

The Venice Glass Week

The international Festival dedicated to the art of glass presents its fourth edition: #TheHeartOfGlass, which will take place around Venice, Murano and Mestre from 5th to 13th September 2020

This year's event will place a special focus on the "making" of glass, with the aim of helping to support and relaunch the Murano glass industry. Alongside events including exhibitions, demonstrations and guided tours, the Festival will offer a programme of online initiatives, in order to sustain links with international audiences.

VENICE, 13th July 2020 – The **fourth edition** of ***The Venice Glass Week*** will take place around Venice, Murano and Mestre **from 5th to 13th September 2020**. The international Festival was established in 2017 to celebrate, support and promote the art of glassmaking: the artistic and economic activity for which Venice has been known around the world for more than a thousand years. For the first time the Festival has a "title-hashtag": **#TheHeartOfGlass**, placing a special focus on the **production of glass**, and aiming to help relaunch and revitalise the sector - primarily that of Murano - which has faced extreme difficulties as a result of months of closure due to Covid-19. Alongside the programme of events organised by the participants (which will be announced at the end of August), *The Venice Glass Week 2020* offers for the first time, thanks to collaboration with its partners, an original programme of digital appointments produced by the Festival - such as the ***TVGW Tours LIVE!*** series of glassmaking demonstrations in furnaces streamed live on Instagram, and ***Conversations on Glass by Apice***, a programme of conversations with international figures from the world of glass streamed live on YouTube. In addition, the Festival will offer a range of **special initiatives** designed for visitors who will come to Venice in September - ***The Venice Glass Week Tours by Nexa*** and the ***Kids' Programme by Artsystem***.

Officially designated as one of this year's **Major Events** of the **Veneto Region**, the new edition of *The Venice Glass Week* will build on the success achieved in 2019 when 103,000 visitors participated in over 200 events dedicated to artistic glass, staged in more than 100 different locations around Venice, Murano and Mestre. However, the fourth edition of the Festival is set to be significantly different from previous years: not in regard to the quantity or quality of its cultural offering - which aims to involve as large an audience as possible whilst fully respecting the necessary safety and social distancing precautions – but in terms of the spirit of event. The reason for this is naturally due to the pandemic that has swept the world since the end of February. Covid-19 has had a grave effect on Venice in particular, seriously impacting upon the tourism and cultural sectors and forcing all production activities - primarily the Murano glass industry - to halt abruptly and remain closed for months, compounding a situation that was already challenged by global competition.

"The fourth edition of The Venice Glass Week will be more sober and more focused on Murano's artistic production, thanks also to a number of new initiatives that the Festival is producing directly for the public, which will include audiences from Venice, the Veneto, elsewhere in Italy and beyond." – stated the Organising Committee, made up of the **Comune di Venezia, Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini-LE STANZE DEL VETRO, Istituto Veneto di Scienze,**

Lettere ed Arti, and the most important association in the glass sector, the **Consorzio Promovetro Murano**, guardian of the Veneto Region's *Vetro Artistico® Murano* brand - *"In this difficult moment, the role and mission of The Venice Glass Week seems more vital than ever: to offer a platform of visibility for artistic glass, and at the same time to give a message of solidarity and support to the island of Murano and the city of Venice as a whole. By "resisting" and standing firm against the tide that has unfortunately seen the necessary cancellation or postponement of many other international cultural events, the Festival is confirming the strength of its roots in, and support for, Murano and Venice."*

This standpoint is also supported and shared by the **Mayor of Venice Luigi Brugnaro** who, together with the City's Municipal Administration, is striving to create a network of companies, associations, resident citizens and visitors, in order to support the art and production of Murano glass, and to strengthen creative synergies between venues and events connected with glass. With this aim in mind, since the second edition of the Festival, initiatives have also been organised on the Venetian mainland, ensuring that the mainland is fully integrated into the Festival events calendar.

#TheHeartofGlass therefore aims to **(re)ignite among the people of Murano, Venice, mainland Venice, the Veneto and Italy the love for, and pride in, the ancient art of glass**, without forgetting of course the **international scope and ambitions** of the Festival, which in previous editions has also been widely appreciated by audiences from abroad. In order to continue communicating with an international public, who – due to circumstances caused by Covid-19 - may find it more difficult to travel to Venice this September, the fourth edition of *The Venice Glass Week* has been given an intuitive English-language title. In addition, the Festival's events programme has been designed to include a series of digital initiatives that should allow audiences abroad to "participate", in line with the inclusive spirit that has always distinguished the Festival.

The 2020 Festival is promoting a return to the roots, to the heart, of glassmaking - also evidenced through its title, written in the form of a hashtag **#TheHeartofGlass**. This hashtag-title indicates the **development of digital initiatives within the Festival's programme**, alongside traditional events around the city. The title also refers to the fact that this year the Festival will place a special focus on the art and craft of "making" glass: an activity which is deeply embedded in Venice's DNA, and which, thanks to the knowledge and skills that have been handed down and evolved over the centuries, ensures that Murano glass continues to be one of Italy's most famous exports, admired and celebrated around the world.

The **visual communication campaign** of the fourth edition of *The Venice Glass Week* also focuses on the hands of glass masters: alchemists who transform molten glass into luminous, perfect forms. The graphic designer **Cristina Morandin** has adapted a selection of photographic images taken in the furnaces and workshops of Murano during previous editions of the Festival for the 2020 posters (displayed around Venice and Mestre since 15th June). These posters **focus attention on the act of creation** and aim to (re)kindle the public's curiosity in the magic of glassmaking – an art and craft that has the capacity to exert a timeless fascination on people of all ages and backgrounds.

THE DIGITAL PROGRAMME: LIVE GLASSMAKING DEMONSTRATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS ON GLASS

The digital programme of *The Venice Glass Week* has kicked off in July: in preparation for the

September Festival, a series of **weekly live broadcasts** is being streamed on the Instagram profile **@theveniceglassweek**, allowing online audiences to "go behind the scenes" of the furnaces and ateliers, to witness glassmaking in action and to hear directly from the masters themselves. The live broadcasts are made in collaboration with the Festival's official partner **Nexa**, a Venetian company that specialises in organising high-level events and international projects, which during the Festival will be offering a programme of special guided tours around Murano and Venice: **TVGW Tours by Nexa**. During the live broadcasts, Nexa's professional guides (who will be leading the tours during the Festival itself) act as narrators for the online glassmaking demonstrations, explaining in real-time what the masters are creating in the furnaces. The online events therefore serve as a virtual preview of what visitors will be able to witness in person during the Festival in September.

The dates of the **upcoming live demonstrations**, before the summer break, are: 14th July at 11.30am CET (in Italian) and 20th July at 11.30am CET (in English).

The Festival has also launched a social media awareness campaign in support of Murano, **#MettiamociilCuore** (loosely translated as "Let's put our heart into it") on the official social media profiles of *The Venice Glass Week* (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). The campaign has begun with testimonials from the Festival's Organising Committee and Curatorial Committee, with a call to action that invites artists, curators, glass masters and all other glass lovers to publish a 30 second video in which they explain "why glass makes their heart beat".

Anyone who wants to participate in the campaign can do so independently via their own social media profiles by posting a video that answers the question "Why does glass make your heart beat?" and tagging **@theveniceglassweek**. These videos will then be shared via the official social media profiles of *The Venice Glass Week*.

Conversations on Glass by Apice, meanwhile, is a programme specially designed to involve international audiences: there will be **six digital "conversations" in English**, created in collaboration with **Apice**, one of the most prestigious transportation companies for works of art, which will be **live-streamed** on *The Venice Glass Week* YouTube channel from **5th to 13th September 2020**. The conversations, which will involve high-profile speakers from Italy and abroad, will be a platform for reflections and discussions about the world of glass. Various topics will be covered, from the relationship between glass and contemporary art to collecting, as well as the impact of Murano glass in the world.

THE FESTIVAL IN THE CITY

This year hundreds of applications were submitted, and then reviewed and selected, by the Curatorial Committee, chaired by the Venetian glass historian **Rosa Barovier Mentasti**, and composed of critics and curators **Isabelle Rehier** and **Jean Blanchaert**, journalist **Uta Klotz**, editor of the German magazine *Neues Glas*, university professor **Marco Zito** and the artist **Marcantonio Brandolini d'Adda**. The applications, which were submitted by foundations, galleries, museums and institutions, cultural associations, universities and higher education institutions, as well as glass furnaces and companies, artists, designers and private Italian and foreign collectors, confirm - even in times of extreme challenges, such as the current period of difficulty caused by Covid-19 - the

vitality of Venice's artistic and cultural scene, and offer a strong indication of the growing international interest in the field of glass.

The Festival's city-wide programme will feature a broad range of events around Venice and Murano, as well as Mestre. The initiatives – most of which will be offered free of charge – will include exhibitions, guided tours, conferences, seminars, award ceremonies, film screenings, educational activities, and a non-competitive nighttime race around the furnaces and streets of Murano. All events will have artistic glass as their main theme, and there will be initiatives in the programme to appeal to audiences of all ages. The complete list of participants and events in the fourth edition of *The Venice Glass Week* will be presented during a second Press Conference, scheduled for late August 2020.

This year, once again, one of the key centres of the Festival will be **The Venice Glass Week HUB**, which will be situated in Campo Santo Stefano in **Palazzo Loredan**, home of the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Building on the success of the past years, the HUB will present a series of independent installations by Italian and international artists. Thanks to the sponsorship of **LagunaB**, the ground floor of Palazzo Loredan will host the first ever **HUB under 35**, which will feature installations and projects presented by young Italian and international artists and designers under the age of 35.

THE PRIZES

The **Bonhams Prize for The Venice Glass Week**, which is the **official prize of the Festival**, is also confirmed for the 2020 edition. All participants will automatically be considered for the prize, which will be awarded to the best project in the Festival, thanks to the support of the **Modern Decorative Art and Design Department (New York) of Bonhams**, one of the main sponsors of the Festival. The winner will receive a **cash prize of € 1,000.00**. The Jury may also decide to give a special mention to two other original projects, at their discretion.

Artists and designers under 35 who are exhibiting in *The Venice Glass Week HUB under 35* will be considered for the new **Autonoma Residency Prize**, promoted by LagunaB and sponsored by the Associazione Culturale per la Salvaguardia delle Tecniche Vetrarie Muranesi E.T.S. through the **Autonoma** project, in association with the American **Pilchuck Glass School**. The prize will enable the winner to participate in a **two-month residency at the Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle (USA) in 2021.**

THE VENICE GLASS WEEK TOURS AND KIDS 'PROGRAMME

This year, for the first time, the Festival will offer a series of official guided tours: **The Venice Glass Week Tours by Nexa**, organized in collaboration with **Nexa**, a Venetian company specialising in organising high-level events and international projects. These tours will allow participants – in small groups, with an emphasis on safety and appropriate social distancing – to experience first-hand the magic of artistic glass production. **From 7th to 13th September**, during *The Venice Glass Week*, these tours will take place around Murano and Venice, involving a series of furnaces, workshops, ateliers and companies selected by Nexa, with the aim of helping visitors to understand and



the **Venice**
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appreciate the value of an ancient art and craft that is in constant evolution, through the hands of masters and artists at work.

The tours, both in terms of logistics and content, will be entrusted to professional guides, who have been specially trained by Nexa regarding the production and history of glass from Murano and beyond.

This year *The Venice Glass Week* will also offer a series of special events for children and families: **Kids' Program by Artsystem**, created in collaboration with the Festival's partner **Artsystem**, a Venetian company that specializes in organising educational events for adults and children.

Information about all of the initiatives and events will be available soon on the website www.theveniceglassweek.com, created by the Festival's technical sponsor **D'Uva di Firenze**, and on the social media profiles of the event (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube).

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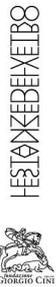
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Organising Committee



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