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## **Le Stanze del Vetro**

**A cultural project and an exhibition space dedicated to the study and the promotion of modern and contemporary glassmaking**

*Le Stanze del Vetro* is a joint venture involving the *Fondazione Giorgio Cini* and the *Pentagram Stiftung*, a Swiss-based, non-profit foundation.

*Le Stanze del Vetro* is both a cultural project and an exhibition space, designed by New York-based architect Annabelle Selldorf.

The purpose of *Le Stanze del Vetro* is to focus on the history and the use of glass in 20th and 21st century art in order to bring this medium back into the center of attention and discussion within the international art scene.

The cultural initiatives of *Le Stanze del Vetro* focus not only on contemporary artists who use glass as their artistic medium, but also on the main glass producers and on the major glass collections around the world. For this reason, two exhibitions will be staged each year until 2021 on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore: one in spring, dedicated to the use of glass in 20th and 21st century art and design, and the second in fall, dedicated to the talented artists who designed objects for the Venini glassware company in the 20th century. Each annual exhibition of Venini glass is accompanied by a *catalogue raisonné* published by Skira and available at the bookshop of *Le Stanze del Vetro*.

Alongside these initiatives, a series of special, often site-specific projects are organized involving contemporary artists (Swiss artist Not Vital in 2013, and Japanese artist Hiroshi Sugimoto in 2014), who are invited to work with glass, either prefabricated or specially produced by craftsmen from Venice. The result is a large site-specific installation, coupled with the design of a small limited-edition object produced in Murano and sold at the *Le Stanze del Vetro* bookshop to support the activities organized and promoted by *Le Stanze del Vetro*.

In addition to this, *Le Stanze del Vetro* has set up a Study Centre dedicated to research in the field of artistic glass, together with a general archive of Venetian glass, a series of scholarships specifically addressed to researchers interested in the topic, and a series of seminars, conferences, and workshops for scholars and artists interested in the history, technology, and development of the art of glassmaking.

*Le Stanze del Vetro* has adopted a model often found in English-speaking countries of free access to museums based on the idea that cultural heritage belongs to the community. That is why the admission to the exhibitions, the tours, and the educational activities are free of charge.

LE STANZE DEL VETRO



## **Fondazione Giorgio Cini**

The Giorgio Cini Foundation is a non-profit cultural institution based in Venice, Italy. It was established by Vittorio Cini, in memory of his son Giorgio, with the aim of restoring the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore (devastated after 100 years of military occupation) and of creating an international cultural center that would reintegrate the island into the life of Venice.

“The Giorgio Cini Foundation’s mission is to promote the redevelopment of the monumental complex on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore and encourage the creation and development of educational, social, cultural, and artistic institutions in its surrounding territory.”

The creation of the foundation was one of the most considerable private initiatives of the 20th century. The importance of this undertaking was borne out by the initial investment committed to rehabilitate the island and by the many events the foundation has promoted or hosted since. It is further substantiated by the cultural patrimony conserved on the island and, since 1984, at the Gallery of Palazzo Cini at San Vio.

Alongside the foundation’s commitment to its own research as well as the conferences and seminars growing out of this work, the island welcomes events sponsored by distinguished cultural and scientific organizations.

The role of the Giorgio Cini Foundation is attested by the many highly esteemed intellectuals, artists, politicians, and economists who have been involved in its program, and by the recollections of scholars and guests who have spent time on the island.

The Giorgio Cini Foundation hosts the International Center for the Study of Italian Culture, named after Vittore Branca. Opened in 2010, the Branca Center is a new residential resource for humanities studies where young researchers and expert scholars can stay while working in the foundation and Venetian libraries. For further information: [www.cini.it](http://www.cini.it).

## **Pentagram Stiftung**

The Pentagram Stiftung is a Swiss private foundation established in 2011, based in Chur, Switzerland, whose mission is to study and promote 20th and 21st century art and design that feature glass as their main medium. The Pentagram Stiftung aims to reappraise the importance of glass—especially in the art and history of Venice—as well

as that of high-standard and innovative glassmaking in the contemporary art and design worlds.

In 2012 the Pentagram Stiftung launched *Le Stanze del Vetro*, a long-term joint initiative with the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.

A further activity of the Pentagram Stiftung is to help promote the work of contemporary glassmakers when funds are insufficient for institutions to show their work adequately. For instance, it helped *In Grimani: Ritsue Mishima Glass Works* (30 May–29 September 2013), an event accompanying the 55th Venice Art Biennale, in the Museum of Palazzo Grimani. Japanese artist Ritsue Mishima finds unique opportunities to create elaborate pieces using the techniques that the Murano glass masters have handed down through the centuries.

Another case in point is that of *Osmosi* (31 May–28 July 2013): French designer Emmanuel Babled has designed a collection of furniture, lamps, and vases made of glass and marble, and this was shown with the foundation's help at Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, Venice, on the occasion of the same Biennale. Another example is that of *700 Snowballs* (1 June–29 September 2013): an installation by Swiss artist Not Vital consisting of 700 glass balls handmade in the Vetreria Pino Signoretto in Murano, and exhibited in the abbey of the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.

### The Glass Study Centre

As part of *Le Stanze del Vetro* project, in 2012 the Cini Foundation—with the support of the Pentagram Stiftung—set up a dedicated **Study Centre in its Institute of Art History**. The Study Centre aims to become a major international academic resource for studies and also for glass as a living topical subject.

To do so it is pursuing various activities among which include the gradual construction of a **general archive of Venetian glass** mainly consisting of drawings, designs, correspondence, and photographs from the Murano glassworks, to be made available to the scholarly community and for use in developing the art of glassmaking; the creation of a **specialized glass library within the art history library**; the organization of regular exhibitions as well as **seminars, conferences, and workshops** for scholars and artists interested in the history, technology, and development of the art of glassmaking. In 2014 the **Institute of Art History, under the direction of Luca Massimo Barbero**, is focusing on building up and making use of its archives, which include some unique items worldwide, and enhancing the

Glass Study Centre's library. The archives of contemporary artists active on Murano have recently been acquired and digitized for consultation. The artists concerned are **Ginny Ruffner** (52 projects), **Peter Shire** (38 projects), and **Emanuel Babled** (over 16 large-scale projects). Moreover, the **Dino Martens Archive** has been digitized for the Aureliano Toso glassworks (345 designs for Biennales, Milan Triennials and international exhibitions such as Brussels, Cairo, etc.) for the period 1940 to 1965.

Over the next few months the Glass Study Centre will digitize the archive of the artist **Vinicio Vianello** (1923–1999). A key figure in the Spatialism movement, he was a great experimenter with glass (see, for example, his celebrated *Atomici* vases) as well as with lighting and designs, which he exhibited several times at the Venice Biennale and the Milan Triennial; in 1957 he was awarded the Golden Compass. All of the Vianello documentation will be made available for consultation: 323 rolls each containing original drawings, tracing papers, and projects, 820 photographs, index cards, reproductions of works, and 14 CDs with the complete press cuttings and publications on his production of art glass. The forthcoming issues of *Saggi e Memorie*, a magazine published by the Institute of Art History, will include a new section on the applied arts with the publication of the proceedings from the conferences on Napoleone Martinuzzi and Tomaso Buzzi, organized by the Institute of Art History through the Study Centre.

The importance and special role of the Cini Foundation Glass Study Centre are highlighted by the fact that it attracts scholars from all over the world and by its relations with major international institutions.

**The Glass Study Centre Archive and Library are open to the public by appointment from Monday to Friday, 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2–5 p.m.**