ville Menton*, 1958
Printed book (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher)
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

fig. 17
Jean Cocteau, *Cyclop*s (*Ciclope*, 1964), Galleria Il Naviglio, Milan, December 1964





cat. 41

Jean Cocteau
***Three Eyes* (*Tre Occhi*)**
ca. 1960
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent polychrome blown glass, details in blue and red glass
Diameter: 33 cm, height: 34 cm
Antonio Cometa Collection, Perugia



cat. 42

Jean Cocteau
Untitled
ca. 1960
Lithograph
16.5 × 12 cm
François Wahl Éditeur, Nice
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





figs. 18–19
Jean Cocteau with a version of his *Halberd* (*Alabarda*), Villa Santo Sospir, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat (France), ca. 1960

cat. 43

Jean Cocteau
***Cyclops* (or *Halberd*)**
(*Ciclope* [o *Alabarda*])
1960
Polychrome hot-modeled blown glass
63.5 × 12 × 10 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne





cat. 44

Jean Cocteau
***Billy Goat* (or *Lucifer*)**
(*Caprone* [o *Lucifero*])
1962
Hot-modeled amethyst blown glass, details in black glass; metal support
56 × 33 cm; diameter: 19 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne

cat. 45

Jean Cocteau
***Janus* (or *Bifrons*)**
(*Giano* [o *Bifronte*])
1962
Hot-modeled amethyst and amber blown glass, details in polychrome glass; metal and wood support
51 × 32 cm; diameter: 20 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne





fig. 20
Jean Cocteau,
Billy Goat (*Caprone*),
1962, and *Janus* (*Giano*),
1962, exhibition catalogue,
IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte (Venice: Tipografia Commerciale, 1964)



cat. 46

Jean Cocteau
***Dream* (*Sogno*)**
1964
Hot-modeled yellow and orange blown glass, details in red and black glass; metal support
170 × 50 × 50 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne

fig. 21
Jean Cocteau, *Dream* (*Sogno*, 1964) [Fucina degli Angeli, Venezia, 1968]



6.

Jean (Hans) Arp and the Fluidity of Glass

Cristina Beltrami

"He is a charming man, utterly selfless and wholly devoted to his art," is how Jean (Hans) Arp's second wife, Marguerite Arp, described Egidio Costantini in a letter to Joan Miró dated December 1963.[1] The Swiss artist and Costantini plausibly met in 1961, once again through Peggy Guggenheim. Their collaboration, which lasted until the artist's death in 1966, is among Costantini's most successful, owing to the nature of Arp's work, whose abstract plasticity rests on forms especially well-suited to translation into glass.

The artist expressed his enthusiasm for *Three Graces* (*Le tre grazie*, 1962) when, in August 1962, he wrote to Costantini that "Your realization of my project *Tre grazie* is perfect."[2] Arp was referring to the three flat silhouettes—clearly derived from the eponymous Duralumin sculpture completed the previous year (1961)—mounted on a pedestal, visible in images of Guggenheim's living room in the 1960s, as well as at the 1965 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, where they were described as "three tall, slender, rounded forms in bright blue."[3]

Over the years, Arp and Costantini's meetings became more frequent: Arp and his wife enjoyed holidaying at Abano Terme, near Padua, where a photograph from the summer of 1962 shows them with Costantini and the artist Orlando Fasano, also a collaborator of the Fucina.[4] Arp returned in April 1963 for discussions with Giuseppe Marchiori regarding the monograph the Italian art critic would print the following year.[5] In the meantime, Costantini visited him in Solduno, Switzerland, in 1962, when the couple gifted him a richly illustrated monograph that became a valuable source to draw from.[6] He was there again in 1963, when a series of photographs portrayed him

fig. 1
Jean (Hans) Arp with a version of *Doll* (*Pupo*) and a glass relief, Solduno (Switzerland), 1964



fig. 2
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965

with a plaster maquette for *Swan or Amphora*,[7] a marble sculpture from 1958 (*Entre cygne et amphore*, cat. no. 48) that was later translated into deep blue glass and titled *Dove* (*Colomba*, 1963), mentioned by Marguerite in a letter of 1962.[8] A version of the sculpture is easily recognized in the previously mentioned photograph David Lees took of Guggenheim's home. It stayed there until 1967, when she donated it to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,[9] where it joined Arp's *Nude* (*Nudo*, 1964), which had entered the collection in 1965, likely after the MoMA exhibition.

Further exchanges with Arp generated several new glass sculptures: in October 1963, Marguerite wrote to Costantini in excellent Italian, reassuring him that a "really beautiful" sculpture—most likely *Nymph* (*Ninfa*)—had arrived in Paris, and urged him not to regard the work as "a glass vase"[10] but as a sculpture. The year 1964 proved to be defining. Costantini gave three-dimensional form to a *Doll* (*Pupo*) and to several *Forms* (*Forme*)*,* included in the *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte* at Ca' Giustinian, Venice, and later at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, and both derived from decoupages that Arp began experimenting with in 1959. The slender forms with sinuous outlines, rooted in *Doll,* a subject the artist explored with great enthusiasm,[11] took on a powerful visual presence once mounted on a pedestal, especially when presented as a group under the title *Family* (or *Three Dolls*) (*La famiglia* [o *Tre pupi*], 1966, cat. no. 55).

The 1962 version of *Figure* (*Figura*, Walter Museum, Baltimore,) and *Column* (or *Three Shapes-Clouds*) (*Colonna* [o *Tre forme-Nuvole*], 1964, cat. no. 52) emerge as three-dimensional solutions of the silhouettes cut out from paper in the collages from the same period. The sculptures replicate the expert mechanism of interlocking forms standing out distinctly against the background that characterized Arp's early reliefs, such as the iconic *Overturned Blue Shoe with Two Heels Under a Black Vault* (*Soulier bleu renversé à deux talons, sous une voûte noire*, ca. 1925, cat. no. 49). These works respond to the mechanism Gualtieri di San Lazzaro explained in the preface of Arp's solo show at the Galleria del Naviglio in 1957: "He cuts out wood and metal as if they were colored paper. Then, on a monochrome background, he glues forms that are also monochrome, and of an elementary purity, carefully meditated."[12] However, the glass version of the reliefs boasts the splendor of light and transparency inherent to its medium, as noted in *Vogue* in 1964: "The relief in Venetian glass by Arp . . . has a sumptuousness and luminosity that are a thousand miles away from the understated eloquence of his reliefs in painted wood."[13]





fig. 3
New Year greeting card of Jean and Marguerite Arp, 1964

fig. 4
Peggy Guggenheim and artist Giorgio Giusti, Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, 1970

In December 1964, Arp featured again at the Galleria del Naviglio in a group exhibition—a "feast for the eyes and the mind"[14] in which his *Figure* rose from the ground, while *Collage* stood prominently on the nearby wall. The latter is likely the work characterized by "rhythmic planes"[15] exhibited at the Galleria dell'Obelisco the following year: "Here is Arp, with blue and light forms on a transparent ground, akin to clouds of an eternal sky—the sky of imagination."[16]

Arp also entrusted to Costantini precise instructions for the fabrication of *Positive-Negative Figure* (*Positiv-negativ Figuren*, 1962), which derives from woodcuts. The work was "to be executed in Murano glass, respecting Arp's original creation. Solduno, December 19, 1963."[17] The two figures in blown glass, known as *Groom and Bride* (*Gli sposi,* 1964) with which Guggenheim posed in the garden of her home plausibly in early 1965, were also on view at MoMA that same year.

It is in this context that Marchiori, a critic also closely associated with the Fucina degli Angeli, developed his study of Arp's work in preparation for a sumptuous trilingual monograph, in which he traced that "stylistic rigor expressed in the precise outlines, the crisp surfaces, and immaculate laying of pure colors," clearly a strong point in Arp's works in glass, in which "pure beauty consists in eliminating everything superfluous, in reducing the image to a diagram with harmonious proportions."[18]

1 AFdA, Fondo J. Arp, Letter by M. Arp to J. Miró, December 19, 1963.
2 AFdA, Fondo J. Arp, Letter by M. Arp to J. Miró, August 30, 1963. Now in Lausanne, Mudac.
3 The Museum of Modern Art Archives, *Sculpture in Glass*, Press Release n. 120, November 18, 1965. Now Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno.
4 See Fondation Marguerite Arp, Solduno, Switzerland, Archive, folder FMA HS K 35.
5 Giuseppe Marchiori, *Arp* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1964).
6 AFdA, Fondo J. Arp, *Arp*, ed. M. Seuphor (Paris: Collection Prisme, February 1957) features the dedication: "To our friend Costantini in memory of his visit to the Ronco dei Fiori in Solduno, September 30, 1962."
7 *Entre cygne et amphore* derives from the reworking of a plaster model from 1941, titled *Traumamphora / Objet de rêve à l'anse* (see C. Giedion-Welcker, *Jean Arp* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1957], no. 64), and of smaller dimensions (24.5 × 23 × 13.5 cm), thus closer in scale to the glass version. Of the five plaster models recorded by the Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno, Switzerland, the original 1941 plaster, now in a private Swiss collection and modeled by Jean Arp himself, is of particular interest for research on the Fucina degli Angeli, as beneath the base in bears the autograph inscription by Marguerite Arp, "dark steel blue / Locarno, 30.9.62," along with Arp's signature.
8 AFdA, Fondo J. Arp, Letter by M. Arp to E. Costantini, October 30, 1962: "It's already quite something that you can make 'the dove.'"
9 See *Peggy Guggenheim's Other Legacy*, ed. Lader, Melvin P. and Fred Licht, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 1987–88 (Milan, New York: Mondadori Editore, 1987), pp. 30–31.
10 AFdA, Fondo J. Arp, Letter by M. Arp to E. Costantini, October 18, 1963.
11 See Rainer Hüben, Roland Scoti, *Jean Arp: Poupées*, Fondazione Margueite Arp – Steidl, Göttingen, 2008. The *Poupée* was a subject the artist explored towards the end of his career, revealing his interest in the human figure and its proportions, although evoked through the features of a doll.
12 Gualtieri di San Lazzaro, untitled, in *Arp*, catalogue of the 245th exhibition of the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, May 18–June 10, 1957, n.p.
13 "Glass Art," in *Vogue* (USA), October 15, 1964, n.p.
14 Marco Valsecchi, "Il vetro d'arte," in *Il Giorno*, December 30, 1964.
15 A. B., "Mostre d'arte: Sculture in vetro," in *Il Messaggero di Roma*, July 9, 1965.
16 Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, "C'é il mito del fuoco nel vetro scolpito. La Fucina degli Angeli in una mostra romana," in *Avanti,* July 20, 1965. *Collage* n. 3 was in Peggy Guggenheim's collection until she decided to gift it to the Phoenix Art Museum (See *Peggy Guggenheim's Other Legacy,* p. 27.)
17 See W. F. Arntz, *Bibliographie der Werkkataloge zur Kunst des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts: Catalogues raisonnés* (Haag, Oberbayern: Verlag Gertrud Arntz-Winter, 1974), p. 248, no. 303.
18 Giuseppe Marchiori, *Arp* (Milan: Bruno Alfieri, 1964), p. 47.



cat. 47

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Dove* (or *Amphora*)**
(*Colomba* [o *Amphore*])
1963
Hot-modeled blue glass
cased in *cristallo* glass
22 × 22 × 13 cm
Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno



fig. 5
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965









fig. 6
From left: Egidio Costantini, Jean and Marguerite Arp, and sculptor Remo Rossi in Arp's studio, Locarno (Switzerland), 1963

fig. 7
Marguerite Arp holding the clay maquette for *Dove* (or *Amphora*), Locarno (Switzerland), 1963

fig. 8
Jean (Hans) Arp, clay maquette for *Dove* (or *Amphora*), Fucina degli Angeli, Venezia [1962–63]

cat. 48

Jean (Hans) Arp
Swan or Amphora
(*Entre cygne et amphore*)
1958
Marble
52 × 48 × 25 cm
Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno

cat. 49

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Overturned Blue Shoe with Two Heels Under a Black Vault* (*Soulier bleu renversé à deux talons, sous une voûte noire*)**
ca. 1925
Painted wood
79.3 × 104.6 × 5 cm
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)







cat. 50

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Figure* (or *Collage*)**
(*Figura* [o *Collage*])
ca. 1964
Mold-shaped *cristallo* glass and acrylic
60 × 44 × 5 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 51

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Figure* (*Figura*)**
ca. 1964
Cardboard cutout
45.5 × 30 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



cat. 52

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Column* (or *Three Shapes-Clouds*) (*Colonna* [o *Tre forme-Nuvole*])**
1964
Mold-shaped blue and black glass and acrylic
105 × 46.5 × 6 cm
Losanna, Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne



fig. 9
Peggy Guggenheim at the opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965. On the wall, Jean (Hans) Arp, *Collage*, 1964

fig. 10
Opening of the exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, October 1964, with *Forms* (*Forme*) and a collage by Jean (Hans) Arp







fig. 11
Jean (Hans) Arp with a *Doll* (*Pupo*), Solduno (Switzerland), ca. 1964

cat. 53

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Doll* (*Pupo*)**
1964
Hot-modeled blown glass, detail in amethyst glass
Diameter: 18 cm, height: 50 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne





fig. 12
Installation view, *Sculpture in Glass*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, November 1965. Center: Jean (Hans) Arp, *Bride and Groom* (*Gli sposi*) and *Figures* (*Figure*); right: Max Ernst, *Poet* (*Poeta*)

fig. 13
Peggy Guggenheim next to Arp's *Forms*, *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, Ca' Giustinian, Venice, June 1964

cat. 54

Jean (Hans) Arp
***Doll* (*Pupo*)**
1963–64
Hot-modeled purple blown glass
Diameter: 13 cm overall, height: 63 cm
Fondazione Marguerite Arp, Locarno





cat. 55

Jean (Hans) Arp
Family (or *Three Dolls*)
(*La famiglia* [o *Tre pupi*])
1966
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass
Three parts:
blue (diameter: 13 cm, height: 64 cm),
orange (diameter: 11 cm, height: 59 cm),
red: (diameter: 8 cm, height: 41 cm)
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 56

Jean (Hans) Arp
Doll (*Pupo*)
1966
Hot-modeled blue blown glass
Diameter: 13.3 cm overall, height: 70 cm; base: diameter: 13.3 cm, height: 16 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 57

Jean (Hans) Arp
Doll (*Pupo*)
1966
Hot-modeled blue blown glass
Diameter: 12 cm overall, height: 58.5 cm;
base: diameter: 11.8 cm, height: 14 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





fig. 1
Arman with his *Procession* (*Processione*, 1966, at the opening of the new gallery of the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, June 1966

7. Arman and the Will to Stop Time

Cristina Beltrami

In 1965, French artist Armand Pierre Fernandez, known as Arman, created three drawings for the Fucina degli Angeli, including a project for *Procession of Violins*,[1] marking the beginning of a collaboration that lasted until 1976.

Arman's foray into glass must be analyzed in the context of his characteristic experimentation with different media, which started with his first *Accumulation,* and his continual endeavor to transform everyday life into poetic and original imagery. This principle can be observed in *Procession,* the first approved version of which debuted at the Fucina's inaugural exhibition, with Arman in attendance. The version of *Procession* (*Processione*, 1970, cat. no. 59*)* on view in this exhibition is likely the same one created in June 1966 that was later in the Galleria Martano in Turin in November 1967, when Marziano Bernardi of *La Stampa* praised Arman's work in glass, even claiming it was more successful than his work in other media.[2]

Arman translated the violin, the main subject of his poetics, into solid glass modulated in a tonality ranging from transparent to opaline. The artist substituted the industrial, or readymade, elements that were common in his practice, such as in *Variable and Invariable* (*Variable et invariable*, 1963, cat. no. 58), with artisanal, custom-made elements. The glass half violins are mounted on a wooden or plexiglass base, foreshadowing to an extent the mechanism of the *coupe* he created in the 1970s, where he set the disassembled instrument in cement, with the same "will to stop time. . . ."[3]

From the mid-1960s onward, Arman became a constant presence in group exhibitions of the Fucina degli Angeli. In 1968, when an invitation to show at the Biennale strengthened his connection with Venice,[4] he exhibited in the Fucina's group exhibition in New York,[5] as well as at the Galleria Blu in Milan, where Roberto Crippa described his "procession of rhythmed objects in ice, born from glass to live in light."[6] Another version of *Procession*, with its twenty-four elements in solid glass displaying different variations of *cristallo*, illustrated an article on the *Esposizione di artigianato artistico veneziano* at the Permanente di Milano in November 1970,[7] although the work was not on view there.[8]

1 AFdA, Fondo Arman, letter by Arman to E. Costantini, March 15, 1976: "My friend Costantini, the drawings that I gave you in 1965, and whose titles are: *Dés Procession de violons* / *Violon sectionné* / *Accumulation de boutellies* are yours, to create or interpret as works in glass." The first work the collaboration yielded was *Accumulation de boutellies,* which was completed in April 1966 (AFdA, Fondo Arman, letter by E. Costantini to Arman, April 8, 1966), the result of which satisfied him enough to also create *Procession de violons*: "Dear Arman, thank you for your warm welcome, and above all for approving the work I brought you. It was our first experience of working together to create a work in glass, and, judging by the result, there can be no doubt that we can continue."

2 Marziano Bernardi, "Sculture in Vetro da Ernst a Picasso," in *La Stampa,* November 17, 1967: "The *Procession of Violins*, alternating clear and opaque glass and slotted sideways into a black cristallo glass slab that reflects its curvilinear forms in an icy light . . . is surprising to those familiar with the odious and irritating jumbles of shoes, used dentures, dented coffeepots, car pistons, rusty water taps, etc. . . . that the French artist loves to present

as sculpture." Bernardi (1897–1977) dedicated studies to Antonio Fontanesi and Felice Casorati. His judgement was likely rooted in sensibilities that were distant to Nouveau Réalisme and favorable to the figurative practice of artists in Turin at the time.

3 Pierre Restany, "Vingt-cinq an de bonheurs," in *Arman,* exh. cat., Musée Picasso – Chateau Grimaldi, Antibes, summer 1983 (Hanover: Shafer Druckerei, 1983) p. 13.

4 *34th International Art exhibition: Catalogue*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1968), p. 83. Arman presented twenty-two recent works and some dedicated to the "violin" theme.

5 *Sculpture in Glass of the Fucina degli Angeli*, Adria Gallery, New York, 1968.

6 Roberto Crippa, "Picasso in vetro." in *Corriere d'informazione,* October 14–15, 1968.

7 See "Artigianato veneziano in Mostra a Milano," in *Corriere d'informazione,* October 14–15, 1968, p. 83. Arman presented twenty-two recent works and a selection dedicated to the violin.

8 *Esposizione di artigianato artistico veneziano,* exh. cat., Palazzo della Permanente, Milan, November 7–22, 1970 (Milan, 1970); I thank Elisabetta Staudacher for the verification.



cat. 58

Arman
Variable and Invariable
(*Variable et invariable*)
1963
Metal and wood
64 × 83 × 7.5 cm
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)





cat. 59

Arman
***Procession* (*Processione*)**
1966
Mold-shaped semi-iridescent *cristallo*, *pagliesco*, and opaline glass and acrylic
105.5 × 130.5 × 10 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne



fig. 2
Arman next to his *Procession* (*Processione*, 1966), Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, 1968



fig. 3
Peggy Guggenheim, "Costantini: i vetri," in *Le Arti*, January–February 1969



fig. 1
Paul Jenkins at a glass furnace, Murano, 1969–70

8.

Tobey and Jenkins: Two Leading Figures of US Abstraction Experimenting with Glass

Cristina Beltrami

Starting in the mid-1960s, Costantini's increasing familiarity with the US art scene led to several collaborations with leading figures of abstract painting, including Mark Tobey and Paul Jenkins.

Although they occupied opposite positions in their rejection of figuration, the two artists knew one another and were both engaged in a compelling exploration of glass. Tobey—the foremost figure of calligraphic abstraction, well exemplified by *Advance of History*, a 1964 work in gouache in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection—introduced Jenkins and Costantini, who, in a letter from 1968, thanked him "for introducing me to dear Paul Jenkins and his colored poems . . . and I assure master Tobey that the works by Jenkins I will create in glass will live up to the warm recommendation he made on my behalf."[1] Tobey's first experiments with glass likely took place in early 1966,[2] a plausible date for *Mask* (or *Totem*) (*Maschera* [o *Totem*], cat. no. 60) a slab of solid glass that, while distant from Tobey's painting in terms of its physical "weight," remains close to it in its earthy palette and dense web of marks of varying intensity. In the words of Paolo Fossati, Tobey "reveals the possibilities of treating glass as a pure material in thickness, folds, and volume; of constructing a kind of enigmatic weight, a physically substantial cluster of questions."[3] In May 1967,[4] Tobey visited the Fucina to check on the most important work he created with Costantini, *Christ* (*Cristo*), a solid glass sculpture that in July 1967 accompanied Ernst's *Immortal* (*Immortale*, 1967) at the *XXII Mostra di sculture in vetro* at Ca' Pesaro in Venice,[5] where it was described as a "hieratic [figure], detached from time, like a Greek icon."[6]

At the time, Tobey was a highly renowned artist. Having received the Golden Lion for Painting at the Venice Biennale in 1958, he held the first solo exhibition by a US artist at the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris in 1961, followed by a show at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, a year later (1962), and an exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1966. From 1960 onward he was based in Basel, which facilitated his connection with Italy and Venice.

Tobey forged a friendship with Costantini's family founded on mutual admiration that extended beyond their shared commitment to glass. In an affectionate card dated April 4, 1968, he wrote: "It appears to me that my friend Egidio Costantini along with a few others is bringing a new life into the Art of Beloved Venice."[7] In February 1971, Costantini traveled to Basel to visit Tobey's solo exhibition at Fondation Beyeler—the catalogue of which, now in the holdings of the Archive of the Fucina, proved once more to be a useful work tool[8]—to collect five works for an equal number of works in glass.[9]

Jenkins and Costantini shared an equally close relationship, as testified by extensive correspondence and several paintings and drawings the artist gifted to the Costantini family over the years (cat. nos. 61–63). On Tobey's recommendation,[10] Jenkins first visited the Fucina in November 1968. The first *Phenomena* in glass plausibly emerged in early 1969, at a time that the artist himself, with keen self-awareness, soon afterward described as "my NEW MATURITY."[11] Jenkins became interested in glass at the age of

thirty-five, by which time his landmark exhibitions at Galerie Stadler in Paris and Martha Jackson Gallery in New York had already earned him international recognition as one of the leading figures of Abstract Expressionism.

Jenkins' sculptures and paintings—such as *Phenomena I* (1969–70, cat. no. 61) and *Phenomena Said the King* (1969, cat. no. 63)—bear the same titling structure, suggesting that his practice as a whole revolved around investigating the possibility of linking "the known and the unknown, the material and spiritual."[12] The catalogue for the 1969 New York solo exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery played a crucial role in the connection between Jenkins and Murano. Indeed, the Archive of the Fucina holds a pamphlet featuring a pen drawing for the translation of a *Phenomena* in glass, with precise instructions regarding the color. These sketches, coupled with the skill of master Loredano Rosin, gave rise to the six *Phenomena* on view at the *XXXV Mostra della Fucina* in Venice in June 1969. In a heartfelt letter accompanied by a signature-self-portrait, Jenkins expressed his hopes of being in Venice on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition and, more importantly, mentioned to Costantini that his upcoming solo show at the Martha Jackson Gallery may include a selection of glass works.[13]

In November that year, the artist's collaboration with the Fucina took the form of an official contract.[14] Jenkins promised to create drawings designed specifically for glass,[15] which Costantini worked on in the early months of 1970 to include them in the exhibition he inaugurated on June 22 at Palazzo Ducale in Venice. Jenkins himself had long viewed exhibiting in institutional settings as "the UNIQUE WAY"[16] to distance glass sculpture from the narrow confines of decorative art. The exhibition provided an occasion for Berto Morucchio to explain how Jenkins's works functioned as fields of color, space, and light,[17] and how glass, the focus during a visit to his Paris studio a few months later, amplified the artist's painterly achievements through its three-dimensionality and reflective nature.[18] That fall, Jenkins returned to Venice to discuss new works with Costantini and Silvano Belardinelli and to organize the shipping of six works that he hoped to include his solo show at the Martha Jackson Gallery. However, he ultimately decided that "I only wish to show our glass in Museums or cultural institutions," since "In America you have to be very careful or they will put it in the category of objects artisans or craft."[19] In the same letter, he also mentioned having shown three sculptures



fig. 2
Letter of Paul Jenkins to Egidio Costantini with a self-portrait, April 19, 1969



fig. 3
Paul Jenkins with glass masters Paolo Marzotto (left) and Loredano Rosin (right), Murano, 1969-70

to William Rubin, Director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, who encouraged him to continue working with glass, but to do so by maintaining strict rigor and cleanness.[20] He was therefore likely referring to experiments such as the 1970 *Phenomena Blue Stele* in blue glass (cat. no. 66). Despite his enthusiasm, Jenkins eventually turned away from glass, which served him as a tool to investigate the mechanisms of paintings in depth, as he described in a letter written late in 1984.[21] He bid farewell to Costantini with words of sincere affection and admiration: "I remember with a vivid passion those early dawns before we set out in the vaporetto to go to your glass factory. And do you also remember the time I caught on fire and you had to take a bucket of water to put me out? . . . I think the glass sculpture made me physically and spiritually realize that my own perfection was a long way off. And I had to substantiate what I learned from the fire in Murano. . . . You have become in my life a profound teacher and a challenging friend."[22]

1 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, letter by E. Costantini to M. Tobey, December 7, 1968. A short video held in the AFdA, in which Jenkins recalls having seen a glass work created with the Fucina in Tobey's home, also bears testimony to this fact.
2 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, document/contract signed by E. Costantini and M. Tobey, March 29, 1966.
3 Paolo Fossati, "Re e regine in vetro, Due mostre alla Martano: sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli e Prampolini," in *L'Unità,* December 6, 1967.
4 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, letter by M. Ritter to E. Costantini, May 8, 1967.
5 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, letter by E. Costantini to E. Ritter and M. Tobey, July 3, 1967. Costantini informed the artist and his assistant that *Christ* would debut at Ca' Pesaro on July 22 and implored him to attend the inauguration.
6 Giuseppe Mazzariol, "Un racconto denso di messaggi nelle opere in vetro a Ca' Pesaro," in *Messaggero Veneto*, August 1, 1967.
7 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, card by M. Tobey, April 4, 1968.
8 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, letter by E. Costantini to M. Tobey: the catalogue of the exhibition *Tobey* (Basel, Galerie Beyeler, December 1970–February 1971), organized on the occasion of the artist's 80th birthday includes a dedication: "To my friend Egidio who with great spirit realize my work translated in glass. Basel, the 8th of February 1971 . . . love Mark," as well as five ticks on five works destined to be translated into glass.
9 AFdA, Fondo M. Tobey, letter by E. Costantini to M. Tobey, February 12, 1971.
10 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, October 30, 1968.
11 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, August 25, 1970. Emphasis in the original.
12 A. Elsen, untitled, in *Paul Jenkins: New Paintings 1968/69* (New York: Martha Jackson Gallery, March 1–22, 1969), n.p.
13 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, April 19, 1969. This intention never came to fruition because the gallerist was reluctant to show works in glass (AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, May 28, 1969).
14 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, contract document signed by E. Costantini and P. Jenkins, November 29, 1969.
15 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, February 13, 1970: "I will be able then, to get back to making the designs which are so important for our work together. . . . I will make every effort to see that you will receive them." Some of the sketches of this series a still owned by the Costantini family and are on view in the exhibition.
16 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, August 25, 1970. Emphasis in the original.
17 Berto Morucchio, "Le sculture in vetro di Jenkins," in *Fucina degli Angeli*, 1970, n.p.: Costantini began with a color-form, following the expansion of the fluidity of glass at different temperatures as far as was appropriate, i.e., to the right level of expression. He captured the organic aspect of Jenkins's vision immediately and gave it compositional value. He achieved chromatic-formal stratification by accentuating the modulation of the thickness of the glass or the duration of the pauses of master Rosin. The result was a perfect *œuvre d'équipe.*
18 Berto Morucchio, "Murano, sculture in vetro e il pittore americano," in *La Voce di San Marco*, September 17, 1970.
19 April 15, 1971. In the letter, Jenkins added that "In America you have to be very careful or they will put it in the category of objects [by] artisans or craft."
20 Ibid. "He was vastly encouraged by the ones which were simplest in form and had a lot of cristallo glass surrounding the colored form within. That is the blue and *cristallo* glass one."
21 AFdA, Fondo P. Jenkins, letter by P. Jenkins to E. Costantini, February 20, 1984: "You will see that my paintings have investigated the broken prisms and once more you see I return to the magic which glass can perform. Through glass or the Newtonian prism if you will, we keep discovering over and over again that from light comes color."
22 Ibid.

fig. 4
Mark Tobey, autographed note mentioning Egidio Costantini, Basel, April 4, 1968

fig. 5
Mark Tobey holding his *Christ* (*Cristo*, 1967) while visiting the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, May 1967


It appears to me that
my friend Egidio Costantini
along with a few others is
bringing a new life
into the Arts of Beloved Venice.

Mark Tobey

Basel
April 4th 1968.





cat. 60

Marc Tobey
***Mask* (or *Totem*)**
(*Maschera* [o *Totem*])
1966–68
Polychrome
mold-shaped glass
37 × 30 × 2 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg





cat. 62

Paul Jenkins
Untitled (*Phenomena*)
ca. 1968
Acrylic on canvas
123 × 171 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice

fig. 6
Paul Jenkins in Venice,
ca. 1969



cat. 63

Paul Jenkins
Phenomena Said the King
1969
Acrylic on canvas
93 × 54 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 61

Paul Jenkins
Phenomena
1967–68
Acrylic on canvas
172 × 121 cm
Egidia Costantini Collection, Venice



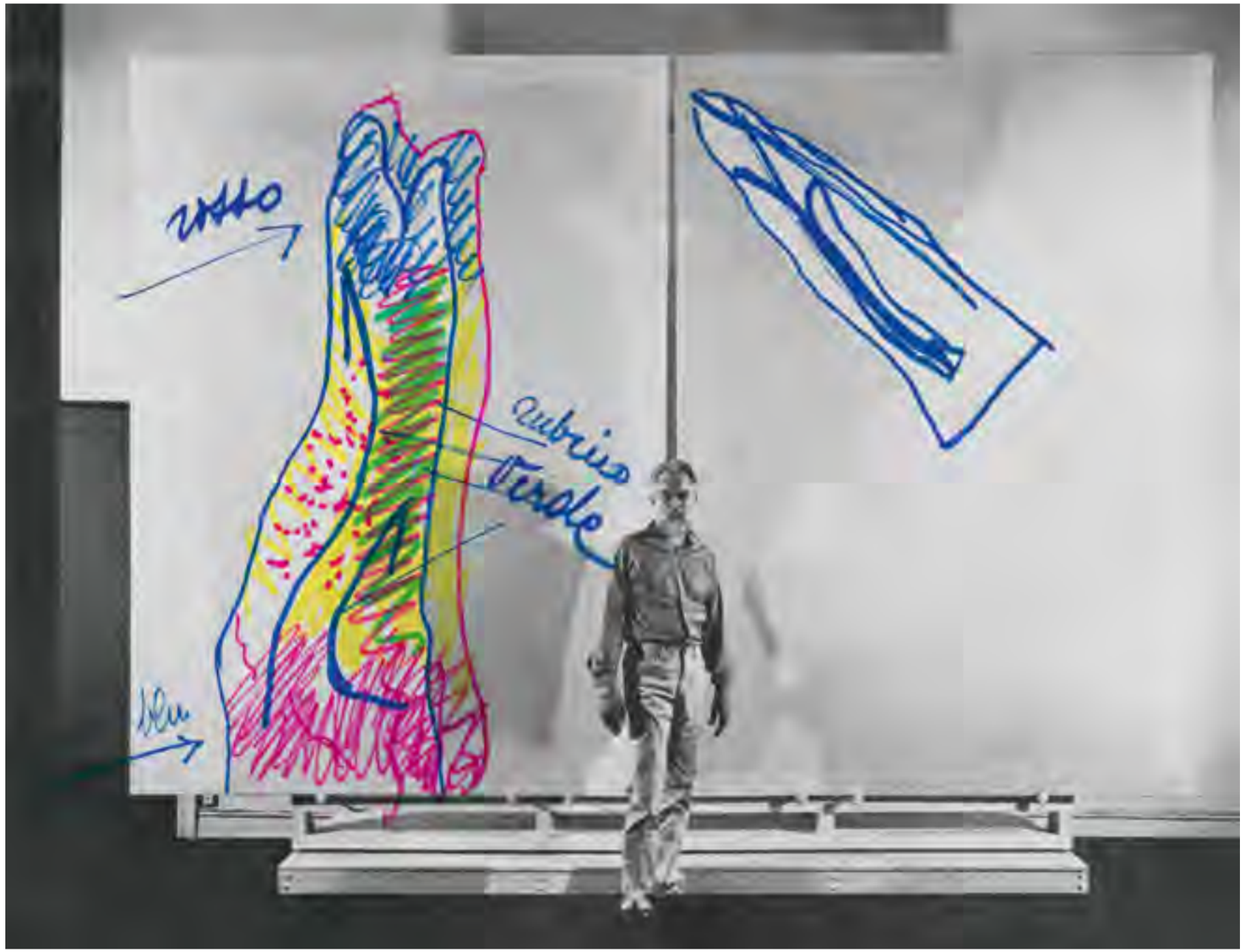


fig. 7
Sketches to translate works
in glass on the catalogue
of the exhibition *Paul Jenkins:*
New Paintings 1968/69,
Martha Jackson Gallery,
New York, 1969



cat. 64

Paul Jenkins
Phenomena I
1969–70
Polychrome hot-modeled glass (Manufacturer: Loredano Rosin)
64 × 14 × 22 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 65

Paul Jenkins
Phenomena I
1970
Polychrome hot-modeled glass (Manufacturer: Loredano Rosin)
40.6 × 21.6 × 12.7 cm
The Paul and Suzanne Jenkins Foundation







fig. 8
Paul Jenkins, *Phenomena I*, 1970 (cat. no. 65)

fig. 9
Exhibition invitation, *Fucina degli Angeli. XXXVII Mostra Internazionale di sculture in vetro*, Palazzo Ducale, Venice, 1970

fig. 10
Paul Jenkins, *Phenomena Blue Stele* (1979, cat. no. 66), ca. 1970





cat. 66

Paul Jenkins
Phenomena Blue Stele
1970
Polychrome hot-modeled glass (Manufacturer: Loredano Rosin)
58.4 × 25.4 × 17.8 cm
The Paul and Suzanne Jenkins Foundation



fig. 1
From left: Gaspero del Corso, Peggy Guggenheim, Vincenzo Gagliardi, Egidio Costantini at the opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965

9.

Glass as a Medium to Define Space and Abstraction

Cristina Beltrami

On the occasion of the 1964 exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli* at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, Mario Lepore described how "glass and decoration seem suited to present day taste and *novelties.*"[1] The "novelties" were the production of the most radical Italian postwar artists, who moved even further than abstraction—as in Lucio Fontana's first *Ambiente spaziale a luce nera* (*Spatial Environment in Black Light*) of 1949—and were particularly interested in integrating new materials into their works. Examples include Remo Bianco's *Small Bags* (*Sacchettini*, 1954–55), small bags created in recently patented transparent plastic, or André Verdet's early use of polyester.

These experimental circles proved especially congenial to Egidio Costantini, who was introduced to them through Carlo Cardazzo. The gallerist likely also served as an intermediary with Fontana, who, in the early 1960s, was exploring collaborations with "alternative" craftsmen, as had been the case with his *Teatrini* and *Ellissi* series.[2] The first collaborative experiment was *Concetto spaziale – Construction* (*Spatial Concept spaziale – Construction*, 1964, cat. no. 73), comprising blue glass elements, which Costantini gifted to Peggy Guggenheim as an Easter present and which she later donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[3] This unique work consists of a wood panel covered by a metal layer and decorated with glass spheres of varying shapes and sizes that create a play of shadow and transparency, tracing orbital paths in dialogue with the iconic *Buchi* the artist cut into on the metal base. The following year, encouraged by the success of this work, Fontana continued exploring the hexagon in another *Spatial Concept* (*Concetto spaziale*, 1965, cat. no. 74). However, this time he used copper, a chromatically warmer metal, on which he mounted fourteen glass elements—blown to maintain impurities—following a carefully designed movement studied in several drawings from the same period, discussed below. The three largest spheres act as the gravitational center of a galaxy traversed by two series of smaller circular objects, some of which are heat-deformed, reinforcing the idea of fluctuating forms.

A handwritten note reveals the procedure employed to create the earliest glass *Concetti spaziali.* Following the artist's indications, Costantini created the blown-glass components in Murano and then shipped them to Milan to be mounted on the supports.[4] Later on, in a demonstration of increased mutual trust, the process was inverted, and Costantini assembled the works entirely in Venice.[5]

Fontana's new inventions were first displayed at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan in late 1964, and in 1965 at the Galleria dell'Obelisco in Rome, where critics praised these "cosmic and inventive" works, marked by the "delicacy of stellar color."[6] These are likely the "ovals" to which the artists referred to in March 1965, when he wrote to Costantini: "The Ovals are ready. I await a letter or call from you"[7]—and that Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco described a few months later as "two large works . . . a real homage to Venice. *Aurora di Venezia* and *Notturno di Venezia* express a period of boundless love (which

Fontana expressed years earlier through turgid and luxurious works). These two large ovals are enhanced by blue or pink light, or Fontana's several forms (the sphere, the egg, the slash, the hole), and are almost a long rhapsody in honor of the city of the arts."[8] In this way, Fontana employed the transparency of glass and reflective surfaces to explore Venice, a subject that had been close to his heart since his solo exhibition at the 1958 Biennale. In a series created in 1957–58, Fontana portrayed Venice in a decidedly unconventional way: "right from the start, [the city] sheds its material consistency," noted Pierre Rouve,[9] and exists "in a suspended and timeless realm . . . where everything alludes to movement," commented Luca Massimo Barbero, who devoted an exhibition to the subject in 2006.[10] In the meantime, in January 1965 Fontana asked Costantini to create "three red spheres . . . three large works and a series of small ones for the large copper disk,"[11] which is likely the *Afternoon* (*Meriggio*) that four years later was reproduced on the front cover of *Le Arti.*[12] The relationship between Fontana, Costantini, and the Murano glass industry found a powerful ally in drawing, which functioned both as an autonomous work revealing the artist's theories of Spazialismo and as an essential tool for communication. Moreover, the sketches that Fontana drew for his glass works were created during the mid-1960s, at a time when a shift was taking place in the critical reception of the graphic arts. In his monograph *Segno antidisegno di Lucio Fontana* (1967) Francesco de Bartolomeis treats drawing as an independent form of expression, equal to the anti-painting and anti-sculpture that is a feature of all of Fontana's inventions: "Fontana's drawings narrate the history of vital abstraction, of the generator of new situations for human experience."[13] The same approach should be employed to examine the seven previously unpublished drawings featured in this exhibition (cat. nos. 67–72), connected to the glass *Concetti Spaziali* of 1964–66. Indeed, they are not only preparatory drawings, but genuine spatial reflections on the interplay of form, light, color, reflectivity, and transparency.

The year 1966 marked a pivotal moment in Fontana's relationship with Venice. He started working busily on his solo gallery at the Biennale in





fig. 2
Lucio Fontana and Franco Angeli at the opening of the exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 1964. In the foreground Raimond Dauphin, *Flower* (*Fiore,* 1964)

fig. 3
Lucio Fontana, *Afternoon* (*Meriggio*) on the cover of *Le Arti*, January-February 1969



fig. 4
Installation view of the inaugural exhibition of the new gallery of the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, June 1966. From left: *Fish Basket* (*Pesce cesto*) after Pablo Picasso; *Galaxy* (*Galassia*) by André Verdet; *Fertile* (*Fecondazione*) by Amedeo Bravo; Lucio Fontana, *Sunrise in Venice* (*Aurora di Venezia*, 1965)

January,[14] his *Afternoon in Venice* and *Nighttime in Venice* (*Meriggio di Venezia*, *Notturno di Venezia*, both 1965) went on view in the renewed exhibition space of the Fucina, and Costantini agreed to loan a glass and metal *Concetto spaziale: Aurora di Venezia* (*Spatial Concept: Sunrise in Venice*, 1965)[15] to his solo show at the Galleria del Cavallino in July.[16] The following year, an *Ellissi* from the same series dedicated to Venice was photographed in the exhibition at the Galleria Martano in Turin.

Fontana died in September 1968, and the following month his *Aurora di Venezia* and *Meriggio di Venezia* were on view at the Galleria Blu in Milan. "Perhaps the best and most decorative [works] he ever created in his investigation into 'Spazialismo'."[17] Valsecchi gave an uncommonly sensitive description: "*Aurora di Venezia*: a silver plane lightly strewn with drops of pale green spheres and ellipses softly tinged with color; it truly seems as though the glass has absorbed the transparency of the lagoon at the first glimmer of morning light. There is also a flame-red *Meriggio di Venezia*, a kind of blaze upon the waters of the canals."[18] The most vivid recollection comes from Roberto Crippa: "One day, I asked Lucio Fontana if he was working in Venice that November, and he replied: 'Yes, I'm working with glass. I pierce it, and my awl is Costantini!'"[19]



fig. 5
Intallation view of Lucio Fontana's exhibition, Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, July 1966. In the foreground, *Sunrise in Venice* (*Aurora di Venezia*, 1965) on loan from the Fucina degli Angeli



fig. 6
Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale*, ca. 1966, courtyard of the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, June 1966

Costantini—who had been attracted to the universe of Spazialismo since his collaboration with Virgilio Guidi in the mid-1950s—found in Remo Bianco another crucial interpreter of artistic glass. It is no surprise that an artist close to Fontana,[20] who had collaborated since 1952 with the Cardazzo galleries,[21] and who was also well acquainted with Venice thanks to his friendship with Filippo De Pisis, became interested in glass. In 1965, Bianco created some *Tableaux dorés* with glass tesserae, initially embedded in colored plexiglass, like the *Skyscrapers* photographed in the Galleria dell'Obelisco in Rome.

Fittingly the artist also translated his radical *Trace* (*Impronta*) abstract paintings into glass: they play with pure colors and the refractions of gold leaf and include one dedicated to "Venezia", which Bianco donated to Costantini to be translated into glass for works such as *Tableau doré,* with cast-glass tesserae and silver or gold leaf, dating around 1965 (cat. no. 76). The intentional choice to reference Venice stands as further proof that Bianco and Fontana were simultaneously pursuing investigations on the same subject during the 1960s. This led to the *Skyscrapers* (*Grattacieli*), plexiglass structures that trap thick, glass, polychrome tesserae that were shown at the Galleria dell'Obelisco in Rome and the Galleria Martano in Turin.

In the summer of 1968, Giuliano Martano, who had just organized a solo show of Luigi Veronesi in his gallery, introduced the artist to Costantini.[22] Veronesi promised him some drawings, but most importantly showed him a lavish monograph published by Bertieri that served as a maquette for the imposing *Relative . . .* (*Relativo . . .*, 1969, cat. no. 79).[23] His exhibition debut in glass took place in January 1969 at the Galleria Forni in Bologna, while he continued to show in group exhibitions with the Fucina, including one at Palazzo Ducale in Venice in 1970.

For Veronesi, experimentation with glass was pivotal in the transition of the 1960s, a period characterized by what Fossati described as "co-presence": a plurality constructed through "continuity and alignment, albeit by means of synthetic, elliptical procedures."[24] That same sense of "alignment" is expressed by the 1969 version of *Relative . . .*, where ellipses and glass shapes generate geometric forms that, as Fagiolo dell'Arco noted, "open and close, lending a sense of dynamism."[25]

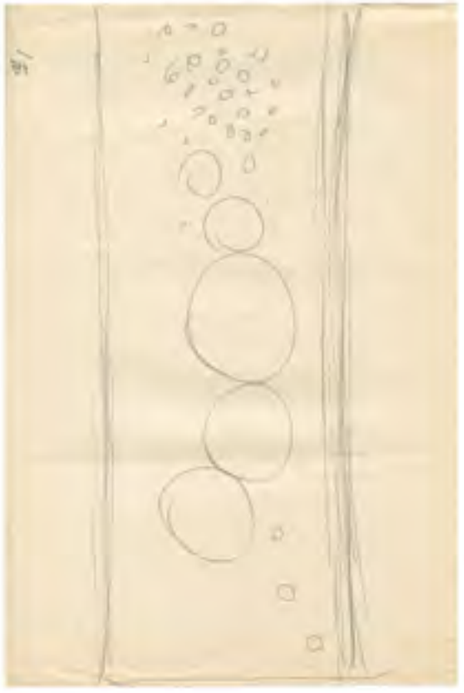
In 1972, Veronesi translated his painting into sculptural form, creating two nearly identical works—*First Image-Figure* (*Immagine figura prima*) and *Image-Figure* (*Immagine figura*)—based on two contemporaneous paintings—*Variable no. 6* (*Variabile n. 6*) and *Tension, Variable no. 2* (*Tensione, variazione n. 2*)—published in the catalogue of the solo exhibition at Galleria Martano,[26] which once again served as a maquette.

The correspondence between the abstract language of Giuseppe Capogrossi's painting and graphic work and his brief venture into glass is equally close. He attended the opening of the exhibition held at the Galleria dell'Obelisco in 1965, where he was photographed with Costantini in front of his *Composition* (*Composizione*), "with its black and dark-red marks, and the juxtaposition of different spaces," wrote Fagiolo dell'Arco. "Capogrossi's mark is the freest of forms born from geometric shapes, something like a fancy within constriction, freedom within strict rigor, rationality and irrationality merge closely."[27] Compared with the version on view in Rome, the *Composition* included here (ca. 1965, cat. no. 78) probably dates from the same time but differs in the color of the glass elements, reduced to only to black and blue. The work expresses an equally primordial force, in which Capogrossi's abstract mark takes three-dimensional form in glass,[28] compactly arranged on a metal surface with deep-cut vertical lines.

Verdet was also involved in the Fucina's projects, employing glass to investigate space. A multifaceted artist, close to the galleries run by the Cardazzo, Verdet contributed to the Fucina as an enthusiastic critic,[29] and, starting at the latest in 1959, as the creator of several works, including *Universe* (*Universo*, 1959, cat. no. 80), a large polychrome glass disc fully aligned with the aesthetics of late Spazialismo.[30]

Verdet's graphic work and glass sculpture are not directly parallel, but both reveal an awareness of Fontana's postwar creations—the suspension of elements in space, the principle that underpins *Cosmos* (*Cosmo)*, a work on view at the inauguration of the Fucina in 1966. On the other hand, the print he dedicated to Costantini in 1961, likely a suggestion for a glass work, bares the influence of Fontana's Spazialismo drawings, which Verdet likely knew thanks to the rich monograph by Michel Tapié.[31] The following year, an exhibition of artist jewelry organized by the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, *I pittori alla scoperta dell'oro*, presented works by Jean Cocteau, Fontana, and Verdet, testifying to the versatile relationship shared by the artists that orbited the Fucina degli Angeli.[32] Verdet was also a staunch defender of Costantini's enterprise. In a long article published in *Le Arti* in 1968, he claimed the Fucina worked toward "the affirmation of a new plastic art," and above all sought to remain "in tune with the evolution of modern painting, sculpture, and ceramics."[33] He pinpointed a crucial aspect, which he reaffirmed in 1973, when he argued that the Fucina had given "a contemporary dimension to the arts of glass and fire in harmony with the evolution of painting and sculpture,"[34] In other words, thanks to Costantini, glass was able to keep pace with the formal developments of contemporary art.

1 Mario Lepore, “Le mostre a Milano: Vetri veneziani su bozzetti dei maggiori artisti contemporanei,” in *Corriere Internazionale*, January 6, 1965.
2 Fontana was busy with the *Teatrini* from 1964 to 1966, while the *Ellissi,* created as a series of fifty pieces between 1965 and 1966 in collaboration with Edizioni Sergio Tosi, debuted at the Marlborough Gallery in Rome in 1967. See *Dizionario Lucio Fontana*, ed. L. P. Nicoletti (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2023).
3 The work bears a dedication: “For Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim / as a token of gratitude by the / ‘Fucina degli Angeli of Venice’ and / all the family of Egidio Costantini / work by Lucio Fontana / #1 of #1 / Easter 1956.” A letter dated August 1, 1965, also mentions the work: “I don’t know if I should mention the small 50 × 50 panel, the first work we have created as a proof, and that we donated to Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim, who in turn gifted it to the Boston Art Museum” (AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, letter by E. Costantini to L. Fontana, October 1, 1966). See *Peggy Guggenheim’s Other Legacy*, p. 47, n. 19, and https://collections.mfa.org/objects/55411 (accessed on June 15, 2026).
4 AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, card written by E. Costantini, December 12, 1964: “I hope my assistant arrives in Milan by Wednesday for the assembling.”
5 AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, letter by L. Fontana to E. Costantini, [March] 15, [1965], and March 19, 1966: “the round work in storage and is waiting for you whenever you want. Should I send it to you?”
6 A. B., “Mostre d’arte. Sculture in Vetro,” in *Il Messaggero di Roma*, July 9, 1965.
7 AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, letter by L. Fontana to E. Costantini, [March] 15, [1965].
8 Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, “C’è il mito e il fuoco nel vetro scolpito.”
9 Pierre Rouve, “Fontana à Venise,” *XX siècle* 25, March 2, 1963.
10 *Lucio Fontana: Venice / New York*, ed. Luca Massimo Barbero, exh. cat., Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, June 4–September 24, 2006 (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2006), p. 29.
11 AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, letter by L. Fontana to E. Costantini, January 21, 1965.
12 Front cover of *Le Arti* 1–2, February 1969.
13 Francesco De Bartolomeis, *Segno antidisegno di Lucio Fontan*a, (Turin: Edizioni d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo, 1967), p. 175.
14 AFdA, Fondo L. Fontana, letter by L. Fontana to E. Costantini, January 7, 2026: “I also wish you that the new Fucina degli Angeli brings you the satisfaction you deserve. I, for my part, will have to work quite hard to prepare for my room in Venice, where I have been invited to exhibit. Let us hope my health allows me to do so.”
15 Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Fondo C. Cardazzo, letter from the secretary’s office of the Galleria d’Arte del Cavallino, July 7, 1966.
16 *Fontana*, catalogue of the 648th exhibition of the Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, July 7–29, 1966.
17 “Le mostre della settimana a Milano,” in *Corriere d’Informazione-Milano*, November 14, 1968.
18 Marco Valsecchi, “Il fuoco e il vetro creano stupende sculture,” in *Tempo*, vol. 30, no. 44, October 26, 1968. Valsecchi also mentions a *Nighttime in Venice* that traveled to Germany for a collective exhibition by the Fucina, identified as the show at Vereinigte Werkstätten, Düsseldorf.
19 Roberto Crippa, “Picasso in vetro.”
20 See Paolo Campiglio, “Bianco con Cardazzo e Fontana,” in A. Altamira, *Remo Bianco: il periodo 3D* (Milan: Electa, 2024), pp. 67–77.
21 Bianco held his first solo show at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice (October 21–30, 1952). Renato Cardazzo then witnessed the exhibition debut of the *Tableaux dorés* at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan and the *Pagode* at the Venice Lido in the summer of 1961.
22 AFdA, Fondo L. Veronesi, letter by L. Veronesi to E. Costantini, July 28, 1968: “I was truly delighted to have met a man of your caliber—I told Martano as much, too. . . . I still have before my eyes the joy of the colors, transparencies, and forms I saw in your gallery, as well as the joy inspired by the noble material you work with: solidified light.”
23 *Veronesi*, with a text by O. Patani (Milan: Bertieri, 1964). On page 97 the catalogue features proof for *Relativo n. 32,* a work from 1960 that nine years later took three-dimensional form on a painted wood panel on which the artist applied glass shapes, following the composition traced by the painting.
24 Paolo Fossati, “Qualche ipotesi dul lavoro di Veronesi,” in *Luigi Veronesi*, exh. cat., Galleria Martano/Due, Turin, May–June 1968 (Turin 1968), n.p.
25 Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, in *Luigi Veronesi*, exh. cat., Musée Municipal, Saint Paul de Vence, February–March 1970, n.p.
26 *Luigi Veronesi*, exh. cat., Galleria Martano/Due, Turin, May–June 1972 (Turin, 1972).
27 Fagiolo dell’Arco, “C’è il mito e il fuoco nel vetro scolpito.”
28 Ibid.: “Capogrossi’s artistic practice could truly serve as an emblem of the demanding art of the glassmaker, constrained by forces greater than himself, yet always ready to calculate the risks and to harness those primordial forces.”
29 As well as introducing Alberto Magnelli (1888–1971), an artist close to the Fucina during the 1960s, at his solo exhibition at the Galleria del Naviglio (December 1964–January 1965), Verdet is the author of both the preface of *Vetri di artisti contemporanei* (410th exhibition of the Galleria del Naviglio, 1965) and *Sculture in vetro* (Galleria Martano, 1967), plus two important articles from 1968: “La Force des anges,” in *Les Lettres françaises,* and “La Fucina degli Angeli,” in *Le Arti.* Verdet also contributed the introductions to the two annual group exhibitions organized by the Fucina in Venice in 1970 and 1973.
30 Verdet’s interest in Spazialismo was undoubtedly encouraged by his frequenting of the Cardazzo brothers, who organized a solo exhibition of his work at the Galleria del Naviglio in 1962 (*André Verdet*, 354th exhibition of the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, March 17–28, 1962), followed two years later by the exhibition in Venice *A. Verdet* (595th exhibition of the Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, August 17–27, 1964), with a presentation by Paul Restany.
31 Michel Tapié, *Devinir de Fontana* (Turin: Edizione d’Arte Fratelli Pozzo, 1961). The book was first presented in Paris at the gallery of Iris Clert and, soon after in 1961, at the artist’s first solo exhibition in the United States at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York.
32 *I pittori alla scoperta dell’oro*, catalogue of the 368th exhibition of the Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 8–31, 1962.
33 André Verdet, “La Fucina degli Angeli,” in *Le Arti*, November 1968, p. 56.
34 *Fucina degli Angeli: Sculture in vetro*, exh. cat., Castello, Venice, 1973.

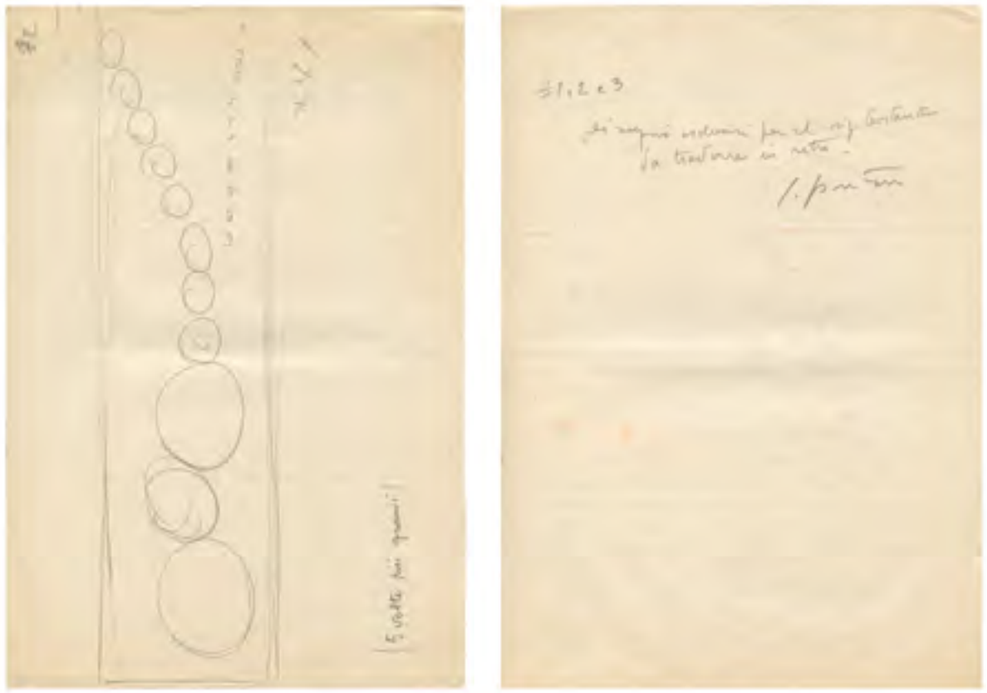


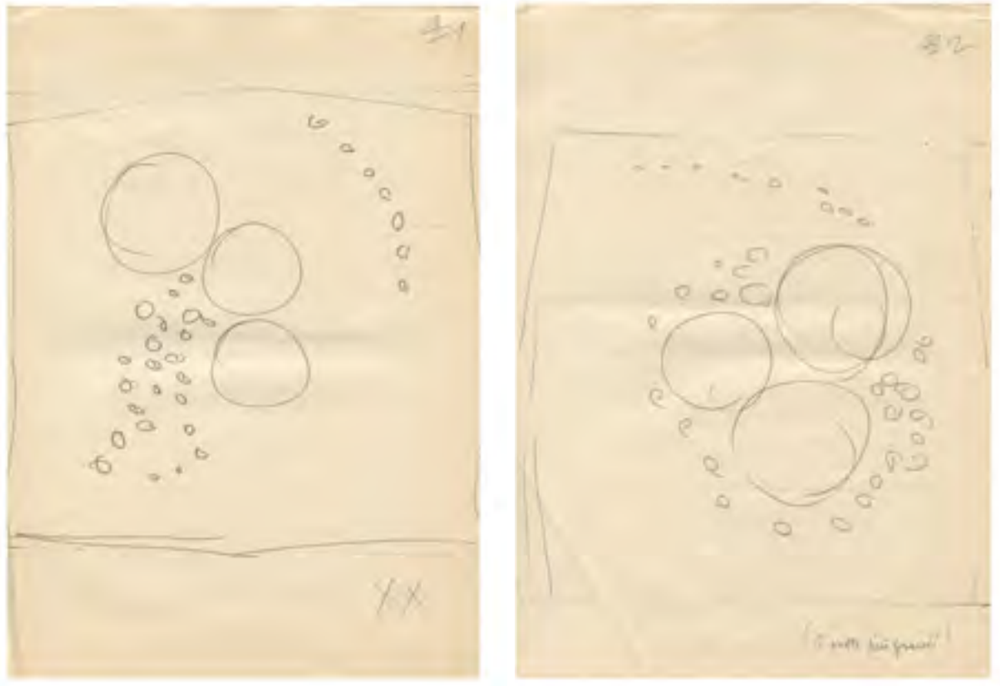
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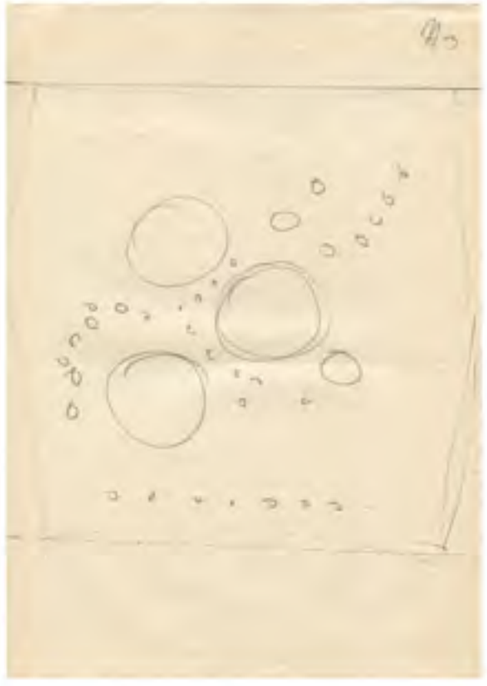
Lucio Fontana
Study for *Concetto spaziale* in vetro (*Spatial Concept* in Glass)
ca. 1964
recto
Pencil on paper
31 × 21 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cats. 68–70

Lucio Fontana
Study for *Concetto spaziale* in vetro (*Spatial Concept* in Glass)
ca. 1964
recto and verso
Pencil on paper
31 × 21 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice









cat. 71

Lucio Fontana
Study for *Concetto spaziale* in vetro (*Spatial Concept* in Glass)
ca. 1964
recto
Pencil on paper
31 × 21 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



cat. 72

Lucio Fontana
Study for *Concetto spaziale* in vetro (*Spatial Concept* in Glass)
ca. 1964
recto and verso
Pencil on paper
31 × 21 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice







cat. 73

Lucio Fontana
Concetto spaziale* – *Construction
1964
Hot-modeled blue blown glass and aluminum on plywood
Thirteen parts,
28.3 × 61.9 × 66 cm overall
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Peggy Guggenheim

fig. 7
Lucio Fontana, *Concetto spaziale* (*Spatial Concept*, 1965, cat. no. 74), n.d.





cat. 74

Lucio Fontana
Concetto spaziale
(*Spatial Concept*)
1965
Hand-modeled light-green blown glass and copper on plywood
Fourteen parts,
80 × 80.5 × 30 cm overall
Luca Bombassei Collection

fig. 8
Opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965. Left: Franco Angeli; in the background, from the left: Jean (Hans) Arp, *Collage*, Remo Bianco *Skyscrapers* (*Grattacieli*), and Yves Klein, *Nude* (*Nudo*)



fig. 9
Opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965. In the foreground, Irene Brin



fig. 10
Opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965. In the background, Remo Bianco, *Skyscrapers* (*Grattacieli*)





cat. 75

Remo Bianco
***Trace* (*Impronta*)**
1962
Mixed media and gold leaf on board
19 × 14 cm
Egidia Costantini Collection, Venice



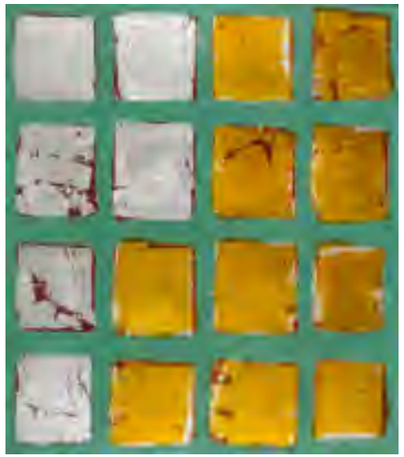


fig. 11
Remo Bianco, *Moon in Venice* (*Luna a Venezia*), 1960, acrylic on canvas, gold- and silver-leaf. Venice, Archivio Fucina degli Angeli

cat. 76

Remo Bianco
Tableau doré
1962
Light-blue glass,
gold leaf, and acrylic
Twelve parts,
62 × 40.5 × 4.8 cm overall
Luigi Costantini Collection,
Venice

cat. 77

Remo Bianco
Tableau doré
1974
Glass, gold leaf,
and silver-leaf
Sixteen parts,
80 × 70 × 10 cm overall
Private collection







fig. 12
From left: Giuseppe Capogrossi and Egidio Costantini at the opening of the exhibition, *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, July 1965

fig. 13
Giuseppe Capogrossi, *Composition* (*Composizione*, ca. 1965, cat. no. 78), exhibition catalogue, *Vetri di artisti contemporanei* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1966)



cat. 78

Giuseppe Capogrossi
***Composition* (*Composizione*)**
ca. 1965
Hot-modeled blue and black glass, aluminum, and wood
93.5 × 52 cm
Gabriele Colleoni Collection



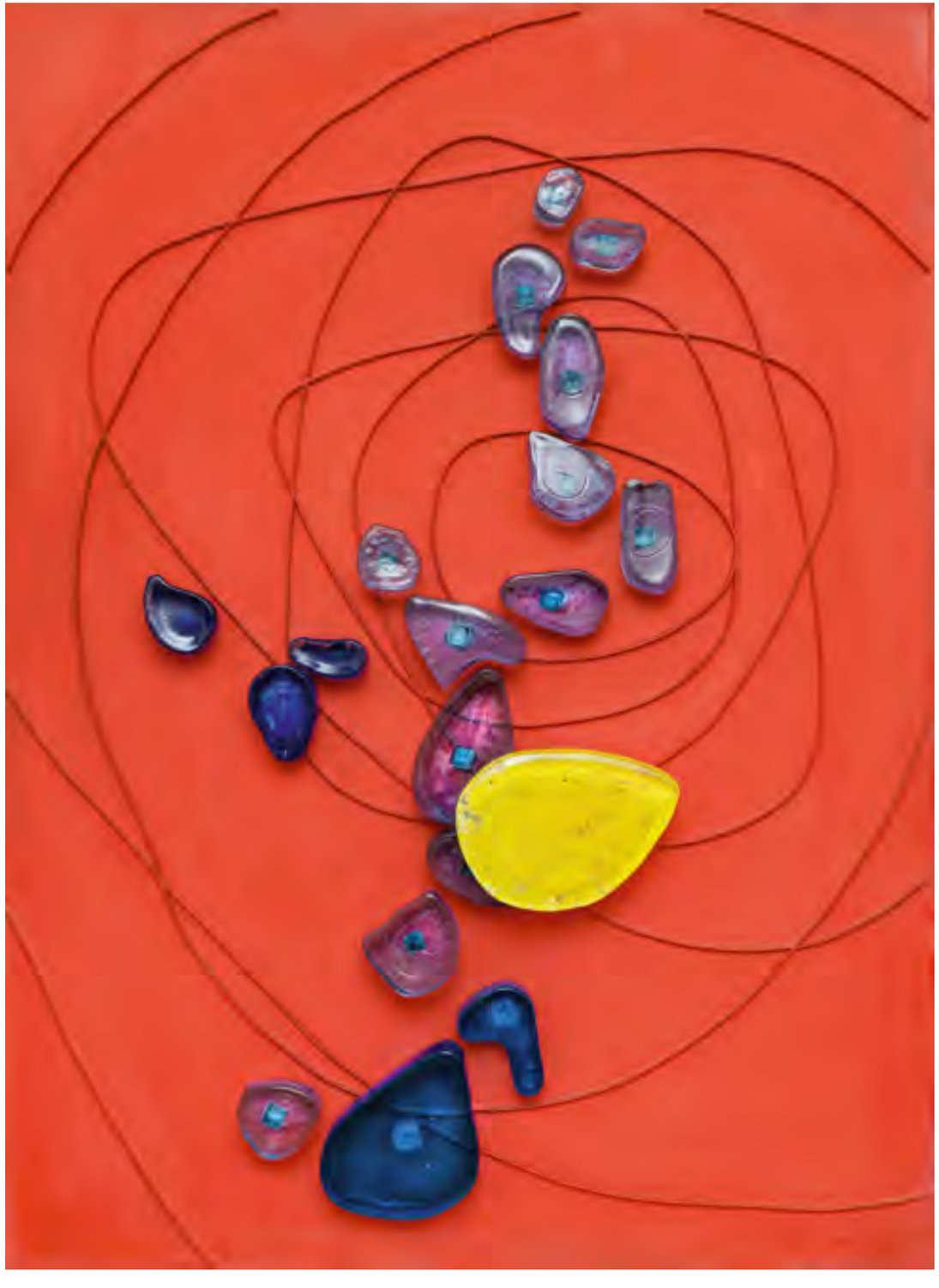


fig. 13
Luigi Veronesi, *Relativo n. 32* (1960), in *Veronesi* (Milan: Bertieri, 1964)

fig. 14
Luigi Veronesi, *Relative . . .* (*Relativo . . .*, 1969, cat. no. 79), ca. 1969

cat. 79

Luigi Veronesi
***Relative . . .* (*Relativo . . .*)**
1969
Acrylic on canvas mounted to board, with polychrome glass and iron elements
150 × 112 × 13 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg





cat. 80

André Verdet
***Universe* (*Universo*)**
1959
Polychrome hot-modeled blown glass
Diameter: 42 cm, depth: 5 cm
Mudac, collection de la Ville de Lausanne

fig. 15
André Verdet, *Untitled*, 1976, pastel on paper. Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice

fig. 16
André Verdet next to his *Satellite World* (*Mondo satellite*), and *Galaxy* (*Galassia*), both 1966, at the opening of the new headquarters of the Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, June 1966





10.

Matta, Glass, and the Figure

Cristina Beltrami

In November 1966, on Max Ernst's encouragement, Egidio Costantini wrote to Roberto Matta, whom he had met a few months earlier, to finalize their collaboration.[1] However, this only materialized during a second meeting, in the summer of 1968, which set in motion the creation of the renowned *Museros*, relying on the expertise of master Loredano Rosin, in the early months of 1969.[2] Matta experimented with glass at a time when he had reached his full artistic maturity, and was aware that "there are three conditions required to create, to say something new: knowledge of the method, i.e. the rules of the game; having a revolutionary impulse that comes from within; and finally, finding the magical moment in which the cosmos and nature meet"[3].

From his earliest—and rare—glass artworks, which include *Man* (*Uomo*, 1968–69, cat. no. 81), Matta confessed: "It's not sculpture. All this is something more. The whole of humanity and life is captured within a shell of transparencies. Not a glass structure. I would call it translucidus—games of



fig. 1
Roberto Matta next to Max Ernst, *Archaic* (*Arcaico*, 1968), Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, 1968

fig. 2
Roberto Matta, three *Totem* (1969), exhibition catalogue, *La Fucina degli Angeli: Mostra Internazionale del Vetro d'Arte*, Galleria Goethe, Bolzano, 1969

transparencies."[4] *Man* is composed of three elements in *cristallo* glass that align to create the illusion of a human body in which an encased red glass heart "beats." The work therefore explores the Chilean artist's quintessential subject: the human form in all its possible deformations. Surrealist writer Édouard Glissant, in an introduction to a 1969 solo show at the Galleria la Bussola in Turin, fittingly wrote: "For Matta, it is the embodiment (rather than the representation) of movements—most often understood as tense, bold, aggressive, and tortured—that constitutes the general psychology of modern man."[5]

Matta's glass creatures are similar to the figures that populate his paintings and are animated by the same "suspended energy,"[6] but do not derive from either his paintings or his sculpture, as was often the case in the Fucina's practice. Instead, Matta sketched a series of drawings for the purpose, including a small, pen-traced angel on a photograph that depicts him working in Murano (cat. no. 83).

The collaboration with Costantini yielded several particularly successful *Totems*—enigmatic figures with traits that range from the anthropomorphic to the robotic—that the artist presented at group exhibitions the Fucina organized starting in January 1969, where they were understood as "figures that are half-real, half-symbol. . . . The creature of a humorous, ironic world: a character with antennae for eyes (like asparagus says Matta): perhaps more than a character a cheerful toy that carries the turmoil, uncertainty, crises, and doubts of today's world."[7]

1 AFdA, Venezia, Fondo R. Matta, letter by E. Costantini to R. Matta, November 2, 1956. As well as Ernst acting as go-between, Matta's friendship with Peggy Guggenheim was also important. See Guggenheim, *Out of This Century: Confessions of an Art Addict* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1979), p. 314.
2 See *Roberto Matta: 1911–2002*, ed. A. Ades, E. Barisoni, and N. Rosenthal, exh. cat., Ca' Pesaro – International Gallery of Modern Art, Venice, October 25, 2024–March 23, 2025, (Cisinello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana Editore, 2024) pp. 134–135, 147.
3 Roberto Joos, "Matta: erede di Ernst alla Fucina degli Angeli," in *Il Gazzettino*, February 6, 1969.
4 Ibid.
5 Édouard Glissant, *Matta*, exh. cat., Galleria la Bussola, Turin, October 25, 1969 (Turin, 1969), n.p. The volume reprints Glissant's text "Les sculptures de Matta," *Quadrum* 16 (1964), pp. 91–98.
6 Ibid.
7 Joos, "Matta," 1969.





cat. 81

Matta
***Man* (*Uomo*)**
1968–69
Hot-modeled *cristallo* glass, with red *sommerso* layer
Three parts,
20 × 128 × 28 cm overall
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 82

Matta
Untitled (For Alterico [Per Alterico])
ca. 1968
Felt-tip pen on photograph
29 × 37.5 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

11.

Works by Japanese Artists in the Mysterious and Magical Medium of Glass: Japanese Itineraries at the Fucina degli Angeli

Stefano Turina

fig. 1
Azuma Kengiro and Peggy Guggenheim visiting the exhibition *Arte e contemplazione*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 1961

fig. 2
Munakata Shikō, *Ananda, Disciple of Buddha,* on view in the traveling exhibition *Asian Artists in Crystal*, 1956

fig. 3
Sekine Nobuo, *Phase of Nothingness* (*Fasi di vuoti*, 1970), on view at the exhibition *Fucina degli Angeli: XXXVII Mostra Internazionale di sculture in vetro*, Venice, 1970

In considering the relationship between contemporary Japanese artists and glassmaking (and also as an homage to US patron Peggy Guggenheim), it is worth recalling a New York precedent: Steuben Glass, the historic and renowned art-glass manufacturer founded in 1903. After presenting *Twenty-Seven Artists in Crystal* (1940), which included Isamu Noguchi, Steuben went on to organize *Asian Artists in Crystal* (1956), which brought together thirty-six artists from sixteen countries, among them Munakata Shikō, who won a prize at the Venice Biennale that same year. The artists participated by submitting designs to be engraved on crystal.[1]

A brief consideration of Steuben Glass's complex cultural—but above all political and diplomatic—project helps to illuminate the originality of Costantini's approach. Costantini's interest in Japan drew on close family ties, from the stories of his father Attilio, who had lived in Japan and China between 1900 and 1909, to his son-in-law, the architect Ōmura Mikuni, but most of all it drew on the interest of his young collaborator Silvano Belardinelli.[2] Interest in Japan within the Venetian milieu in which Costantini operated was fostered not only by the Biennale but also by the presence of Japanese artists in the lagoon and by private initiatives such as the Galleria del Cavallino and Milan's Galleria del Naviglio, both directed by Carlo Cardazzo until 1963





and then by his brother Renato.[3] It was therefore no coincidence that a number of artists highly regarded by Renato attended the opening of the exhibition devoted to the Fucina degli Angeli at Galleria del Naviglio, held between late 1964 and early 1965: the painters Abe Nobuya, then living in Rome, and Nakai Katsumi, newly arrived in Milan, together with Fontana, who was also among the exhibitors. But another likely incentive was the presence of *Fungo* (1964), a two-part work based on a design by Ikewada Yuuko, a Tokyo-born artist then living on the Giudecca with the painter Friedensreich Hundertwasser.[4] The work evokes both the surreal organic excrescences that populate the artist's paintings and the tragic, iconic mushroom cloud. It later appeared alongside two pieces by the little-known Tamaki Takaaki, a student at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice from 1965, in an exhibition organized by the Fucina in July 1966. The show also included major artists who had helped make the Fucina famous, among them Jean Cocteau, Max Ernst, and Pablo Picasso. Ōmura, listed as an artistic collaborator, was praised in the press for his contribution "to the display" of the works, a task to which he would remain dedicated.[5]

The first issue of *Le Arti*, published in 1969, featured, alongside a celebrated statement by Guggenheim praising the Fucina, a work by Ōmura: *Architectural Forest* (*Foresta architettonica*, 1967), shown at the Galleria Blu in Milan in 1968 and the Galleria Goethe in Bolzano in 1969, to considerable acclaim. A variant of the work, *Work no. 3* (*Opera 3*, ca. 1968–69, cat. no. 83), entered the patron's collection. The same page also featured *Egidio* by Silvano Belardinelli, a collaborator of the Fucina.[6] Both contributed to the development of the exhibition project *Itinerari giapponesi* (1972): Ōmura through his origins and family ties to Costantini, and Belardinelli in a crucial bridging role, having traveled to Japan from 1966 to 1970 "to learn about its art, culture and philosophy."[7]

No fewer than fifteen artists took part in the project, several of them figures who remain significant today but were then only newly discovered in Italy, if not entirely unknown. Alongside the two "Venetians," Ōmura and Tamaki, they were Itō Takamichi, Itō Takayasu, Maeda Jōsaku, Miki Tomio, Narita Katsuhiko, Saitō Yoshishige, Sekine Nobuo, Shinohara Ushio, Sugimata Tadashi, Takamatsu Jirō, Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, Yokoo Tadanori and Yoshihara Jirō. Belardinelli had identified the artists in Japan through his friendships with the graphic designer Ota Yukio, who had passed through Venice,



fig. 4
Opening of the new gallery of the Fucina degli Angeli with (center, from left), Ōmura Mikuni, Arman, and André Verdet, Venice, June 1966

and Narita.[8] Contact with them was established through the Tokyo Gallery, which represented Narita, and its director, Yamamoto Takashi. Yamamoto had visited Venice on several occasions for successive Biennales since 1960 and, during the 1966 Biennale, had organized the exhibition *Modern Art of Japan* with the Galleria del Cavallino, then directed by Renato Cardazzo.[9] It is therefore plausible that Yamamoto had already become acquainted with the Fucina degli Angeli through Cardazzo, who in 1970 defended its work together with Abe, Nakai and Toyofuku Tomonori, signing a letter in his capacity as director of the Galleria del Naviglio in Venice.[10] Thanks to this contact and to Belardinelli, Sekine, a member of the Mono-ha group, then little-known in Italy, presented *Fasi di vuoti*, a collaboration with the Fucina, on the occasion of his participation in the 1970 Venice Biennale with *Phase of Nothingness* (1970), following his first solo exhibition at the Tokyo Gallery in 1969.[11]

As the archival records show, Belardinelli's collection of drawings and designs must already have been well advanced by the fall of 1970.[12] First among the various contributions to be noted is that of Yoshihara, leader of the Gutai group. One of his gouaches, closely related to his work of the period, provided the basis both for a work composed of two elements in two colors, blue and red, whose surface is animated by the granularity of the glass, and for the exhibition poster (Poster for the exhibition *Itinerari giapponesi*, June 10, 1972, cat. no. 88)[13]. Another participant was Miki, represented in Tokyo by the Minami Gallery. His iconic motif, the enlarged and repeated ear, had already appeared in "Modern Art of Japan" in 1966, when Miki was selected by Cardazzo, and at the 1968 Venice Biennale.[14] *Hearing* (*Udire*, 1970–72, cat nos. 85–86) returned to this motif through elements of mold-blown, amethyst- and aquamarine-colored glass, whose transparency contrasted with the aluminum Miki usually employed, giving the work novel coloration and an unusual sense of fragility.

The participants represented an extraordinarily diverse range of practices, from the more minimal and conceptual work of Sekine and Yoshihara himself to the eclectic, acid-colored experiments of Shinohara and Yokoo, whose imagery reached back to ukiyo-e prints while also nodding to Pop art. These contrasting yet coexisting impulses found clear expression in Yokoo's *Flying Woman* (*Donna volante*, 1970–72, cat. no. 84) and Narita's *Light* (*Luce*, 1970–72, cat. no. 87).

At the time, Yokoo was a prolific graphic designer, celebrated for his posters and for his covers for jazz and rock records and alternative magazines. He too had held a solo exhibition at the Tokyo Gallery in 1969. An admirer of Pop art, Yokoo developed a combinatorial eclecticism built on provocative contrasts in which violence coexisted with sensuality, while elements drawn from different periods and geographical contexts collided in his posters to create disorienting, hallucinatory juxtapositions.[15] Several pages from the volume *The Complete Tadanori Yokoo*, which brought together hundreds of images of his work, had made their way to Venice, but in a reversal of the artist's own complex, combinatorial approach, a single element had been extracted from them.[16] Produced in blown glass at the Fucina, *Flying Woman* derived from the poster for the performance *Yui Shōsetsu* (1968); despite its apparently playful innocence, it evoked the countless pinups that decorated the fuselages of US military aircraft during World War II.[17] The psychedelic poster, indebted to Yokoo's stay in New York and to hippie culture and made at a time of intense protest in Japan,[18] advertised a performance devised and performed by the avant-garde actor Kara Jūrō about the rebellious samurai Yui Shōsetsu (1605–1651), who committed suicide and with whom Kara identified, casting himself as a new dissident against the postwar political system.[19] Repeated endlessly on paper, *Flying Woman* was produced in several examples and, when exhibited, multiplied further through a play of mirrors, as can be seen in a photograph of the exhibition display.

Narita, still very young and, like Sekine, then a member of the Mono-ha group, was interested in exploring matter in both perceptual and conceptual terms. He was already known in Europe through his participation in the 1969 Paris Biennale with *Sumi* (1969), a work consisting of a block of charcoal produced by burning wood that reflected on the qualitative transformation of materials[20]. Narita submitted several proposals, and *Light* closely resembles his third, which called for a large number of spherical elements in transparent



fig. 5
From left: Nakai Katsumi, Abe Nobuya, and Lucio Fontana at the opening of the exhibition *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 1964

glass to be piled above a coiled neon tube. The work was ultimately realized as an accumulation of hemispherical elements in mold-blown *cristallo*, hot-joined and held together by a rope, with a light source positioned beneath them, originally surrounded by neon lights that wrapped around the internally illuminated pile. The work is built on pronounced contrasts: on the one hand, the transparency of the glass elements and the reflected neon light that cancels it out; on the other, the apparent freedom of the accumulated spheres, visibly forced into order by the rope. Its relatively small scale, however, partly falls short of Narita's original conception, since his proposals were generally conceived on an environmental scale.[21]

The exhibition *Itinerari giapponesi* was staged in the former Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia alongside the 42nd exhibition of glass sculpture. Costantini dedicated both exhibitions in part "to my guardian angel, Peggy Guggenheim."[22] The exhibition met with approval and aroused curiosity, as the local press attests, while the speech delivered by lawyer Arduino Cerutti at the opening on June 10, 1972, underscored the official recognition finally accorded to the Fucina.[23] Likely thanks to the efforts of Masaaki Iseki, then secretary of the Japanese Cultural Institute in Rome, the exhibition was subsequently presented in the capital. The poster, which doubled as the exhibition brochure, featured a selection of photographs of glass sculptures based on designs by Shinohara (*Mouth* [*Bocca*]), Takamatsu (*Expansions* [*Espansioni*]), Narita, whose *Light* has already been discussed, and, at the center, another work based on a design by Yokoo (*Love* [*Amore*]).

The brochure for the Rome exhibition reprinted a text already presented at the Venetian exhibition by the influential critic Tōno Yoshiaki, who in 1972 was commissioner of the Japanese Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and had also reviewed the exhibition organized by the Fucina on that occasion. In his presentation, he compared the works to "flowers of contemporary glass blossoming on Venetian soil from Japanese conceptual seeds," evoking an encounter between two worlds, distant both geographically and in their working methods, brought together through Belardinelli's initiative. He even compared the artists on display to the "Alice" of Lewis Carroll's famous novel, imagining them as having passed through the looking glass into the wonderland of Venetian glass.[24] In the same brochure, Costantini summarized the rationale for *Itinerari giapponesi*, that "demanding exhibition rich in poetry," which featured "works by Japanese artists in the mysterious and magical medium of glass."[25]

Another Japanese artist, Ohira Yoichi, joined the Fucina in the wake of this cross-cultural exchange and later established himself in Venice as an independent artist working in this fragile and precious material.[26] From the 1970s onward, Venice also became a destination for other Japanese artists working in glass, among them Fujita Kyōhei. The Studio Glass movement, which had asserted the dignity and autonomy of aesthetic research through glass, had by then found adherents across the world, including in Japan[27]. Finally, it is worth noting that the Notojima Glass Art Museum, which opened in 1991 as Japan's first public museum devoted to glass, had already acquired for its collection several works resulting from encounters between major contemporary Japanese artists and La Fucina degli Angeli, specifically in recognition of the importance of this collaboration, which certainly merits further study.[28]

1 Crystal manufacturers launched the project that would culminate in the exhibition *Artists in Crystal* (1940), taking up an idea proposed by Henri Matisse: contemporary artists were asked to submit a design that would then be engraved on crystal. By contrast, the initiative associated with the exhibition *Asian Artists in Crystal* (1956), was political and diplomatic in nature and was led by Karl Kup, curator at the New York Public Library. The original drawings, subsequently donated to the New York Public Library together with the finished works, were exhibited in 1956 in several US cities, including Washington, DC (National Gallery of Art) and New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art), and later internationally. On the subject, see *Asian Artists in Crystal: Steuben Glass at Sunny Lands*, exh. cat. (Rancho Mirage, California: The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, 2015), particularly Frank Lopez, "An Historical Account of Asian Artists in Crystal," pp. 8–15. Japanese names are presented here in Japanese order, with the family name followed by the name, with the exception of Isamu Noguchi.

2 The few words opening the section "Viaggio in Oriente" in the important 1978 volume clarify these connections; see *La Fucina degli Angeli, Venezia* (Bologna: La fotometalgrafica emiliana, 1978). The volume, an important reference, also includes photographic reproductions, some in color, of several works exhibited. I thank Silvano Belardinelli for his valuable recollections of his experience in Japan and at the Fucina degli Angeli.

3 On Carlo Cardazzo, see *Carlo Cardazzo: Una nuova visione dell'arte*, ed. Luca Massimo Barbero, exh. cat., Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, November 1, 2008–February 9, 2009 (Milan: Electa, 2008). On the Galleria del Cavallino, see Giovanni Bianchi, *Un cavallino come logo* (Venice: Edizioni del Cavallino, 2007). The relationship between the two galleries and Japanese art was examined in the author's doctoral dissertation, for which he benefited from a research stay at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in 2022. See Stefano Turina, *Oltre lo Zen: Rapporti artistici tra Italia e Giappone (1952-1968)*, PhD dissertation, University of Turin, 2024, ch. 3. On Japan's participation in the Venice Biennale, see *Japan at the Venice Biennale 1952–2022*, ed. The Japan Foundation (Milan: Electa, 2022).

4 See Peggy Guggenheim and André Verdet, *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, exh. cat., Galleria del Naviglio, Milan, December 19, 1964–January 7, 1965; Mario Lepore, "Le mostre a Milano: Vetri veneziani su bozzetti dei maggiori artisti contemporanei," *Corriere della Sera*, January 6–7, 1965. On Hundertwasser and Japan, see *Hundertwasser: Japan and the Avant-garde*, ed. Agnes Husslein-Arco, Harald Krejci, and Axel Köhne, exh. cat., Belvedere, Vienna, March 6–June 30, 2013 (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2013). Ikewada, then Hundertwasser's wife and still a little-known artist, had exhibited at the Galleria del Cavallino (1966) and later at the Galleria del Naviglio (1969). For a reproduction of the work, see *Fucina degli Angeli* (Venice: Stamperia di Venezia, 1967), n.p.

5 See Manlio Alzetta, "Fucina degli Angeli," *Avvenire*, July 23, 1966. For a biography of Tamaki, see *Ishikawaken Notojima garasu bijutsukan / Notojima Glass Art Museum*, exh. cat. (Notojimamachi: Ishikawaken Notojima Garasu Bijutsukan, 1991), p. 139. For a reproduction of *Laguna* (1966), see ibid., p. 50 (color), and *Fucina degli Angeli* (1967) (black-and-white). In addition to photographs of works by Tamaki (*Laguna* and *Universo "Masumi"*) and Ikewada (*Fungo*), the undated publication includes a photograph of Ōmura and, on the back cover, a graphic work by the designer Ota Yukio that also appeared in other brochures. The publication was also translated into English. In this essay, Japanese catalogue titles are accompanied by their English translations where available, while translations in square brackets are by the author.

6 See Peggy Guggenheim, "Costantini: i vetri," *Le Arti* 1–2, January 1969, pp. 51–52. Marco Valsecchi praised the work for having recaptured "the silvery tremor of the leaves," while at the Bolzano exhibition it was admired for "its rational rigor" and for the treatment of the material employed, crystal. See Valsecchi, *L'Immortale*, exh. cat., Galleria Blu, Milan, October 1968 (Milan: Grafie Olimpia, 1968), together with *La Fucina degli Angeli: Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, exh. cat., Galleria Goethe, Bolzano, February 11 to March 2, 1969 (Bolzano: Tip. Mazzucchi, 1969). See also Luigi Serravalli's review, "Il vetro esalta il disegno dell'artista," *Il Giorno*, February 14, 1969. A work by Ōmura titled *Work no. 3* (*Opera 3*) was exhibited at the Fucina's 41st International Exhibition in 1971.

7 See *La Fucina degli Angeli, Venezia*.

8 For a publication by Ota that includes several of his designs, see Yukio Ota, *Pikutoguramu [emoji] dezain / Pictogram design* (Tokyo: Kashiwa Bijutsu, 1993). On Narita, see *Narita Katsuhiko Mono-ha no nokoribi to kaiga he no kikyū / Narita Katsuhiko: Embers of Mono-ha and Trust in Painting* (Hachioōji-shi: Tokyō Zōkei Daigaku Gendai Zōkei Sozō Senta, 2017).

9 Ichirō Hariu, *Modern Art of Japan*, exh. cat., Cavallino 2 – Sala di S. Basso, Venice, June 15–July 15, 1966. On the Tokyo Gallery, see *Tōkyō garō 60-nen / Tokyo Gallery + BTAP*

1950–2010 (Tokyo: Tokyo Gallery, 2010). See also Turina, *Oltre lo Zen*, 2023–24; and Aya Tsutsui, "'Gendai Itaria bijutsu' to Nihon / Contemporary Italian Art and Japan", in *Itaria to Nihon no zen'ei: 20 Seiki no nichiikōryū-ten* / *Avant-garde in Japan and Italy. Intercultural Dialogue of Artists in the 20th Century*, exh. cat., Fukuyama Museum of Art, Fukuyama, April 2–June 6, 2024 (Tokyo: Rose des vents - Suiseisha, 2024), pp. 103–10.

10 See Renato Cardazzo et al., "L'insegna della Fucina degli Angeli," in "Lettere al cronista," *Il Gazzettino*, September 27, 1970.

11 On Sekine's participation in the Biennale, see *Japan at the Venice Biennale*, pp. 219–20. For examples of Sekine's work, see *Requiem for the Sun: The Art of Mono-ha*, ed. Mika Yoshitake, exh. cat., Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, February 25–April 14, 2012; Gladstone Gallery, New York, June 22–August 3, 2012 (Los Angeles: Blum & Poe, 2012).

12 AFdA, Venice, XXXXII Mostra Int. di Sculture in Vetro "F.A", 1972, letter from Belardinelli to Yamamoto Takashi, October 19, 1970. The archive preserves photocopies of drawings, editorial references such as articles and brochures and other materials including letters and postcards. For some artists, only photocopies of drawings survive. In the same letter, Belardinelli confirmed to Yamamoto his willingness to organize an exhibition of the Fucina degli Angeli in Tokyo in 1971, which ultimately did not take place.

13 The work recalls Yoshihara's contribution to Expo '70 in Osaka, where he presented *Blue and Red* (1970), in which two uniform fields of color entered into dialogue with one another. See *Yoshihara Jirō* / *Jiro Yoshihara*, exh. cat., Ashiya City Museum of Art, Ashiya, April 4–May 5, 1992, and Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, October 20–November 23, 1992 (Ashiya: Ashiya City Museum of Art & History, 1992), pp. 159, 213. A key publication on the Gutai group remains *Gutai: Splendid Playground*, eds. Ming Tiampo and Alexandra Munroe, exh. cat., Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, February 15–May 8, 2013 (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2013).

14 *Modern Art of Japan*, n.p.; and *Japan at the Venice Biennale*, p. 229. The Minami Gallery must have been another point of reference for Belardinelli and Costantini, as the list of the selected artists suggest. On the Minami Gallery, see *Shimizu Kusuo to Minami garō* / *Kusuo Shimizu & Minami Gallery* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1985).

15 See *Yokoo Tadanori shinra banshō* / *Tadanori Yokoo: All Things in the Universe*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, August 10–October 27, 2002, and Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, November 3, 2002–January 26, 2003 (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 2002). In particular, the chronology makes only a generic reference to his participation in the exhibition in Venice, p. 242.

16 *Yokoo Tadanori zenshū* / *The Complete Tadanori Yokoo* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971). See AFdA *XXXXII Mostra Int. di Sculture in Vetro "F.A", 1972, Yokoo Tadanori.*

17 *Yokoo Tadanori zenshū* / *The Complete Tadanori Yokoo*, p. 216. For extensive photographic documentation of so-called "nose art," see Jeffrey L. Ethell, Clarence Simonsen, *The History of Aircraft Nose Art from WWI to Today* (Somerset: Haynes Publishing Group, 1991).

18 Commentary on the work specifically notes that 1968 saw protests against the renewal of the Security Treaty between Japan and the United States, against the Vietnam War and the entry of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Enterprise* into the port of Sasebo. See Koichi Tanikawa, *100 Posters of Tadanori Yokoo* (New York: Images Graphiques, 1978), p. 8, cat. no. 27.

19 During the Edo period (1603–1868), Yui Shōsetsu had unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the Tokugawa government and committed suicide after his plot was discovered. The performance and the poster also appeared in Ōshima Nagisa's film *Shinjuku Dorobo Nikki* [*Diary of a Shinjuku Thief*] of the same year, which featured Yokoo himself in the leading role. See Ian Cameron, "Nagisa Oshima," in *Second Wave* (London: Studio Vista, 1970), pp. 80–92.

20 See *Requiem for the Sun*, pp. 149, 164, 178, and 232. Narita participated in the Sixth Paris Biennale together with Sekine; Yokoo also took part. See *Sixième Biennale de Paris: Manifestation Biennale et Internationale des Jeunes Artistes*, exh. cat., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, October 2–November 2, 1969 (Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1969), p. 86.

21 AFdA, *XXXXII Mostra Int. di Sculture in Vetro "F.A", 1972, Katsuhiko Narita*.

22 Egidio Costantini, untitled, in *42a Mostra di sculture in vetro "Fucina degli Angeli"* / *Itinerari giapponesi*, exh. brochure, Fucina degli Angeli – former Cassa di Risparmio, Venice, June 10–September 30, 1972.

23 See "Omaggio giapponese a Venezia," *Avvenire*, July 1, 1972: the exhibition, "now open in Venice for some twenty days, continues to enjoy considerable success"; Mario Rossi, "Mostra internazionale di sculture in vetro a Venezia: La Fucina degli Angeli," *Messaggero*, July 17, 1972. See also the typescript of the speech delivered on June 10, 1972, by lawyer Arduino Cerutti and the typescript of the letter from Egidio Costantini to the mayor of Venice, Giorgio Longo, dated July 4, 1972, thanking him for officially opening the exhibition and for the patronage of the city, granted for the first time; AFdA, *XXXXII Mostra Int. di Sculture in Vetro "F.A.", 1972*.

24 Tōno Yoshiaki, "Gli 'Alice' giapponesi nel paese del vetro Veneziano," in *Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei*, exh. brochure, Japanese Cultural Institute, Rome, February 5–March 4, 1975. Tōno, a prolific author of books and articles, including contributions to international journals, had already traveled in Europe and the United States in connection with the 1958 Venice Biennale and had presented Japanese artists in France at the aforementioned Sixth Paris Biennale in 1969. Tōno's contribution to the Venetian exhibition appeared in both Italian and Japanese, see ibid. For Tōno's review, see Tōno Yoshiaki, "Dai 36-kai Venechia Biennāre / Dai 5-kai Kasseru Dokumenta" [The 36th Venice Biennale / The 5th documenta in Kassel], *GQ: A Quarterly Review of the Graphic Work* 1, 1972, pp. 40–41.

25 See Egidio Costantini, untitled, in *Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei*.

26 On Ohira, see *Yoichi Ohira, Artista dello Studio Glass Veneziano: I disegni della vetreria Anfora* / *Yoichi Ohira, Artist of the Studio Glass in Venice: The Drawings by Vetreria Anfora*, ed. Federico Zanini (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2023); and *Yoichi Ohira: Beyond Venetian Glass, a Retrospective*, ed. Toyama Glass Art Museum, exh. cat., Toyama Glass Art Museum, March 9–June 23, 2024 (Toyama: Toyama-shi Garasu Bijutsukan, 2024).

27 From 1977 to 2004, Fujita traveled to Murano annually. From 1976 he served as president of the Japan Glass Art-Crafts Association, founded in 1972. See *Fujita Kyōhei, Fujita Jun: "iro garasu no bi" ten* / *Kyohei Fujita & Jun Fujita: Harmony of Colors in Glass Works*, exh. cat., Koganezaki Crystal Park Glass Museum, Nishizu, May 21–September 29, 2011 (Nishizu: Koganezaki Crystal Park, 2011), p. 57. On the Studio Glass movement and Japan, see Peter Layton, *Glass Art* (London: A & C Black, 1996), pp. 64–68.

28 The Notojima Glass Art Museum opened in 1991 in the island of the same name, home to the Notojima Glass Studio since 1982. A catalogue published for the museum's opening remains an important reference: *Ishikawaken Notojima garasu bijutsukan* / *Notojima Glass Art Museum*, 1991, pp. 8–51. See Iezumi Hiroko, "Gendai kyoshō ni yoru garasu chōkoku" [Glass Sculptures by Contemporary Masters], ibid., pp. 114–17. The permanent collection includes works by La Fucina degli Angeli created in collaboration with Japanese artists, as well as works produced in collaboration with Arman, Jean (Hans) Arp, Georges Braque, Marc Chagall, Jean Cocteau, Roberto Crippa, Max Ernst, Lucio Fontana, Paul Jenkins, Le Corbusier, Oskar Kokoschka, Pablo Picasso, Reuven Rubin, Robert Scherer, Mark Tobey, Giulio Turcato, André Verdet, and Luciano Zarotti.



fig. 6
Opening of the exhibition *Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei*, Istituto Giapponese di Cultura, Rome, February 1975. In the foreground Yamaguchi Katsuhiro, *Cosmos* (*Cosmo*, 1970–72); Yokoo Tadanori, *Flying Woman* (*Donna volante*, 1970–72, cat. no. 85)



cat. 83

Ōmura Mikuni
***Work no. 3* (*Opera 3*)**
ca. 1968–69
Steel, brass, glass,
and black basalt
57 × 66 × 66 cm
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Foundation, Venice



Costantini: i vetri



fig. 7
Peggy Guggenheim, "Costantini: i vetri," in *Le Arti*, January–February 1969

fig. 8
Roberto Matta next to Ōmura Mikuni's *Work no. 3* (*Opera 3*, ca. 1968–69, cat. no. 83), Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, 1968

fig. 9
Yokoo Tadanori, poster for
Yui Shōsetsu, 1968



cat. 84

Yokoo Tadanori
Flying Woman
(*Donna volante*)
1970–72
Hot-modeled polychrome
blown glass
67 × 68 × 25 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli,
Venice



fig. 10
Opening of the exhibition
Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei,
Istituto Giapponese di Cultura,
Rome, February 1975. In the
foreground Narita Katsuhiko,
Light (*Luce*, 1970–72,
cat. no. 88)

fig. 11
Yokoo Tadanori, *Flying*
Woman (*Donna volante*,
1970–1972)
on view at the exhibition
Itinerari giapponesi, Venice
(1972), in *GQ: A Quarterly*
Review of the Graphic Work 1
(1972), p. 40









cat. 85

Miki Tomio
***Hearing* (*Udire*)**
1970–72
Mold-shaped amethyst glass and acrylic
Nine parts,
63.5 × 41.5 × 15 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 86

Miki Tomio
***Hearing* (*Udire*)**
1970–72
Mold-shaped amethyst glass and acrylic
Nine parts,
63.5 × 41.5 × 15 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice



fig. 12
A version of Miki Tomio *Hearing* (*Udire*, 1970–72), n.d.



fig. 13
Exhibition brochure of Miki Tomio's participation in the Japanese pavilion at the *34ª Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, Venice, 1968 (detail)







fig. 14
Narita Katsuhiko, *Light* (*Luce*, 1970–72, cat. no. 87), exhibition catalogue, *49ª Mostra di scultura in vetro*, Chiostro di Sant'Apollonia, Venice, 1978

fig. 15
Exhibition brochure, *Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei*, Istituto Giapponese di Cultura di Roma, 1975

cat. 87

Narita Katsuhiko
***Light* (*Luce*)**
1970–72
Mold-shaped *cristallo* glass, string, and LED
85 × 80 × 80 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 88

Poster for the exhibition *Itinerari giapponesi*
June 10, 1972
100 × 70 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





fig. 1
Remo Bianco, *Totem*, 1987–88 (cat. no. 92), detail

12. The 1980s

Cristina Beltrami

From the late 1960s, it became evident that the path pioneered by Egidio Costantini was also being pursued by other Murano glassmakers. One example is the 1969 exhibition *Homage to Venice*, which presented ironic glass sculptures by Harold Stevenson at Gino Cenedese,[1] or the 1972 Biennale, where a selection of the Fucina degli Angeli's glass works, on loan from private Venetian collections,[2] stood alongside works that Claire Falkenstein had created for Salviati and ones in ground glass by the Venetian artist Arabella Giorgi for the Vetreria Vistosi.[3] In the 1980s, in his ceaseless efforts to distance glass from the decorative arts, Costantini encouraged his artists to explore a theme imbued with multiple references and open to numerous variations—the totem.

Derived from the indigenous Algonquian word *ototeman*, the term refers to a marker of gathering and prayer, a form so essential and foundational that it spans different historical periods and cultures. The pioneers in developing this subject in glass were Max Ernst, who created a totem in 1963,[4] and Matta, who presented "Three dark Totems, rendered in a deep, nocturnal blue, which seem to emerge from the remote depths of a primordial forest"[5] at the Galleria Blu in Milan in 1968. Matta's totems, described as real "protohistoric formal assonances,"[6] were also on view the following year at the Fucina's exhibitions in Bolzano and Bologna.[7]

It was during this same period that Ettore Sottsass's irreverent brilliance took over the Galleria Sperone in Milan with a "jungle" of ceramic towers, propelling the use of this material well beyond the boundaries of decorative art. Costantini adopted the same approach when he urged several of the Fucina's artists to explore the subject of the totem. Among them, Remo Bianco, shortly before his death, returned to glass and created a towering structure constructed by layering geometric shapes in deep blue glass,

figs. 2–4
Egidio Costantini, John and Joan Portman visiting Peggy Guggenheim, Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Venice, ca. 1970







leading his sculptural practice back to the renowned *Pagodas*.[8] This *Totem* (1987–88, cat. no. 92) is among the twenty-seven works that animated the spaces of the Hibernacle of the Parc de la Ciutadela in Barcelona and that were collectively interpreted as "symbols of love,"[9] an homage to Costantini recently deceased wife, Emilia Dain, who had supported him in all of his endeavors. The exhibition featured a selection of artists who, throughout the years, had participated in the Fucina's enterprise. This included those involved with Costantini since the 1950s, such as Giuseppe Agozzino, whose work featured in the Rome exhibition of 1954,[10] or Pino Mucchiut, who had created his first glass work in 1955[11] and who, starting in 1975, had reconnected with the Fucina to create a *Totem* composed of geometric forms modulated through the chromatic gradations of glass (1987–88, cat. no. 95).

The same subject became the locus of exploration of French artist James Coignard, who at the 1964 group exhibition had exhibited an *Ancestral Vessel* and an *Ancestral Plate* (*Coppa ancestrale* and *Piatto ancestrale*). These expressed the "boundless imagination" that "gives genuine pleasure to the eye,"[12] evident in his solo exhibition at Galleria il Canale in 1961; the cover of the catalogue showed a head in profile that later found its expression in glass.

US Architect John C. Portman expressed a vague anthropomorphism in his *Totem* (1987–88, cat. no. 101). He had discovered and become fascinated by the Fucina in 1965, so much so that he visited the factory, collaborated actively with Costantini, and purchased several sculptures for the interiors of his buildings.[13] The two established a friendly relationship founded on mutual admiration, as testified by a series of photographs likely dating from 1965 that show them in Peggy Guggenheim's home.

Extensive correspondence and a series of photographs from 1985 document Costantini's trip to Atlanta, where he discovered its burgeoning industrial development and visited the monumental construction site of Peachtree Center, designed by Portman, who promised to lend financial support for the renovation of the Fucina's premises.[14]

The totem subject also drew the attention of local artists, such as the sculptor Luciano Zarotti and his wife Dorina Petronio.[15] Zarotti, an assistant to Luigi Tito at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia and later a teacher at the Scuola d'arte dei Carmini, collaborated with Costantini starting in 1968[16]



fig. 5
Matta, *Totem* and *Figures* (*Figure*), Fucina degli Angeli, Venice, ca. 1970



fig. 6
Catalogue of the solo exhibition of James Coignard, Galleria d'arte Il Canale, Venice, 1960

in the versatile role of designer and installation supervisor[17] and lent support to artists that were less familiar with glass.

From a technical standpoint, the totems relied on the expertise of the master glassmakers Mario Dei Rossi[18] and his son Francesco,[19] who also created *Totem* (1987–88, cat. no. 94), in collaboration with Costantini. As poet and critic Carlo Della Corte wrote in 1978, the Dei Rossis supported Costatini, indulging his "creative follies."[20] During the 1980s those same "follies" encouraged Ugo Nespolo to collaborate with the Fucina. A drawing dated 1984, bearing the friendly dedication "Papà Egidio" refers to a large head titled *Genie* (*Genio*, 1984, cat. no. 91), itself one of three elements—the others being *Talon* (*Artiglio*, 1984, cat. no. 89) and *Crowing Rooster* (*Gallo che canta*, 1984, cat. no. 90)—that make up a rebus connected to the fable of Aladdin that the artist chose not to reveal. The interest in fables is a feature of Nespolo's practice from the 1970s, as Fossati[21] noted on the occasion of the artist's solo exhibition at the Galleria Blu in Milan. Equally, in the 1980s, Furio Colombo drew attention to how in Nespolo "the playful atmosphere and fairytale tone must not be underestimated"[22] and likened his work to that of Italo Calvino.

1 See *Antonio Da Ros: Suspended Colors*, ed. Cristina Beltrami,, exh. cat., Modesti Pedriolle Gallery, Brussels, January 27–March 23, 2024 (Brussels, 2024).
2 *36. Esposizione biennale internazionale d'arte*, 3rd ed. (Venice: La Biennale – Stamperia di Venezia, 1972), pp. 163–162, 167. *La Regina Colomba* by Marc Chagall (an oval in engraved glass), *Sun* (*Sole*) by Jean Cocteau (a glass plate), and *Dove* (*Colomba*) (polychrome glass) by Gino Severini in polychrome glass were part of the collection of Arturo Deana in Venice; while painter Mario Deluigi lent a polychrome vase, *Vaso in vetro a canne policrome e manico a serpente*, also by Cocteau.
3 Ibid., pp. 164 and 165.
4 AFdA, Fondo M. Ernst, letter by E. Costantini to D. Tanning and M. Ernst, January 15, 1964: "In a few days the glass works 'totem' and 'three masks' will be ready, and I count on delivering them to you in Paris at the end of the month."
5 Marco Valsecchi, "Il fuoco e il vetro creano stupende sculture," in *Tempo*, a. XXX, no. 44 (October 26, 1968).
6 Roberto Crippa, "Picasso in vetro."
7 *Totem 1*, *Totem 2,* and *Totem 3* are included in the catalogue of the Galleria Goethe in Bolzano and the Galleria Forni in Bologna.
8 See *Remo Bianco: Le impronte della memoria*, ed. Lorella Giudici, exh. cat., Museo del Novecento, Milan, July 5–October 6, 2019 (Cisinello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2019) pp. 148–155.
9 Roberto Ballarin, "Totem di vetro e simboli d'amore: A Barcellona espone Egidio Costantini," in *Il Gazzettino*, May 1, 1988.
10 *I Mostra internazionale . . .*, 1954, p. 20. Painter, ceramicist, and engraver Giuseppe Agozzino (1912–2007) was born in Agrigento, Sicily. In 1953 he moved to Perugia after winning a prize awarded by the Azienda Provinciale del Turismo. See *Giuseppe Agostino: Impronte, Opere su carta e cartone, ceramiche, bronzi,*ed. Massimo Durati, exh. cat. Palazzo Comunale, Corciano, December 20, 2001–January 13, 2002 (Perugia: Effe, 2001). Another artist operating in Umbria was Barbara Mencarelli (Corciano, Perugia 1944), whom Costantini met on the occasion of the Fucina exhibition in Perugia in 1984 and immediately proposed to create a *Totem* (1987, cat. no. 93).
11 Giuseppe Antonio Mucchiut, known as Pino (1924–1990), was born in Romains, Gorizia, and studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, alongside Alberto Viani. From the late-1940s he was a teacher of sculpture at Academy of Fine Arts of Gorizia, where he met Dino Basaldella and Pietro Marini. See *Pino Mucchiut: 1924–1990*, exh. cat., Villa del Torre, Romans d'Isonzo, September 26–October 25, 1992 (Gorizia: Grafica goriziana, 1992). The artist's archive is held in the Biblioteca comunale di San Giovanni al Natisone, Udine.
12 Manfredo Borsi, introduction, *James Coignard*, exh. brochure, Galleria Il Canale, Venice, November 21–30, 1960). An artist and skilled ceramicist, James Coignard (1925–2008) trained in Niece in the studio of Louis Marchand des Raux. He opened a ceramics workshop in Saint-Claude, Paris, and developed a pictorial idiom similar to circles connected to the École de Paris. Experiments with glass ran parallel to his entire career and specifically to his collaboration with the Fucina. In 1998 he claimed glass represented "the discovery of a technique in this vibrant center of artistic exchange." "Une aventure en verre," interview by M. Zardetto with J. Coignard, 1998, published in *James Coignard à la lumière du verre* (Bologna: Berengo Studio–Grafiche Damiani, 2012), p. 103.
13 See "Atlanta: Peachtree Centre Plaza Hotel," *Interior Design*, July 1976, n.p.; "Circles in the Square: Curved Forms within Fixed Lines Provide Flexibility and Order in John Portman's Atlanta Residence," *Interior Design*, March 1982, n.p.; John Portman, Robert M. Craig, and Aldo Castellano, *John Portman: An Island on an Island*, I Talenti series (Milan: L'Arca Edizioni, 1997). For a broader discussion, see *John Portman: Art and Architecture*, ed. Paul Goldberger and Robert M. Craig, exh. cat., High Museum of Art, Atlanta, October 17, 2009–January 17, 2010 (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2009).
14 AFdA, Fondo J. Portman, letter by J. C. Portman to E. Costantini, February 21, 1985.

15 See *Con delicato piacere dei sensi: Arte, bellezza e perdita nel centenario di "Morte a Venezia," Emanuele Convento/Dorina Petronio/Luciano Zarotti*, ed. S. Annibaletto, exh. cat., Palazzo Albrizzi, Venice, May 5–June 5, 2012, n.p.
16 Giovanna Caine, "L'anima di vetro. Costantini: una vita per l'arte," in *Il Diario*, March 19, 1980.
17 P. R. [Paolo Rizzi], "Trent'anni per fare moderno il vetro muranese: Aperta ieri la mostra della Fucina degli Angeli a Sant'Apollonia," in *Il Gazzettino*, August 2, 1978.
18 See *Fucina degli angeli Venezia*, 1978, n.p. The collaboration with Mario Dei Rossi started in 1975.
19 Ivo Prandin, "Questo vetro è come il miele: Barcellona, Inaugurata una mostra antologica della veneziana Fucina degli Angeli," in *Il Gazzettino*, May 25, 1984.
20 Carlo Della Corte, "Il 'vetraio' degli angeli," in *Il Gazzettino*, September 12, 1978, and with them the assistants Vanni Falcer and Enzo Padoan (see Giovanna Caine, "L'anima di vetro: Costantini, una vita per l'arte," in *Il Diario*, March 19, 1980).
21 Paolo Fossati, *Ugo Nespolo: Alabastro, argento, avorio, ebano, lacca, seta, smalto*, exh. cat., Galleria Blu, Milan (Milan 1974), p. 1. Fossati alluded to the writer Lewis Carroll as well as the fact that "As in the medieval fable in which, to lull the prince to sleep (needless to say, a prince), the storyteller counts the hundreds upon hundreds of sheep crossing from one bank to the other."
22 Furio Colombo, "Un'intuizione americana," in *Nespolo*, collana Maestri Contemporanei, n. 36, (Vanessa s.r.l. – Edizioni d'Arte, post 1982).



fig. 7
Ugo Nespolo, *Genie* (*Genio*, cat. no. 91), *Talon* (*Artiglio*, cat. no. 89), and *Crowing Rooster* (*Gallo che canta*, cat. no. 90), all 1984, ca. 1984

cat. 89

Ugo Nespolo
***Talon* (*Artiglio*)**
1984
Hot-modeled polychrome glass
55 × 20 × 12 cm
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





cat. 90

Ugo Nespolo
Crowing Rooster
(*Gallo che canta*)
1984
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass, details in blue, ochre, and red glass
47 × 27 × 13 cm
Egidia Costantini Collection, Venice

cat. 91

Ugo Nespolo
***Genie* (*Genio*)**
1984
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent polychrome blown glass, details in blue and black glass
34.5 × 24 × 24 cm
Matteo Omura Collection, Padua





fig. 8
Intallation view of the exhibition *L'immortale: I capolavori di Egidio Costantini della Fucina degli Angeli*, Parma, 1984



cat. 92

Remo Bianco
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled semi-iridescent polychrome blown glass, details in polychrome glass
190 × 35 × 35 cm
Achille Passini Collection, Brescia

cat. 93

Barbara Mencarelli
Totem
1987
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass
183.5 × 34.5 × 34.5 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 94

Francesco Dei Rossi and Egidio Costantini
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass, details in black and red glass
187 × 34.5 × 34.5 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





cat. 95

Pino Mucchiut
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass, details in burgundy glass
203 × 30 × 30 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice





cat. 96

Pino Mucchiut
Satellite 4F
1980
Screenprint
70 × 51 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice



cat. 97

Giuseppe Agozzino
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass, details in green glass
213 × 34.5 × 34.5 cm overall
Archivio Fucina degli Angeli, Venice

cat. 98

Giuseppe Agozzino
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled aquamarine blown glass, details in blue glass
216 × 30 × 30 cm overall
Antonio Comelli Collection, Padua





cat. 99

Luciano Zarotti
Totem 10
1987–88
Hot-modeled blue blown glass, details in black glass
Diameter: 28 cm overall, height: 161 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 100

Dorina Petronio
Totem
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass
180 × 33 × 25 cm overall
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg

cat. 101

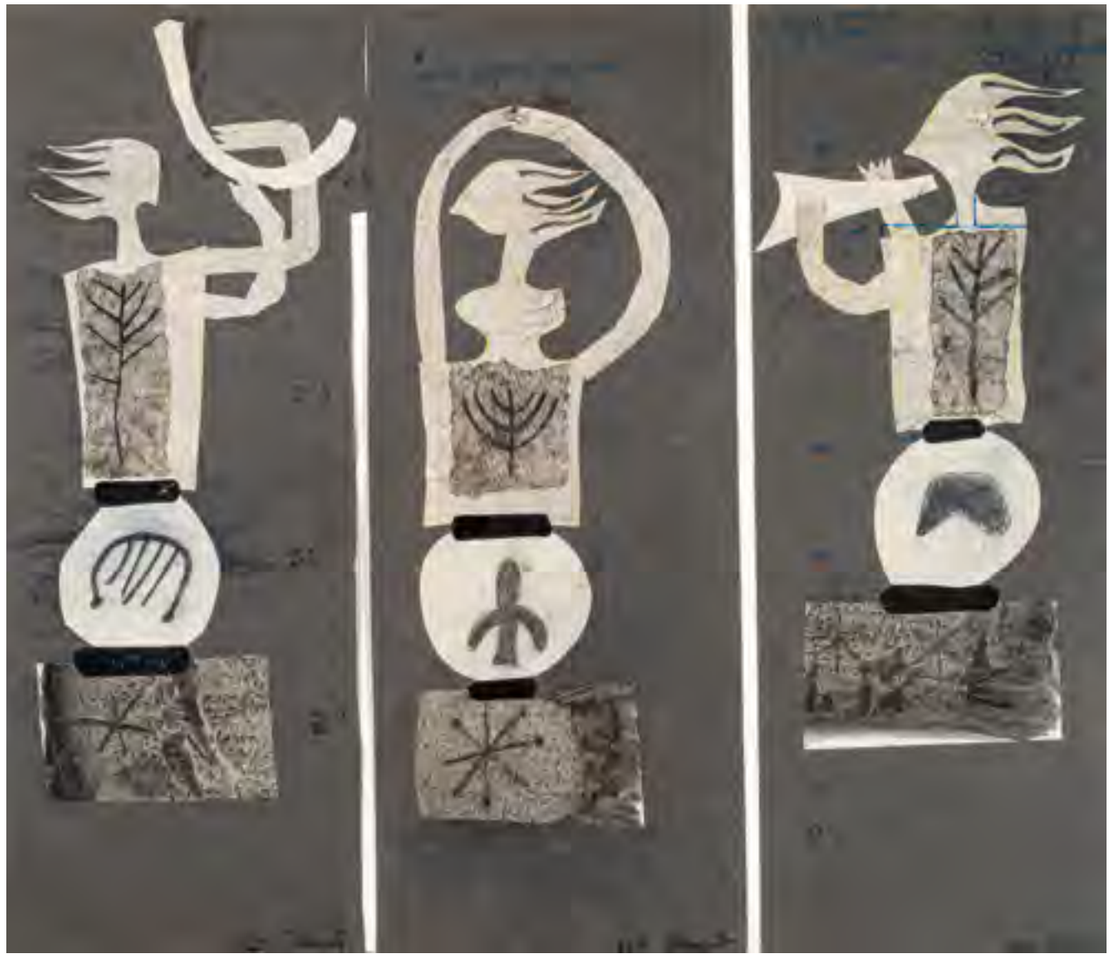
John C. Portman
Totem 3
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown glass, acid corrosion, details in iridescent black and red glass
123 × 40 × 29 cm overall
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg



cat. 102

James Coignard
Totem 4
1987–88
Hot-modeled polychrome blown red glass, details in iridescent black glass
Diameter: 24 cm overall, height: 147 cm
Kunstmuseum Walter, Augsburg





cat. 103

James Coignard
***Three Projects for Figures in Glass* (*Tre progetti per figure in vetro*)**
n.d.
Paper and mixed media collage
74 × 63 cm
Luigi Costantini Collection, Venice



fig. 9
Egidio Costantini and John C. Portman in Portman's architectural office, Atlanta, February 1985. Center, from left: James Coignard, *Genesis* (*Genesi*, 1966)


FUCINA DEGLI ANGELI



Egidio Costantini: Chronology

Egidio Costantini is born in Brindisi on April 22, 1912. When he is only three years old, his father dies of Spanish flu, and his family moves to Venice to stay with his maternal grandmother. After obtaining his diploma, he holds different positions at the Circolo Motonautico di Venezia.

He meets Emilia Dain (1908–1986), later known affectionately as “Mamma Emi,” whom he marries on May 30, 1933. His first son, Attilio Enrico, is born on January 16, 1938, followed by Maddalena in 1940 and Egidia in 1942.

At the outbreak of World War II, he works as a clerk at the Banca Commerciale di Venezia and studies botany at the University of Parma, graduating in 1942.

In 1945, he relocates with his family to Cercivento (Udine), Dain’s hometown. The location is better suited to her frail health. While there Costantini installs coal-making furnaces.

In the early 1950s, he returns to Venice and works at a number of glass factories as a commercial agent. He experiences the vibrant atmosphere of postwar Murano glassmaking, when experimentation with glass reaches extraordinary heights, and understands the potential of producing works in synergy between artists and master glassmakers.

Together with a group of Venetian artists—Aldo Bergamini, Mario Carraro, Fioravante Seibezzi, and Armando Tonello, led by Gino Krayer—he established the Centro Studio Pittori nell’Arte del Vetro di Murano, which officially debuts on April 18, 1953 with an exhibition at the Ferro & Lazzarini factory.

The success of this first endeavor encourages Costantini to involve artists internationally, and he connects with them via intense correspondence and numerous trips: in March 1954, he travels to Vallauris, then Paris and Vence, in France; In November of the same year he travels to Villeneuve, in Switzerland, where he meets Oskar Kokoschka, who was the first to accept his invitation with much enthusiasm.

In 1954, the exhibition *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d’arte di Murano*, on view at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, boasts the participation of fifty-six artists.

In 1955, the success of the Rome exhibition encourages Costantini to open his own gallery, distinct from the Centro Studi Pittori nell’Arte del Vetro, in Campo Santi Filippo e Giacomo in Venice. Jean Cocteau baptizes it “Fucina degli Angeli,” and it soon becomes the site of the most original experimentation with artistic glass.

Despite Costantini’s unique vision and involvement in international projects, in 1958 the Fucina suffers economic setbacks. Peggy Guggenheim provides vital support, purchasing a number of works and, crucially, broadening Costantini’s network to include Jean (Hans) Arp and Max Ernst, who begin collaborating with the Fucina in 1962 and 1963, respectively.

Numerous master glassmakers collaborate with Costantini during the early years: Aldo Bon (Polo), Angelo Bon, Albino Carrara, Luigi Martens, Francesco Martinuzzi, Ermanno Nason, Archimede Seguso, Ferdinando Toso Fei, and Ferruccio Visentini, who work for the factories Dalla Venezia & Martinuzzi, Luigi Martens, Ferro & Lazzarini, I.V.R. Mazzega, Archimede Seguso, Alberto Toso, and Aureliano Toso.

The year 1964 marks a turning point: Costantini organizes a major exhibition at Ca’ Giustinian in Venice, under the auspices of Guggenheim, one at the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan, in December the same year, and another at the Galleria dell’Obelisco in Rome at the start of 1965. At the same time, he begins his collaborations with Remo Bianco and Lucio Fontana.

On November 16, 1965, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, inaugurates the exhibition *Sculpture in Glass,* featuring a selection of thirty-three works by Arp, Ernst, and Pablo Picasso, organized by the museum’s director Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the conservator of the Paintings Department, Peter Selz. The following year, the J&B Weintraub Gallery,

New York, hosts *Vetri di Artisti Contemporanei*. Costantini's international success encourages him to open a new gallery for the Fucina, which debuts in June 1966 on Calle Corona, near San Marco. They gallery features a Minimalist design by architect Ōmura Mikuni (1937–2025), who, on May 6, 1966, marries Costantini's daughter Maddalena.

During this period, Costantini collaborates with young artists, foremost among them Silvano Belardinelli, who, starting in 1965, draws several works, takes on the role of mediator between master and artist, and oversees installations. From 1969 on, the team also includes graphic designer Lucia Dall'Acqua, Antonio Ellero, and Amedeo Bravo.

The catastrophic *acqua alta* ("high flood") of November 1966 causes serious damage to the gallery, straining its finances. Costantini recovers thanks to the support of his collectors, primarily based in the United States, and gives life to one of his most ambitious projects, Ernst's *Immortal.* This sixteen square meter chess set is presented in July 1967 at the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna at Ca' Pesaro in Venice.

In 1967, Costantini travels extensively. During the summer, and then again in mid-October, he spends time in Basel with his wife and daughter Egidia, where he meets Mark Tobey. He then travels to Munich and returns to Italy in time to follow the installation of the *XXIII Mostra della Fucina degli Angeli* exhibition at the Galleria Martano in Turin.

In February 1968, he spends a month in New York exploring opportunities to exhibit the Fucina's works—his efforts come to fruition in the exhibition *Sculptures in Glass of the Fucina degli Angeli* at the Adria Art Gallery in May that year—and to further probe the US market.

On November 9, 1969, Costantini returns to New York to hand deliver to Paul Jenkins one of his works, an advance on the shipment of the US artist's production. The two then travel to the Pilgrim Glass Corporation, the renowned art glass manufacturer in Ceredo, West Virginia, where the Venetian master glassmakers, brothers Alessandro (1922–1998) and Roberto (1930–1986) Moretti have been working for several years. Together they create works by Attilio Sinagra and Jenkins himself, one of which can be identified as *Phenomena One Pole of the Twelve Pole Creek* (1969), now in the collection of the Huntington Museum of Art in West Virginia. Costantini later recalls: "We worked for ten straight hours, under the television cameras, surrounded by journalists, executives, the mayor, and the workmen" (*Il Gazzettino di Venezia*, December 28, 1969). The press reports on Costantini's return to Venice in December.

In June 1970, alongside the 35th Venice Biennale, Costantini opens *Fucina degli Angeli*: *XXXVII Mostra internazionale di sculture in vetro* at Palazzo Ducale. The exhibition features a substantial group of works by Jenkins, while press coverage focuses on the theft of a work by Sinagra, known as "the gondola."

In the early 1970s, the Fucina attracts the attention of the Romanian government, which, with a view to strengthening cultural ties with Italy, invites Costantini to exhibit in Bucharest (1971) and to establish in Buzău (1974) a sort of workshop, a "pilot furnace . . . to teach the art of glassmaking" (*La Stampa*, August 2, 1974). In early 1971, Costantini also returns to Basel to visit Tobey's solo exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler and to collect five new drawings by the artist intended for glass.

After spending seven months in Tokyo, in September 1972 Maddalena Costantini and Ōmura return to Venice via Paris, where the rest of the family joins them for the journey home. The trip provides Costantini with the opportunity both to visit Jenkins's studio and, around September 22, to make yet another stop in Basel to see Tobey.

Admired by Giorgio Longo, mayor of Venice from 1970 to 1975 and a regular presence at the Fucina's openings, Costantini secures municipal patronage for the *42ª Mostra internazionale di scultura in vetro* in 1972, marking the first time one of his exhibitions is supported by the City of Venice.

During the 1970s, the Fucina enters another period of crisis, to which Costantini responds by conceiving an ambitious new project: the *Cathedral*, a monumental glass installation that brings together nine artists—Amedeo Bravo, Luciano Dall'Acqua, Sever Frentiu, Gianfranco Lai Olla, Ohira Yoichi, Ōmura Mikuni, John C. Portman, Robert Scherer, and Luciano Zarotti—in collaboration with the master glassmakers Mario Dei Rossi, Vanni Falcier, Mario Ragazzi, and Daniele Tagliapietra. The work is unveiled at the Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia in October 1981, during the Franciscan Year celebrations.

As the Fucina approaches its thirtieth anniversary, a major retrospective opens in Barcelona in May 1984, with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute and in the presence of both Italian and Spanish authorities. On that occasion, Costantini shares his philosophy of glassmaking with the press: "One must understand the nature of glass, just as one understands paper, wood, or wax . . . Once you have discovered the soul of glass, if you know how to respect it, it will yield the very best results" (May 25, 1984).

Between 1984 and 1985, Parma's *Città del Vetro* invites the Fucina to present an exhibition in the city's Parco Ducale. The accompanying catalogue includes a text by Enrico Crispolti, who describes glass as "a material of immediate gesture and inventiveness: a gesture that realizes, through the age-old skill of direct engagement with the material itself, a plastic idea, a formal invention, an image. The material liquefies and the idea takes shape in a process that must unfold with complete assurance in a very short time and along an irreversible trajectory . . . confronting a material that allows no second chances."

In February 1985, Costantini and his daughter Egidia travel to Atlanta, where they meet John C. Portman. Through Portman, Costantini fulfills his dream of meeting Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King Jr.

Emilia Dain dies on October 11, 1986. Costantini loses his lifelong companion, to whom he dedicates the exhibition held in 1988 at the Hivernacle in Barcelona's Parc de la Ciutadella.

Throughout the 1990s, the Fucina presents a series of exhibitions devoted primarily to the work of Costantini's final collaborators. An important exception is the major 1992 retrospective dedicated to Costantini himself at the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna at Ca' Pesaro, Venice. The exhibition highlights the singularity of the Fucina's achievement, which, as Giandomenico Romanelli observes in the catalogue, ventures into "a minefield . . . so profoundly plastic yet so resistant, so precariously balanced between masterpiece and banality."

Costantini dies in Venice on October 8, 2007, at the age of ninety-five.

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2008

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2012

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2013

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2019

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2021

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2023

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2024

Simona Martinoli, *That Inexhaustible Desire to Experiment: Hans/Jean Arp, a Multifaceted Artists*, in *Hans/Jean & Sophie Taeuber Arp. Friends, Lovers, Partners*, ed. Walburga Krupp, exh. cat., Bozar, Brussels, September 20, 2024–January 19, 2025 (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2024), pp. 241–65.

Jean Cocteau: The Juggler's Revenge, ed. Kenneth E. Silver, exh. cat., Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, April 13–September 16, 2024 (Venice: Marsilio Arte, 2024).

Marc Heiremans, *SALIR: Studio Ars et Labor Industrie Riunite. Contemporary Glass-Decorating on Murano. 1923–1993* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 2024), no. 246, pp. 220–21.

Yves Klein Italia, eds. Cécilia Braschi and Bruno Corà (Paris: Dilecta, 2024).

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2026

Cristina Beltrami, "1948-1958: il vetro, un materiale dell'arte," in *1948-1958. Il vetro di Murano e la Biennale di Venezia*, eds. Marino Barovier and Carla Sonego, exh. cat., Stanze del Vetro–Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, April 19–November 22, 2026, Venice: Marsilio Arte, 2026), pp. 30–39.

Exhibition History

1953

Perugia, Palazzo Gallenga, *Mostra d'arte internazionale di vetri, disegni e pitture del Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro di Murano-Venezia*, October 15–25

Treviso, Sala dell'Ispettorato Scolastico, *Mostra internazionale di vetri, disegni e pitture del Centro Studio Pittori nell'Arte del Vetro di Murano*, December 23, 1953–January 6, 1954

1954

Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, *I Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte di Murano*, May 22–June 13

Padua, Galleria La Chiocciola, *Mostra internazionale Vetro d'Arte Murano*, October–November

1955

Basel, Gewerbemuseum, *Glaskunst von Murano*, September 6–November 20

1956

Lido di Jesolo (Venice), *Mostra internazionale della Fucina degli Angeli*, August

1957

New York, Brooklyn Museum, *Contemporary Italian Glass: Designs in Glass by Picasso, Cocteau and Young Italian Designers*, April 9–30

Lido di Jesolo (Venice), Galleria d'arte Sirene, *Mostra Fucina degli Angeli*, May

La Fucina degli Angeli a Venezia, 1957 [inaugural exhibition]

Basel, Galerie Stürchler, *Glaskunst aus Murano*, November 30, 1957–January 6, 1958; traveled to Stuttgart, Galerie Valentien; Dortmund, Museum am Ostwall, May 11–June 1958

1958

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Mostra di disegni, lacche e tempere di Jean Cocteau, Manfredo Borsi, Gino Krayer, Aldo Bergamini, Otto Mazzucato, Alessandro Pornaro, Elinda Da Re, Bruno Casalini*, December

1959

Perugia, *Mostra Fucina degli Angeli*, April 30–May 15

Lido di Venezia (Venice), Salone Hotel Cappelli, *Mostra "Estate d'Arte"*, July–September

1960

Verona, Palazzo della Gran Guardia, *Vetri di Murano 1860–1960*, March 13–April 30

1964

Venice, Ca' Giustinian, *IX Mostra internazionale del vetro d'arte*, June 21–July 29

Milan, Galleria del Naviglio, *Vetri di artisti contemporanei: La Fucina degli Angeli*, December 19–January 7, 1965

1965

Rome, Galleria L'Obelisco, *Sculture in vetro: La Fucina degli Angeli*, July

New York, Museum of Modern Art, Auditorium Gallery, *Sculpture in Glass*, November 16, 1965–January 2, 1966

1966

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Fucina degli Angeli. Sculture in vetro*, from June 14

New York, J&B Weintraub Gallery, *Vetri di artisti contemporanei*, [March 27]–April 30

Basel, Galerie Münsterberg, *Vetri di artisti contemporanei*, May 8–July 1966

Venice, Galleria del Cavallino, *Lucio Fontana*, July 7–29

1967

Venice, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro, *XXII Mostra di sculture in vetro: Max Ernst e Mark Tobey*, July 22–September 30

Turin, Galleria Martano, *XXIII Mostra della Fucina degli Angeli: Sculture in vetro alla Galleria Martano con un omaggio a Max Ernst*, November 15, 1967–January 10, 1968

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Mostra collettiva Associazione Giovani Artisti Veneziani*, December

1968

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Sculture in vetro: XXIX mostra internazionale*, June 21–September 30

Milan, Galleria Blu, *L'Immortale*, October

Düsseldorf, Vereinigte Werkstätten, *Fucina degli Angeli*, October 25–November 2

New York, Adria Art Gallery, *Sculpture in Glass of the Fucina degli Angeli*, May 4–June

1969

Bologna, Galleria Forni, *La Fucina degli Angeli: L'Immortale*, January

Bolzano, Galleria Goethe, *La Fucina degli Angeli: Mostra Internazionale del Vetro d'Arte*, February 11–March 2

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli: XXXV mostra internazionale*, June–July

1970

Venice, Palazzo Ducale, *Fucina degli Angeli. XXXVII Mostra Internazionale di sculture in vetro*, June 23–September 30

Milan, Palazzo della Permanente, *Mostra artigianato artistico veneziano*, November

1971

Bucharest, Ateneo rumeno, *XXXVIII Esposizione internazionale di scultura in vetro*, January–February; traveled to Cluj, Muzeul de Arta Cluj

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli. XXXXI Mostra internazionale*, 1971

Hanover, Kubus, *Plastik in Glas: 40. internationale Ausstellung der Galerie Fucina degli Angeli*, April 16–May 23

1972

Venice, former headquarters of Cassa di Risparmio, *"Itinerari giapponesi" della XXXXII Mostra internazionale di sculture in vetro realizzate dalla Fucina degli Angeli*, June 10–September 30

Venice, *36. Esposizione Internazionale Biennale d'arte*. June 11–October 1

1974

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *44ª Mostra internazionale di sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli di Venezia*, June 29–September 30

Ferrara, Centro attività visive, Palazzo dei Diamanti, *45ª Mostra internazionale di sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli*, December 8, 1974–January 15, 1975

1975

Rome, Istituto Giapponese di Cultura, *Sculture in vetro di artisti giapponesi contemporanei*, February 5–March 4

1976

Tel Aviv, Museum Haaretz-Glass Museum, *Glass Works by Castell, Chagall, Cocteau, Coignard, Ernst, Le Cobusier, Miki, Picasso, Tobey*, January–April

Brindisi, Istituto Magistrale Statale, *48ª Mostra di sculture in vetro*, April 25–;ay 31

1978

Venice, Chiostro di Sant'Apollonia, *49ª Mostra di scultura in vetro*, August 1–October 15

1979

Haifa, Goldman's Art Gallery, *Homage to Reuven Rubin: Glass Sculptures*, November

1981

Perugia, Palazzo dei Notari - Palazzo dei Priori, *50ª Rassegna di sculture in vetro: Proposta per una cattedrale*, October 4–November

Rome, Palazzo Barberini, Ente Premi Roma, *Sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli di Venezia*, December 1981–January 1982

1982

Verona, Chiostro della chiesa di San Fermo, *Egidio Costantini e la Fucina degli Angeli di Venezia: Sculture in vetro*, June 19–August 31

1983

Pordenone, Palazzo Amalteo, *Nell'ambito di Vinmondo '83: Egidio Costantini e la Fucina degli Angeli di Venezia: Sculture in vetro*, August 27–September 30

1984

Barcelona, Casa Elizalde, *Escultures de vidre de Egidio Costantini*, May–June

Valencia, Excm. Ajuntament de València, *Escultures de vidre de Egidio Costantini*, October

Parma, Parco Ducale, Palazzetto Eucherio Sanvitale, *L'Immortale: I capolavori di Egidio Costantini della Fucina degli Angeli*, December 15–January 30, 1985

1985

Torgiano (Perugia), Antica Fornace, *Egidio Costantini a Torgiano con La Fucina degli Angeli*, November 6–December 6

1986

Bologna, Artefiera, *Sculture in vetro di Egidio Costantini*, May 22–25

Milan, Fiera Milano, *Sculture in vetro di Egidio Costantini*, June 7–15

Venice, Fucina degli Angeli, *Vetro, un amore: Egidio Costantini e la sua Fucina degli Angeli*, June

1988

Barcelona, Hivernacle, Parc de la ciutadella, *Donna, universo, armonia*, May 3–June 30

1989

Alessandria, Palazzo Guasco, *Picasso: Le espressioni di un genio*, December 20, 1989–February 25, 1990

1990

Brussels, Grand Place, *Egidio Costantini: Il maestro dei maestri*, May 17–July 1

Cassino (Frosinone), Galleria Aedes, *Un sogno della materia, la materia del sogno: Egidio Costantini e la sua Fucina degli Angeli*, April 7–June 9

Alessandria, Palazzo Guasco, *Da Chagall a Max Ernst: Magia di vetri*, December

1992

Venice, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro, *Egidio Costantini, vetro, un amore: La Fucina degli Angeli 1948–1992*, October 2–November 15

1994

Vittorio Veneto (Treviso), Museo del Cenedese, *La Fucina degli Angeli: Egidio Costantini, vetro, un amore*, December 17, 1994–January 8, 1995

1996

Piacenza, Associazione Culturale Fatti d'arte, *"Egidio Costantini e i suoi Artisti": Sculture in vetro della Fucina degli Angeli (da Picasso a Fontana) 1954–1996*, October 19–December 15

Vittorio Veneto (Treviso), Duomo di Serravalle, *Egidio Costantini, La Fucina degli Angeli: "Proposta per una cattedrale", verso la vita*, December 21, 1996–January 6, 1997

1997

Tel Aviv, Eretz Israel Museum, *Egidio Costantini: Glass Sculptures from the Angel's Workshop 1950–1996*, winter

1999

Tolmezzo (Udine), Palazzo Frisacco, *Egidio Costantini "Il maestro dei maestri". Sculture d'arte in vetro*, December 10, 1999–March 27, 2000

2012

Murano, Museo del Vetro, *Vetro contemporaneo, il futuro oltre la trasparenza: Omaggio a Egidio Costantini*, July 7–September 30

2025

Domodossola, Musei Civici Gian Giacomo Galletti, *Fuori dei confini della realtà tra Klee, Chagall e Picasso*, July 31, 2025–January 11, 2026

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