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DESIGN & INTERIORS

Venice Glass Week 2023 explores the future of glassmaking

Venice Glass Week 2023: from a floating furnace to upcycled Murano glass, the international festival (until 17 September) celebrates the art of fire and glassmaking

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Laura de Santillana – Oltre la Materia at Gallerie dell'Accademia
(Image credit: Courtesy Galleria dell'Accademia)

Venice Glass Week 2023 (until 17 September) offers visitors an opportunity to discover how Murano glass masters and artists can rework ordinary glass waste to create useful everyday items. For a week, Venice becomes an open-air glassmaking studio, with opportunities to engage in workshops, talks and exhibitions led by skilled artists and glassblowers. Here, we bring you the highlights.

Venice Glass Week 2023: the Wallpaper* edit

Murano: Upcycling Glass



(Image credit: Courtesy Venice Glass Week)

'The exhibition is here to prove that a different way of living and working is possible,' says Matteo Silverio, curator of 'Murano: Upcycling Glass' at the island's Glass Museum. 'It's not about replacing a certain type of glass, such as Murano, with industrial glass.' The point is to think about the possibilities of glass. Working with recycled glass is actually up to 30 per cent more energy-efficient than starting from scratch. The exhibition is the result of work by Murano glass masters to demonstrate how they can overcome the challenge of producing unique pieces using recycled crystal glass such as jam jars and bottles.

Museo del Vetro di Murano

Fondamenta Marco Giustinian, 8, 30141

Wave Murano Glass



(Image credit: Courtesy Wave Murano Glass)

Wave Murano Glass is a start-up created by Roberto Beltrami in 2017, made up of a team of young international artists. The team offers workshops and curated tours of the factory, so 'people can learn how to gather the liquid material, which can be really difficult to master', says Beltrami. 'They get to practise the movements and do a "cold run" in a fake furnace before trying it out in a real one to make a piece that they can take home.'

Fondamenta da Mula, 152

30141 Venezia VE

Laura de Santillana – Oltre la Materia



(Image credit: Courtesy Galleria dell'Accademia)

Works by the artist Laura de Santillana are being shown at The Galleria dell'Accademia, it's the first posthumous exhibition dedicated to the artist, who was born in Venice, but worked with international glassmasters and glass engineers on Murano and abroad. The exhibition features sculptural pieces that explore slumping techniques – a gravity and heat-dependent process that shaped glass sheets using a mould. 'It's a technique very particular to the Czech Republic, because instead of using small kilns, these works were realised in industrial-sized furnaces,' says Leon Diaz de Santillana, director of the De Santillana Foundation. 'It took six years for her to fully master this technique with the engineers.'

Gallerie dell'Accademia
Calle della Carità, 1050

Glass Week Hub



(Image credit: Courtesy Michela Cattai)

A diverse collection of installations has been divided into two sections, with rising glass artists on one floor and more established figures including Michela Cattai on another. Cattai's work studies the botanical properties of the Adriatic sea and the organic plants that were once used within the glass-making process. In the under-35 category, participants hailing from countries including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia, and Italy will be considered as candidates for the Autonomia Residency Prize and an artistic residency at Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, USA in 2024. 'The committee received over 250 applications this year from 34 different countries,' says glass historian and curator Rosa Barovier Mentasti. 'And participants have taken an extremely varied approach to the use of glass.'

Palazzo Loredan

Riva del Carbon, 4637, 30124

The Ice Furnace



(Image credit: Courtesy Venice Glass Week)

Ever noticed the similarities between ice and glass? The 'Ice Furnace' exhibition celebrates the proximity of the two materials and encourages visitors to analyse their qualities of transparency and texture. Curated by Costanza Longanesi Cattani, the exhibition explores both the generative and destructive power of fire in relation to both ice and glass.

Castello 1636/A - 30122

Floating Furnace



(Image credit: Courtesy Venice Glass Week)

The Floating Furnace offers people that may not have the chance to visit the factories on Murano to see a series of live demonstrations by different glass masters and students – in essence transporting the art of glassblowing out of Murano’s furnaces and into the heart of Venice. Demonstrations are in English and Italian and spectators will even have the opportunity to ask questions.

Canal Grande, Venice

The Venice Glass Week runs until 17 September 2023

theveniceglassweek.com★

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