

Peggy Guggenheim COLLECTION

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Press Release

VETRIETEREI ETEROCLITI THREE WORKS IN GLASS BY LUIGI ONTANI, SHOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7TH.

PREVIEW SEPTEMBER 6TH AT 5.00PM ROOF TERRACE OF THE PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION – RSVP 041 2405427

Throughout her life, Peggy Guggenheim demonstrated a certain curiosity with regards to the “dream-like quality” of glass and its myriad artistic applications. The collaboration between the glass masters of Murano and artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, and others, was in part inspired and organized by Peggy herself. It took shape in the 1950s stemming from the initiatives of the Fucina degli Angeli studio, and remains even today the clearest and most fruitful testimony of the visions and the potential of glass as a medium. On the wake of this fascination with glass, Luigi Ontani accepted the invitation to exhibit, in Peggy’s bedroom, three new glass sculptures, which were born from his long collaboration with the Murano masters Silvano Signoretto and Romano Donà. The artist has expressed that the presentation of these previously unexhibited works, fruits of a year and a half of work, “is like playing with Peggy’s legend, an attempt to reawaken a dream, in the room designated for dreaming, and to continue to feed it through fantastical and playful visions.”

The preview of the three works, that will be presented at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection: the large mirror *Gli Incontinenti*, the vase *Vanitaso*, its watercolor, and the sculpture *Il piedone del gigante*, represent a much welcomed return of the *maestro* to the Lagoon. Ontani’s return can be traced to 1995 when Gabriella Belli commissioned him to create an installation at the Italian Pavilion of the prestigious Centennial Venice Biennale. Ontani presented the works that he created in collaboration with the Bottega d’Arte Ceramica Gatti di Faenza (The Ceramic Art Workshop of Gatti di Faenza), including his important grandiose glass chandelier, a tribute to the city and its allegories. Ten years after this work, he again surpasses himself, with another “historical” tribute to a figure of Venice: Peggy Guggenheim. This tribute to the legend of Peggy is a precious and innovative work that uses the unpredictable transparency and ambiguous properties of glass.

From the beginning of the 1980s, Luigi Ontani has experimented with the malleability of glass and its symbolic significance. Launching himself from the generative nature of blown glass sculptures, the artist transfigures a mould of his face into a mask. In playing with his own image, he becomes the source of continual transformations from a glass to a mirror to a chandelier: “whimsical” self-portraits fueled by the vanity of reflections in the incandescent material. Ontani’s experimentation translates into the elemental gesture of a “glass maestro”, and in turn becomes a part of the dialogue between the mask and its double in a virtuous exchange between the exceptional technique and the presumption of the artist who wants to “blow” life beyond the appearance of things, beyond the traditional divide, in constant contradiction.

Insitutional Patrons: Banca del Gottardo, Regione del Veneto

The exhibition programs of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection are made possible by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Advisory Board and:

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e-mail: info@guggenheim-venice.it; web site: <http://www.guggenheim-venice.it>

museum hours: 10.00-18.00; Closed Tuesday

admission: euro 10; euro 8 seniors over 65 years; euro 5 students; free 0-12 years

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