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NEUES AUS MURANO

GLASSTRESS 2011

Von Reinhold Ludwig



Jaime Hayon, *Testa Mecanica*,
2011. Geblasenes Glas,
Borsilicatglas, lackiertes Holz,
55 × 52 × 43 cm. Alle Fotos
Francesco Allegretto.

Neben der Biennale in Venedig gibt es zum zweiten Mal jede Menge Kunst aus Glas in der Lagunenstadt. Adriano Berengo, Initiator und Organisator der Ausstellung mit dem zweideutigen Namen *Glasstress*, hat dafür prominente Partner ins Boot geholt: Das New Yorker Museum of Arts and Design als Promotor, die Kuratoren Lidewij Edelkoort, Peter Noever, Demetrio Paparoni und Bonnie Clearwater. Der visionäre Inhaber des *Berengo Studios* in Murano sieht gar einen neuen Ära für Glaskunst anbrechen.



Joost van Bleiswijk,
*Fragile Factory/
Industry Pallet*,
2011. Borsilicatglas,
Glaspalette,
50 × 120 × 80 cm.

ART AUREA Was wollten Sie mit dem Begriff *Glassstress* ausdrücken? Was bedeutet er wörtlich?

BERENGO Er ist eine Wortverbindung aus „glass“ und „stress“. Das heißt, Glas an sich ist ein Material, das viel Stress verursacht und Stress begleitete auch meine Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Material. Mit anderen Worten: *Glassstress* ist meine Autobiographie.

ART AUREA Was war Ihre Intention mit diesem Glaskunstprojekt? Wenn man sieht, was Sie im Studio Berengo produzieren, könnte man es für ein intelligentes Marketingkonzept Ihrer Firma halten.

BERENGO Ich muss zugeben, dass mich Glas, als ich noch Lehrer mit einigen künstlerischen Ambitionen war, auch in ökonomischer Hinsicht faszinierte. Die Glasindustrie hat früher viele reich gemacht, vor allem die Hersteller von Murano-Glas. Als ich vor über zwanzig Jahren als künstlerischer Direktor einer Glashütte nach Murano kam und mit Künstlern und Meistern im Glasmachen zusammenarbeitete, war ich fasziniert von seinem unglaublichen kreativen Potential. Heute werde ich tagtäglich mit einer Realität konfrontiert, die völlig anders ist. Aber ich glaube immer noch daran, dass diese Insel und dieses Material eine große Zukunft vor sich haben. Deshalb verfechte ich weiterhin die Idee

des künstlerischen Glases, die von der allgemein anerkannten Meinung abweicht und deshalb oft abgelehnt und kritisiert wird. Heute möchte ich meinem Leben einen Sinn geben, indem ich das Glas als ein ganz normales Material in die zeitgenössische Kunst einbringe.

ART AUREA Es ist sicher kein Zufall, dass *Glassstress* gleichzeitig mit der Biennale in Venedig stattfindet?

BERENGO Natürlich nicht. Es gehört zum Konzept der Biennale, die Umgebung mit einzubeziehen. In dieser Hinsicht leistet Berengo Studio einen idealen Beitrag zur Biennale. Wir sind schon seit über 20 Jahren in Venedig und hoffen, in Venedig zu bleiben. Unser Anliegen ist, zeitgenössische Künstler und Designer einzuladen, unsere Möglichkeiten und historischen Fähigkeiten zu erforschen. Wir importieren eher als dass wir exportieren.

ART AUREA Im Katalog, der die erste *Glassstress*-Ausstellung 2009 begleitete, schrieben Sie: „Es war dringend notwendig, Glas von der almodischen Tradition zu befreien, die es auf ein Material für prestigeträchtige Alltagsgegenstände beschränkte.“ Was ist „almodisch“ an „prestigeträchtigen Alltagsgegenständen“?

BERENGO Vielleicht ist der Begriff „almodisch“ nicht ganz treffend. Was ich damit meinte ist, dass Glas



Paula Hayes, *Vertical Giant Terrarium*,
2008/2009. Geblasenes
Glas, 147,3 cm hoch,
35,6 cm Durchmesser.

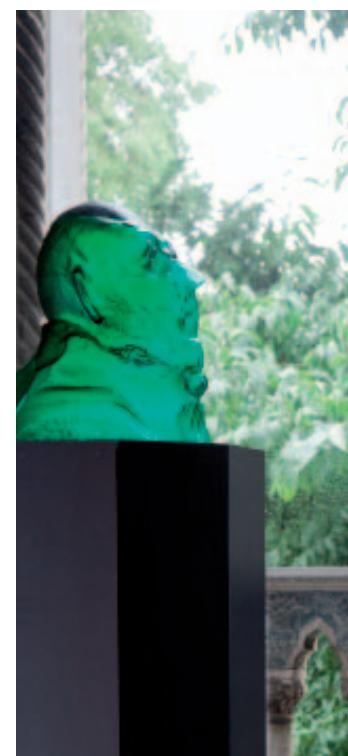
Patricia Urquiola,
Installation *All Ambig*,
2011. Glasobjekte in
postmoderner Manier.







Joep van Lieshout,
Exrementorium,
2011. Pyrexglas,
Modelliermasse,
130 × 190 × 136 cm.



Antonio Riello,
Installation
Ashes to Ashes,
2009/2010.
28 Gefäße aus
geblasenem
Glas mit Asche.

über dekorative und funktionale Objekte hinausgehen soll. Peggy Guggenheim sagte einmal, dass Glas ein viel zu wichtiges Material sei, um es nur in den Händen der Ladenbesitzer und Glasmacher zu belassen. Peggy dachte, dass die Künstler aus ihrem Umfeld Glas für ihre Kunst benutzen sollten.

ART AUREA Für *Glasstress* haben Sie nur Designer und Künstler eingeladen, die noch keine Erfahrung mit Glasarbeiten hatten. Heißt das, Repräsentanten des Studioglasses oder Kunsthändler sind Ihrer Meinung nach unfähig, zeitgenössische Kunst in ihrer Disziplin zu machen?

BERENGO Das stimmt nicht ganz. Wir haben die fantastische Glasarbeit *Water Block* von Tokujin Yoshioka ausgeliehen, der sehr vertraut ist mit optischem Glas. Jan Fabre, Jaume Plensa, Tony Oursler, Pieke Bergmans, Massimo Lunardon, Marya Kazoun, etc.



Thomas Schütte,
Berengo Head, 2011.
Installation aus
geblasenem Glas.

sind einige der Künstler bei *Glasstress*, die schon Erfahrung mit Glas haben. Maria Roosen zum Beispiel repräsentierte die Niederlande in den 1990ern auf der Biennale mit verschiedenen Glasinstallationen. Aber ich denke, Ihre Frage ist subtiler. Sie möchten von mir wissen, ob ein Künstler der internationalen Studioglasszene genug Kreativität besitzt, um Kunst zu machen. Ehrlich gesagt weiß ich gar nicht, was Kunst eigentlich ist – es gibt mindestens tausend Definitionen dafür. Aber sicher ist Kunst unabhängig vom verwendeten Material. Wenn sich also ein Künstler mit Hilfe von Glas ausdrückt und etwas von hoher Qualität dabei herauskommt, wüsste ich nicht, warum man dieses Produkt nicht als Werk der zeitgenössischen Kunst betrachten sollte. Das Problem ist häufig, dass Studioglas-Macher sich obsessiv auf die technischen Aspekte des Glases konzentrieren und weniger auf die konzeptuellen. Außerdem enthält das Wort „Studioglas-Bewegung“ einen Widerspruch: ursprünglich gedacht als Bewegung, in welcher der Künstler seine eigene Arbeit entwickeln sollte, in seinem eigenen Atelier, fern der Fließbänder der Glasfabriken, zeigt sich nun, dass viele der Studioglas-Künstler den eigentlichen Schaffensprozess an Handwerker delegieren und als Designer fungieren. Zum Beispiel produziert Dale Chihuly Tausende von Objekten, die im Wesentlichen von Assistenten gemacht werden.

ART AUREA Könnten Sie einige Werke von *Glasstress* 2011 nennen, die Sie besonders beeindruckt haben und warum?

BERENGO Die meisten Ergebnisse sind sehr beeindruckend. Aber ich würde gerne etwas zu dem unglaublichen Stück von Michael Joo *Expanded Access* sagen. Diese Installation zeigt beispielhaft, wofür ich all die Jahre gekämpft habe. Joo schafft es, Poesie in Glas zu transferieren. Er erkundete seine Identität mittels Glas und bringt seine künstlerischen Ideen perfekt zum Ausdruck: die Überschneidungen dualer Systeme wie Natur und Wissenschaft, Innen und Außen, Religion und Moral, permanente Themen in seiner lebenslangen Suche nach der perfekten Balance.

ART AUREA Denken Sie, dass *Glasstress* eine neue Generation von Glassammlern inspiriert und motiviert? Und könnte Ihre Initiative ein neues Kapitel aufschlagen in der Geschichte der Glaskunst?

BERENGO *Glasstress* wird Sammler zeitgenössischer Kunst inspirieren und motivieren, nicht nur Sammler von Glasobjekten. *Glasstress* ist in der Tat ein



Michael Joo, *Expanded Access*, 2011. Installation. Verspiegeltes Borsilicatglas.

Charlotte Gyllenhammar,
Installation *Wait, the smallest
of us is dead*, geblasenes
Glas (unten) und Videopro-
jektion *Hang*, 2011.



neues Kapitel in der Geschichte der Glaskunst und in der Geschichte der Kunst allgemein. Die Präsenz von Glasarbeiten in internationalen Ausstellungen zeitgenössischer Kunst wie *Surreal versus Surrealism in Contemporary Art*, die im Valencian Institute of Modern Art stattfinden wird, sind ein Beweis für meine Aussage.

ART AUREA Wurden denn auch Objekte von *Glasstress* 2009 in Editionen produziert und in Galerien verkauft? Wenn ja, zu welchen Preisen?

BERENGO Um mit *Glasstress* 2009 die Idee zu kommunizieren, dass Glas ein Material für zeitgenössische Kunst ist, waren wir auf die Unterstützung von vielen großzügigen Leihgebern angewiesen. Bei den Stücken, die wir in unserem Studio produzierten, machten wir generell die *edition of the original*, also Repliken des Prototyps bis zu sechs Stück. Wenn wir es Replik nennen ist das eigentlich nicht ganz korrekt. Denn dank der Natur des Glases mit seinem handgemachten Prozess gleicht ja kein Stück exakt dem anderen. Um ein Beispiel für Preise zu nennen: die Spiegel von Fred Wilson wurden in drei verschiedenen Größen produziert und zu drei verschiedenen Preisen angeboten mit einem Durchschnitt von 80 000 USD.

ART AUREA Denken Sie, Ihre Initiative wird die Art und Weise ändern, wie Glaskunstwerke in der Zukunft gesehen werden?

BERENGO Ja, das hoffen wir. *Glasstress* wird eine Marke werden und hoffentlich als Qualitätsgarantie für Werke von zeitgenössischen Künstlern und Designern gelten. Die Tatsache, dass wir eingeladen sind, unsere Stücke im Millesgården Museum in Schweden, im Museum of Foreign Art im historischen Gebäude der Rigaer Börse, Litauen, im Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York, im Beirut Exhibition Center, Libanon, Ende 2012 und im Moscow Multimedia Center for Contemporary Arts zu zeigen, ist sicher ein guter Indikator dafür.

Noch bis 27. 11. 2011

in Venedig

www.glasstress.org

www.veniceprojects.com

CONTRAST AND UNITY

JAPANESE CERAMIC QUARTET

By Walter Lokau

The victory of the Japanese women's football team proves once again that Japan can indeed be a world champion. For many national and international artists in the studio-ceramics scene, the Land of the Rising Sun has long been both heaven on Earth and the vanishing point in their perspective. Now Heidelberg is hosting Japan as part of the festivities commemorating 150 years of German-Japanese friendship.

At least once in their lives, all those who hope to earn recognition in the world of Western ceramics simply must visit the legendary Old Kilns, i.e. the ceramic centers of Japan. The history and evolution of artistic

ceramics in Europe and America would be inconceivable without the East Asian influence. This is as true for the glaze experiments of French Art Nouveau and German Jugendstil as it is for the contemporary wave of Japanese-inspired wood-fired ceramics. Not only with regard to the discipline's appreciation and its equality with the fine arts, Japan sets the tone in the world of ceramics around the globe.

Nippon is exemplary in technical and aesthetic aspects. The greatest respect for ceramics is deeply rooted in Japanese tradition and daily life, and the diversity of Japanese ceramics is a national treasure that seems positively unbelievable to Westerners. But innovation and tradition aren't fundamentally separate. Just the opposite: without seeming old-fashioned or rashly destroying the past, contemporary ceramics naturally evolve from traditional forms. This art of simultaneous conservation and renewal is now on display in Heidelberg at Galerie Marianne Heller, which has made the presentation of top-quality Japanese ceramics one of its focal points. In cooperation with the Yufuku Gallery in Tokyo, the current show is devoted to four of Japan's most outstanding ceramists: Katsumi Kako, Takuo Nakamura, Atsushi Takagaki and Yoko Imada.

KATSUMI KAKO

Born into a family of potters in 1965, Katsumi Kako draws his orientation from the traditions of Japanese ceramics. Teacups, sake bottles and cups, and vases all take shape in his workshop. His newer pieces, which include vases, bowls and boxes, tend to have

thin walls and ochre, earthy backgrounds with scratched decorations highlighted by red pigments. With their archaic-looking forms and surfaces, these artworks and their decorative allusions are contemporary reflections on the ceramic tradition. The décor no longer organically and wholly reaffirms the form, but runs counter to it and accentuates it anew, yet remains indelibly inscribed into the material, where it simultaneously creates aesthetic contrast and unity.

TAKUO NAKAMURA

Born the son of a potter in 1945, Takuo Nakamura creates ceramics that refer similarly, but more extremely, to traditional Japanese art. Far removed from the forms of traditional vessels, his boxes, assembled plates or irregularly shaped bowls are cut from fireclay and look almost like raw stone, yet parts of them unexpectedly reveal the filigreed décor of elegant and finely nuanced decorative painting. The décors of historical Kutani porcelain, the painting of the Momoyama era and especially the painting of the so-called Rimpa School return here, albeit in the form of preciously contrasting fragments on coarse, nude clay. The result is a fascinating interaction of harsh oppositions between naturalness and fragments of cultivated refinement.

ATSUSHI TAKAGAKI

Born in 1946, Atsushi Takagaki has exclusively devoted himself to celadon, the iron-rich monochrome glaze that has formatively contributed to the aura and atmosphere of East Asian ceramics for many centuries. This artist gives a surprisingly contemporary face to celadon's traditionally shimmering green hues. His accurately assembled, hieratic stoneware vessels with multiply angled walls are covered with a pale green, nearly white, milky variant of the noble glaze, accentuated by fine dark craquelé. The pastel reddish surfaces and edges of these artworks are unique and new: they luxuriously contrast with the pale glaze, and these contrasts chromatically define the formal composition of the vessels.

YOKO IMADA

Born in 1971 and educated in Japan and England, Yoko Imada is the only woman in the quartet. She uses porcelain and a potter's wheel to turn her large-format vessels and chalices, which widen dramatically as they rise from their small bases and are coated with a clear glaze, slightly dyed with blue tones, that hardens at the foot of the vessel into droplets and drip marks. Beneath the light-colored monochrome surface, the ceramist sometimes inserts dark, seemingly windblown flecks of cobalt blue which follow the flow of the glaze and cloud the ground color. Between practical use, ritual and aesthetic, these purist vessels express a singular awareness of absolute beauty and a tribute to the traditions of East Asian porcelain.

NEWS FROM MURANO

GLASSTRESS 2011

By Reinhold Ludwig

Alongside the Biennale in Venice, for the second time there's also plenty of art made of glass in the lagoon city. Adriano Berengo, initiator and organizer of an exhibition with the ambivalent name *Glasstress*, has taken prominent partners aboard: New York's Museum of Arts and Design is the promoter and the curators are Lidewij Edelkoort, Peter Noever, Demetrio Paparoni and Bonnie Clearwater. Berengo, who owns the *Berengo Studios* in Murano, prophesies the imminent arrival of a new era in glass art.

ART AUREA What did you want to say with the word "Glasstress"? What does it mean literally?

BERENGO It is a compound word between glass and stress. It means that glass in itself is a material with a lot of stress and stress is the result of my historical approach to the material. In simple words *Glasstress* is my autobiography.

ART AUREA What was your intention when you conceived this art project for glass? Considering what you produce at *berengo Studio*, one could imagine it is an intelligent marketing concept for your company.

BERENGO I must admit that the initial appeal that the glass has had on me, back when I was a teacher with artistic pretensions, was the economic one, because in past years the industrial and manufacturing activities paid well and especially in Murano have enriched many. When I started working on the island, now more than twenty years ago as artistic director of a furnace, collaborating with artists and master glassmakers, I was fascinated for its incredible potential. Today I am confronting with a reality totally different. But I continue to believe that this island and this material have in front them a bright future and that is why I continue to fight to propose an idea of art glass different from the commonly shared and



often adverse and criticized. Today what I want is to give sense to a lifetime of efforts and satisfactions bringing glass in the contemporary art world as an ordinary material.

ART AUREA I suppose it is not by chance that Glasstress is scheduled to coincide with the Biennale in Venice?

BERENGO No, it is not. It is in fact one aspect of the Mission of the Biennale to be overtly connected with the territory. In this perspective, berengo Studio represents an ideal effort for the Biennale. We have been in Venice for over 20 years and we hope to stay in Venice. Part of our mission is to invite contemporary artists and designers to experience our facilities and historical abilities. We import rather than export.

ART AUREA In the catalog accompanying the first Glasstress event in 2009, you wrote: "There was an urgent need to free glass from the outmoded tradition that confined it to a material used for prestigious everyday objects." What is "outmoded" about "prestigious everyday objects"?

BERENGO Yes maybe the term "outmoded" is not really appropriate. What I meant is that glass has larger potential in creating work that goes beyond decorative and functional objects. Peggy Guggenheim once said that glass is far too important a material to be left only in the hands of the shop keepers and glass makers. But Peggy had in mind the possibility of having artists of her entourage to use glass for "art purposes", as she did with many of them.

ART AUREA For Glasstress, you have invited only designers and artists who had no prior experience with glassworks. Does this mean you think that the representatives of studio glass or the craftspeople are unable to make contemporary art in their artistic disciplines?

BERENGO I am sorry but I have not only invited artists with no experience with glass works. We borrowed a fantastic glass piece by Tokujin Yoshioka *Water Block*, who is very familiar with optical glass. Jan Fabre, Jaume Plensa, Tony Oursler, Pieke Bergmans, Massimo Lunardon, Marya Kazoun, etc, are among the artists in Glasstress who had previous experience with the glass making process. Maria Roosen, for example, represented the Netherlands in the 90s at the Venice Biennale with several glass installations. But I understand that your question is more subtle. You would like me to tell you if an artist of the international Studio Glass is able to produce "Art" in its creativity? Frankly I do not know what "Art" is (you can give at least thousand definitions of it) but certainly it is something independently from the material you use. Therefore if an artist expresses himself through glass and pro-

duces something of quality I do not see why we should not consider it as a piece of contemporary art. The problem is that very often the Studio Glass' people obsessively concentrate themselves on glass in its technical aspects rather than in its conceptual one. Moreover, the word "Studio Glass Movement" reveals an intrinsic contradiction: born as a movement in which the artist should create his own work, in his own studio, far from the assembly line of production of the glass furnaces, we see now that many of the Studio Glass' artists delegate the real making process to craftsman and they function as designers. As one example for all, I have in mind Dale Chihuly who produces thousands of objects materially made by other assistants.

ART AUREA Could you mention some artworks at Glasstress 2011 that most impressed you and why?

BERENGO Most of them, since the results we obtained are very impressive. In this occasion I would spend some words on the incredible piece by Michael Joo *Expanded Access*. This magnificent installation is an example of what I have been fighting for all these years; he managed to transfer his poetry into glass. He explored his identity through the use of glass and perfectly expressed the ideas that identify his art: the intersection of dual concepts like nature and science, inside and outside, religion and morality which are constant themes in his life-long research towards the perfect balance.

ART AUREA Do you think Glasstress is inspiring and motivating a new generation of collectors of glass objects? And do you think the

event will be the start for a new chapter in the history of glassart?

BERENGO It will be inspiring and motivating contemporary art collectors and not just of collectors of glass objects. Glasstress is indeed a new chapter in the history of glass art and in the history of art in general. The presence of glass pieces in international contemporary art exhibitions like *Surreal versus Surrealism in Contemporary Art* that will be held at IVAM, the Valencian Institute of Modern Art, are a proof of what I am stating.

ART AUREA Were objects at Glasstress 2009 produced in editions and sold in galleries? If so, at what prices?

BERENGO In Glasstress 2009 to communicate the idea that glass was, is and hopefully will be a material for contemporary art, we had to profit from many generous loans. Among the pieces that we produced in our studio, we generally created the *edition of the original* that is to say a replica of the prototype up to six pieces. When we say replica we indeed do not tell the truth. Owing to the very nature of glass in its handmade process, no piece is exact the same of the other. To cite you an example of prices, the Fred Wilson mirrors were produced in three different sizes and offered at three different prices with an average of 80.000 USD.

ART AUREA Do you think your initiative will change the way glass artworks are viewed in the future?

BERENGO Yes, we hope so. Glasstress will become a brand and hopefully will be seen as a quality work made by contemporary fine art artists and designers. The fact that we are invited to spread Glasstress at the Millesgården Museum in Sweden,

at The Museum of Foreign Art in the historical building of Riga Stock Exchange, Latvia, in The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in New York, at the Beirut Exhibition Center in Lebanon in late 2012 and a recent invitation at the Moscow Multimedia Center for Contemporary Arts, is certainly a good indication of this.

Until 27. 11. 2011
in Venice
www.glasstress.org
www.veniceprojects.com

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CHEERFULLY TRAN- SCENDING BOUNDARIES

ROBERT SMIT

By Ellen Maurer Zilioli

Now they're all getting a bit long in their tooth, if they haven't gotten old already: those who made sure that the so-called "international auteur jewelry" evolved into something, i.e. an autonomous artistic movement, no matter what one might think of the more specific definition of the term.

Robert Smit, born in 1941, is one of them, albeit not one of the very first trailblazers but certainly one of the early protagonists and definitely one of the truly great and truly important artists whose oeuvre has matured into a substantial, well-rounded and compact whole – like a large wheel of Dutch Gouda. He merits being acknowledged in an outstanding, unique and already historicizing article on the topic. His oeuvre unites a number of characteristic features that usually don't partner up so easily. But he has this exceptional gift of combining graphical, constructive, pictorial, figurative and abstract arrangements without exerting undue effort, without causing any conflict and without putting their contrariness in the limelight, this knack of linking and interlacing them in a sovereign act into highly original compositions. This is probably the most unique and unmistakable characteristic of his entire oeuvre.

