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THE MUSEO DEL VETRO OF MURANO INAUGURATES *SILICON DIOXIDE*, A NEW SOLO SHOW BY TONY CRAGG

Venice, 3 December 2021 – *SILICON DIOXIDE*, the new solo show by TONY CRAGG opens at the Museo del Vetro in Murano (Venice) and runs from December 3, 2021 till March 13, 2022. The exhibition featuring a variety of works, several of which have never been exhibited before.

Opening today in the presence of the artist, the exhibition, which is held by Berengo Studio in collaboration with Musei Civici di Venezia, retraces the most significant stages of the English sculptor's career, starting from the *assemblages*, historical works of large dimensions where groups of objects are juxtaposed and brought together. Alongside these important pieces from the past, there are several more recent works, some of which have just been completed, which show Cragg's new curiosity for the various effects of colored glass and reflect, with expressive twists, the research path undertaken by the artist in recent years mediating upon the concept of fluidity within glass as a material. The exhibition is also enriched by a series of drawings, etchings, and watercolors that help to immerse the audience in the creative universe of the artist.

Of particular importance within the exhibition are the series of hand-blown sculptures that Cragg began to produce in 2009, when he began collaborating with Berengo Studio in Murano. In a striking evolution from his large-scale assemblages of the 1990s, the blown glass sculptures gave Cragg access to a new dimension of the material. No longer bound to the traditional found forms of bottles and other classical objects, in these more recent works he has been able to explore the possibilities of manipulating matter in its molten state. This flexibility has seen him "choreograph" elaborate and original compositions in the furnace that have emerged organically, slipping from his mind into the hands of the glass masters to be moulded into a new physical presence, one that resists the stasis of sculpture and instead comes to capture the movement and energy of a single moment.

The artist's investigation, which stems from a need for ontological exploration of matter and the need to investigate the relationships that govern the dynamic energy of materials, results in works that manage to balance the inner and outer balance of forms. Cragg's works mediate on the complexity of physics, reconciling a total understanding of the organic nature of reality with an acceptance of its less intelligible characteristics.

It is not by chance then that glass has become an element of inspiration for the English artist: glass is itself a crucible in which particles blend, are broken, and reassemble, where the free potential of organic matter manages to transform itself and go beyond its own limits to shift into a new material state.

It is also no coincidence that this exhibition is called *Silicon Dioxide*, because it is precisely this silicon dioxide element from which glass is born that contains within itself not only a necessary chemical-organic structure, but also a creative spark of matter, ready to express itself as a new form, as a new work of art.



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"Silicon Dioxide is a wonderful material. The potential is endless" Tony Cragg notes, when he describes his creative process he describes how: "It's like looking at somebody, and you're reading their face and their movements, and you feel you have ideas about them, you have emotions about them, but it's the same with drawing, it's the same with glass. So once you start that journey, you don't really know where you're going, the best thing is to not know where that journey is going to take you, and suddenly you arrive in a new situation, that's really what I'm interested in."

Luigi Brugnaro, the Mayor of Venice, commented: *"Venice and Murano welcome Tony Cragg, an artist of international renown and great value, whose exhibition pays homage to the history of this island, the home of glass and of a thousand-year-old tradition capable of renewing itself in the contemporary world. The encounter between art and technology has produced these works, which find a natural place in our Glass Museum, for an exhibition that is the fruit of the artist's work and his ability to create a dialogue with our craftsmen. Cragg is one of the protagonists of the renewal of world sculpture and a master in the use of new materials and new technologies. Inaugurating this exhibition demonstrates how alive glass is, how artful it is, but above all how important it is to open the doors of our museums to artists who pay homage to Venice with their craftsmanship, just as we are celebrating the 1600th anniversary of the founding of the city."*

"The themes present in this exhibition, in these installations, are recurrent in the work of Cragg, who I remember has already exhibited in several editions of the Biennale and a solo show at the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna at Ca' Pesaro in 2010. Accumulation and assembly as conceptual ideals feature throughout, the material bent to the creative need and thus ennobled, is present from the first creations made of fragments and waste materials, just as it is in the latest ones, with the introduction of new techniques and new materials: wood, bronze, ceramic, and of course glass. Here in Murano, thanks to the fortunate encounter with Berengo Studio, Cragg's work has focused on the flexibility of this extraordinary material with its infinite possibilities, which therefore requires great control, producing a further leap forward. The importance of this exhibition lies also in the fact that it proposes historical works and other very recent ones, accompanied by drawings and engravings, as evidence of his exceptional career as an artist," stated **Gabriella Belli**, Director of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.

"After over ten years of collaboration I am honoured to bring the exhibition Tony Cragg. Silicon Dioxide to the Venetian lagoon. This will be his first solo show on Murano and also – appropriately – the first exhibition to ever focus on Cragg's innovative use of glass as a material in contemporary art. In a joint venture with Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia it gives me great pleasure to showcase the vibrant contemporary life of this material as seen through the mind of one of the world's most renowned sculptors in the historical setting of Murano's Museo del Vetro," stated the President of Berengo Studio, **Adriano Berengo**, who further noted how *"Cragg's creations are constant paradoxes of 'formless forms' in which*



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each artwork is a pure mental evocation. While his experimentations in bronze, wood, and plaster seemingly defy gravity, his glass sculptures, conceived in living matter, challenge the brilliance and transparency of this expressive medium."

**TONY CRAGG. SILICON DIOXIDE
MUSEO DEL VETRO, MURANO**

From 3 December 2021 till 13 March 2022.

The exhibition is held by Berengo Studio in collaboration with the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.

Opening hours

from Thursday to Sunday, 11.00 to 17.00. Last entrance at 16.00.

Special openings

- Monday 6, Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 December 2021;
- everyday, from Friday 17 December 2021 to Sunday 9 January

Entrance included with ticket to the Museo del Vetro. Free for residents of Venice.
Access only permitted with Green Pass (EU Digital Covid Certificate).
Masks must be worn inside the museum.

<https://www.berengo.com>

<https://www.fondazioneberengo.org/>

<https://www.museovetro.visitmue.it/>

PRESS KIT

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1z6x0r6b43g67hr/AAArZqdurxZwK7HUVhYNbJp3a?dl=0>

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