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Exhibitions

Enzo Berti: Murano Rediscovered

Znaki Czasu. Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej
DECEMBER 13, 2024 - MARCH 09, 2025



Curated by:

Alessandra Gaspari, Cezary Kruk,
Krzysztof Białowicz

Venue:

Znaki Czasu. Centrum Sztuki
Współczesnej

Dates:

13/12/2024 - 09/03/2025

That glass has been known to man since thousands of years has been evidenced by ancient glass beads found in Egypt. First glassworks in Venice, a place still associated with the art of making unusual objects or rather small works of art from coloured glass, appeared in the fourth century, and the main manufacturing centre developed on the small picturesque island of Murano around 1290. Since then, Murano glass has invariably been seen as synonymous with exquisite craftsmanship, exciting and inspiring consecutive generations of artists who keep drawing on the tradition to tell their own stories, uniting the past with the present.



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The *Murano Rediscovered* exhibition hosted by the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń puts on show the work of Italian designer Enzo Berti, a versatile artist and winner of many prestigious design awards. Berti reinterprets the thousand-year-old art of melting and decorating glass, presenting a different point of view and revisiting the conventional approach to artistic production and traditional decorative techniques. In glass, tough as it is, the artist sees the potential for movement and he makes an attempt to cross the limitations of matter and treat glass as though it were as supple as fabric.

Not only has the Italian designer created the works on display, he has also developed the concept for the show and designed the arrangement of space. The exhibition represents multidimensional transformation of matter, craftsmanship, form, purpose, and, lastly, perception. Murano according to Berti triggers surreal synaesthesia in viewers.

The exhibition has two parts. The first takes the form of a ten-metre-long installation with a mirror tunnel and a basic meant to reference the Venetian Lagoon – two

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pylons fished out from the bay constitute an integral part of it. A passive and inscrutable witness to reality, the mirror is turned in Berti's work into an instrument of transformation, creating a new perspective, an illusionary space where shapes and colours overstep the glass surface, blur the boundaries, while the observer becomes part of a continuous and unavoidable transformation. Another meaningful inspiration comes from water – the natural element that makes Venice so exceptional. The unusual construction completed with a large-format video invites viewers to immerse themselves in a mirage.

The unique space in which Berti's glass objects have been placed amongst mirrors that set off a play of light announces sublime visual sensations and surprising reflections. An exceptional sense of depth and blurred perspective confront viewers with transformation, or an astonishing creation.

The second part of *Murano Rediscovered* adopts a more traditional mode of presentation. Displayed on white plinths, the glass objects designed by Enzo Berti evolve from forms associated with functionality to those that appear to be pure art. The artist revitalises the thousand-year-old filigree technique of glassmaking that involves creating from canes of glass, while at the same questioning it. For Berti, glass is like fabric made of interweaving threads. Three-dimensionality, lightness and transparency become major aspects in his work. Glass objects are accompanied by paintings and drawings made by the artist as two-dimensional notes of his dynamic thoughts on the "new philosophy" of glass.

The CoCA exhibition is proof positive that the glass from a small island by Venice is not only exceptional, it also continues to provide inspiration.

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