

GLASSTRESS 2017

PRESS RELEASE

11 MAY - 26 NOVEMBER 2017

Organised by

fondazioneberengo

Curated by Dimitri Ozerkov, Herwig Kempinger, Adriano Berengo

With the consultancy of Clare Phyllis Davies

Palazzo Franchetti | San Marco 2847, Venice

Berengo Exhibition Space | Campiello della Pescheria, Murano: *The Unplayed Notes Factory*, a solo exhibition by Loris

Gréaud, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, a special project of GLASSTRESS 2017



Charles Avery, Untitled (Ninth stand #1) / detail, 2017, glass, steel, plastic containers, fabric, brick, wood, blood, acrylic, 165 x 108 x 79 cm, Courtesy the artist and Berengo Studio, Photo credit: Francesco Allegretto.

Returning to Venice for the 57th Venice Biennale, **GLASSTRESS** brings together 40 leading contemporary artists from Europe, the United States, the Middle East and China in an ambitious exhibition exploring the endless creative possibilities of glass. Conceived by **Fondazione Berengo**, the project will take place in two exceptional historic locations: Palazzo Franchetti in Venice and a converted furnace in Murano.

Since its debut as a collateral event of the Venice Biennale in 2009, GLASSTRESS has revived the traditional craft of Murano glassblowing by forging new alliances with internationally renowned artists and designers and has since become an unparalleled platform showcasing groundbreaking new works in glass.

The 2017 edition of GLASSTRESS presents an impressive line-up of artists including **Ai Weiwei**, **Jake & Dinos Chapman**, **Jan Fabre**, **Abdulnasser Gharem**, **Tony Oursler**, **Laure Prouvost**, **Ugo Rondinone**, **Thomas Schütte** and **Sarah Sze**. With little or no prior experience working with glass, these artists have embraced the challenge of creating extraordinary works in this very delicate medium in collaboration with Muranese artisans. The remarkable output of this unusual encounter defies the stereotypes associated with this ancient craft, ultimately pushing the boundaries of both contemporary art and glass.

Ai Weiwei who has experimented with Murano glass for the first time says: "I think what Berengo did is exceptionally brilliant. The idea, the concept is so strong. He believes in contemporary expression, but at the same time tries to develop this old technique into a new language. I'm a contemporary artist, but I am always learning and working with tradition."

Major highlights from the 5th edition of GLASSTRESS exhibited at Palazzo Franchetti include *Gartenzwerge*, an installation of colourful and geometric sculptures reminiscent of garden gnomes produced by German artist **Thomas Schütte**. Scottish artist **Charles Avery** transposes his signature fictional island to the Venetian lagoon, with an installation depicting the long journey of eels from his hometown, Oban, to Venice. The artist has been inspired by the act of glassmaking as a way to discover an objective truth through physical movement, strength and timing. **Brigitte Kowanz** and **Erwin Wurm**, both representing the Austrian Pavilion this year, also experiment with glass and conceive striking installations at the 19th Century palace.

American artist **Sarah Sze** has collaborated with glass masters to create a site-specific installation composed of shards, *Cotissi*, informed by her experience of working in the furnace. Her intervention traces the confines of the Palazzo Franchetti with a delicate, but strong line of shards of glass circling the architecture and echoing the shades of blue and green of the Laguna.

Iraqi artist **Halim Al-Karim** recounts his exile in the desert during the first Gulf War with a mirror in engraved Murano glass, combining his poetry with traditional Venetian art. Kuwaiti artist **Monira Al Qadiri** presents seven sculptures of oil drill heads made of iridescent glass, *Amorphous Solid Ghost*, mimicking artefacts. The installation attempts to conjure the premonition that fossil fuels will soon become obsolete as an energy source, and pre-emptively positions oil drilling as an inexplicable human activity from ancient times. **Abdulnasser Gharem**, Saudi Arabia's most important conceptual artist, addresses themes of Islamic cultural identity in contemporary society, drawing his inspiration from his previous experience as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Saudi army. His work *The Stamp (Moujaz)* takes on a satirical view of bureaucracy in the Arab world.

Clare Phyllis Davies states that the fragility and translucence of glass combined with malleability of form and nuance of colour makes the medium serve as an ideal foil for effects and currents that would otherwise remain at the threshold of human perception.

In the garden of Palazzo Franchetti, Belgian artist **Koen Vanmechelen** presents a spectacular installation exploring recycling and sustainability supported by ECO-oh!

In Murano, where the exhibition continues, **Loris Gréaud** makes his GLASSTRESS debut with a special project at Berengo Exhibition Space. The French artist will bring an abandoned glass furnace back to life with his immersive and performative solo exhibition *The Unplayed Notes Factory* curated by **Nicolas Bourriaud**. The Campiello della Pescheria furnace, shut down for the last 60 years, will host an unofficial glass production line with an almost alchemical ambition to crystallise time.

GLASSTRESS 2017 is curated by **Dimitri Ozerkov** (Director of the Hermitage 20/21 Project for Contemporary Art at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg), **Herwig Kempinger** (President of Secession, Association of Visual Artists, Vienna) and **Adriano Berengo** (President of Fondazione Berengo and founder of GLASSTRESS, Venice), with the consultancy of **Clare Phyllis Davies** (Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). *The Unplayed Notes Factory* by Loris Gréaud is curated independently by **Nicolas Bourriaud**.

NOTES TO EDITORS

GLASSTRESS 2017 - PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

New Artists

Ai Weiwei (China), Charles Avery (UK), Dike Blair (USA), Graham Fagen (UK), Gaia Fugazza (Italy), Abdulnasser Gharem (Saudi Arabia), Loris Gréaud (France), Xenia Hausner (Austria), Siggie Hofer (Italy), Cameron Jamie (USA), Halim Al-Karim (Iraq), Brigitte Kowanz (Austria), Dr Lakra (Mexico), Karen LaMonte (USA), Paul McCarthy (USA), Haroon Mirza (UK), Laure Prouvost (France), Monira Al Qadiri (Kuwait), Random International (UK), Ugo Rondinone (Switzerland), Markus Schinwald (Austria), Sarah Sze (USA), Sabine Wiedenhofer (Austria), Dustin Yellin (USA)

Returning artists

Monica Bonvicini (Italy), Jake & Dinos Chapman (UK), Tony Cragg (UK), Erin Dickson (UK), Jan Fabre (Belgium), Josepha Gasch-Muche (Germany), Shirazeh Houshiary (Iran), Vik Muniz (Brazil), Tony Oursler (USA), Jaume Plensa (Spain), Thomas Schütte (Germany), Koen Vanmechelen (Belgium), Erwin Wurm (Austria)

GLASSTRESS - THE PROJECT

GLASSTRESS was launched in 2009 by **Adriano Berengo** as an official collateral event of the 53rd Venice Biennale. The project has been then accredited for four consecutive editions and it is today the world's leading showcase for the collaborative work of contemporary artists and designers with **Berengo Studio's** Muranese glass masters.

Organised by **Fondazione Berengo**, GLASSTRESS exhibitions have been presented in prominent museums and institutions worldwide including the **Boca Raton Museum of Art**, Florida, the **London College of Fashion** and **The Wallace Collection** in London, the **Art Museum Riga Bourse** in Riga, **Millesgården Museum** in Stockholm, the **Museum of Arts and Design (MAD)** in New York, the **Beirut Exhibition Center (BEC)** in Beirut.

www.glasstress.org

FONDAZIONE BERENGO

Fondazione Berengo was founded by **Adriano Berengo** in 2014 as a cultural institution consolidating and strengthening his mission of marrying the Muranese glass-making tradition with contemporary art. The Foundation seeks to achieve this goal through educational initiatives and an

interdisciplinary programme of exhibitions and special projects in collaboration with internationally acclaimed artists, designers, and architects.

www.fondazioneberengo.org

ADRIANO BERENGO

Adriano Berengo was born in Venice in 1947 and lives between Venice and Beirut. He holds a Foreign Languages degree from Ca' Foscari University (Venice) and a Master's degree in Comparative Literature from the State University of New York.

Adriano Berengo is the visionary behind **Fondazione Berengo, GLASSTRESS** and the glass factory **Berengo Studio 1989**. Following the footsteps of Egidio Costantini and Peggy Guggenheim who have introduced outstanding artists such as Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall to Murano glass, he has been championing the innovative use of glass as a medium in contemporary art for almost 30 years by inviting more than 300 artists in his studio.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PRESS PREVIEW

TUESDAY, 9 MAY 2017
10:00am - 4:00pm*

Palazzo Franchetti
GLASSTRESS 2017
San Marco 2847, Venice

TUESDAY, 9 – 11 MAY 2017
10:00am - 4:00pm*

Berengo Exhibition Space
The Unplayed Notes Factory by Loris Gréaud
Campiello della Pescheria, Murano

* A boat service from Palazzo Franchetti to Berengo Exhibition Space will be provided for journalists at 12:00pm and 2:30pm. Prior booking required at info@fondazioneberengo.org

PUBLIC OPENING

11 MAY - 26 NOVEMBER 2017
Palazzo Franchetti
San Marco 2847, Venice
Daily 10:00am – 6:30pm

13 MAY - 26 NOVEMBER 2017
Berengo Exhibition Space
Campiello della Pescheria, Murano
Saturday–Sunday–Monday, 1:00pm – 4:00pm

PRESS INFORMATION

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