



(Above) Lino Tagliapietra's work merges sculptural forms with elegant necks. (Below right) Laura de Santillana's 'Nox' (2017) — Roberta Ono

Glassware's creativity reformed

Interiors | Venice Glass Week looks at past masters and the art's future. By Ife Adedeji

The Rezzonico chandelier is the consequence of competition and perhaps a healthy dose of envy. In the early 18th century, Italian glass master Giuseppe Briati wanted to create something that would refocus the world's attention back on Murano, away from the Bohemian crystal pieces taking Europe by storm.

He crafted a new symbol for Murano glass and the resulting elaborate multi-branched chandelier soon became a fixture in the homes of the nobility. Admired for the detail achieved through multi-layered processes, Briati's artistry reignited the demand for the island's glass production. These chandeliers, or *cicche* (bouquets), have made a lasting impression on the world.

It's this spirit of competition that is encouraged at the annual Venice Glass Week (September 9-17). "With Glass Week we want to push Murano back towards the quality that it's known for,

rather than quantity," says founder David Landau. And in only six years since the first edition, Landau and the Glass Week committee, chaired by Venetian glass historian

Rosa Barovier Mentasti, continue to attract the best in the industry. "Glassmakers from all over the world compete to get to Venice, it offers them the prospect of recognition," says Landau.

Siobhan Healy, artist and founder of Scottish charity Healy Arts, will be holding workshops that allow participants to hand engrave AI-generated designs on to glass. "Glass Week is an opportunity to learn about different techniques and ways of working," says Healy. "Our intention is to explore ways in which we can com-



ist Laura de Santillana — granddaughter of Venini & C Glassworks founder Paolo Venini. "They're pieces she was working on before her death, so they've never been seen before," says Landau. On display will be art de Santillana made on Murano and in the Czech Republic.

Venice is also paying homage to another native with an exhibition on retired glass maestro Lino Tagliapietra at the Ca' Rezzonico museum. "The grandeur of [the] palazzo makes it the perfect setting for the unique pieces I've chosen," says Tagliapietra. Large panels that blend blocks of colour sit beside sculptural forms displaying the long, graceful necks for which Tagliapietra is known.

"I sincerely hope visitors

will enjoy the exhibition and see the wonderful versatility of glass, a material that's always been a part of my life," he says. Murano's former rivals are also being celebrated at an exhibition in collaboration with the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, *Bohemian Glass: The Great Masters*, which will show works by 20th century Czech artists.

Moulaye Niang, who founded his studio Muranero on Murano, will be hosting demonstrations and workshops for the first time during the event. Niang has lived in Venice for more than two decades but his work focuses on crafting delicate glass beads to form jewellery inspired by his native Senegal. "My whole family are artisans and my father works with gold and silver to make jewellery," says Niang. "When I first saw glass it felt like something that was already a part of me. Working the sand in the fire feels poetic, feels musical. And, as an African, what I make is unique in its style here."

Irish artist Róisín an Buitléir has been developing her projects using waste materials. "As I become more aware of the climate impact on my own island, I am looking to reuse waste glass as a raw material for creative solutions," she says. "Given the wide variety of types of glass on Murano this is an exciting and diverse palette, a starting point for creation and solutions for reuse."

While looking forward, Glass Week is also reflecting on a time when Briati could create the Rezzonico chandelier. The event is encouraging a celebration of novelty, while spurring participants to excel and better their production. "We don't want to see the same thing again and again in different colours," says Landau. "There needs to be creativity, which is a fundamental tenet of what one has to do in the creative world."

September 9-17; theveniceglassweek.com

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