



museum of arts and design

MAD Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Studio Glass Movement with *Playing with Fire*

Exhibition opens on November 20, 2012 and features the work of more than 100 artists

New York, NY (November 9, 2012) – Celebrating a complex, fragile, and highly versatile material, *Playing with Fire: 50 Years of Contemporary Glass* takes a comprehensive and eye-opening look at the breadth of innovative processes and artistry in contemporary glass. From November 20, 2012 through April 7, 2013, this exhibition showcases an astonishing diversity of works that use glass, from pieces by early adaptors such as **Dale Chihuly**, who entered MAD’s collection when he was still an emerging artist; to installations by Israeli designer **Ayala Serfaty**, who creates clouds of light with innovative processes. Also included are pieces by artists and designers not commonly known for their work in glass, such as **James Turrell**, **Donald Lipski**, and **Ettore Sottsass**. There will also be a number of special installations, including **Peter Bynum**’s “Untitled No. 202”—a wall-mounted triptych made up of thin layers of painted glass mounted on lightboxes, in which viewers can change the brilliance of the multicolored hues by shifting the intensity of light.

“As a sculptural material, glass has unique properties: its ability to hold, emit, and reflect light renders color more brilliant and animates figures and forms,” says Associate Curator Jennifer Scanlan. “In *Playing With Fire*, we wanted to show how artists and designers play with the properties of this fluid medium—often in extraordinary, and sometimes unexpected ways.”

Ever since 1962, when a legendary workshop led by renowned glassblower and glass artist Harvey Littleton first presented glassblowing as a possibility for individual artists, artists and designers have continually pushed the material in new directions. This year, MAD celebrates the 50th anniversary of that workshop, considered the birth of the American Studio Glass movement, with *Playing with Fire*, which will feature more than 100 works of glass from the collection, as well as promised gifts, and additional contemporary works on loan.

“MAD has long been a champion of cutting edge glass works, especially those that explore new processes and manipulate such a marvelous and fluid medium,” says Holly Hotchner, Nanette H. Laitman Director. “We started this anniversary year with *Glasstress New York*, which explored how artists who don’t usually work with glass have approached the material. And what better way for us to bookend the year than with an exhibition that showcases the works of so many glass masters?”

Drawn largely from the MAD collection and promised gifts, and including some new installations, the works in the exhibition are organized in two themes: “Color and Light” and “Meaning and Emotion.” “Color and Light” includes artists who use luminosity in colored glass to achieve brilliance and saturation of hue, and in transparent glass to manipulate perception of shape and dimension. Notable among them is **Toots Zynsky’s** multihued vessel is made of hundreds of colored glass threads; when the interior of the vessel is lit, the colors fuse together, shifting dynamically as the light changes. Another highlight is **Tom Patti’s** “Compacted Solarized Bands,” made out of clear laminated glass, inviting introspection and meditation as the eye explores the subtle optical shifts between layers.

“Meaning and Emotion” looks at the ways in which glass adds layers of resonance to subject matter. In **Clifford Rainey’s** “War Boy—Job Number 1,” spent ammunition is encased within the fragile shell of a young boy’s torso; the metal pieces are dimly seen within the glass figure,

suggesting the lasting impact of war that goes beyond surface scars. Some artists like **Matt Eskuche** and **Judith Schaechter** both present new takes on historical glass forms. Schaechter uses traditional stained glass techniques, though religious narratives have been replaced with demented children's toys, while Eskuche's glass goblets have been "wrung out" and hung to dry.

Through the generosity of many donors who have gifted and promised works to The Museum of Arts and Design, we are able to present innovative works of glass through five decades in this exhibition, according to Holly Hotchner. "We would not have been able to cultivate and amass a world class collection of glass art if not for donors, as well as artists and lenders who have lent us more recent works solely for this exhibition. We are so thankful to all of them."

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND CREDITS

Playing with Fire: 50 Years of Contemporary Glass is organized by the Museum of Arts and Design, and is curated by Jennifer Scanlan, Associate Curator. *Playing With Fire: 50 Years of Contemporary Glass* is made possible, in part, by the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design explores the blur zone between art, design, and craft today. The Museum focuses on contemporary creativity and the ways in which artists and designers from around the world transform materials through processes ranging from the artisanal to digital. The Museum's exhibition program explores and illuminates issues and ideas, highlights creativity and craftsmanship, and celebrates the limitless potential of materials and techniques when used by gifted and innovative artists. MAD's permanent collection is global in scope and focuses on art, craft, and design from 1950 to the present day. At the center of the Museum's mission is education. The Museum's dynamic new facility features classrooms and studios for master classes, seminars, and workshops for students, families, and adults. Three open artist studios engage visitors in the creative processes of artists at work and enhance the exhibition programs. Lectures, films, performances, and symposia related to the Museum's collection and topical subjects affecting the world of contemporary art, craft, and design are held in a renovated 144-seat auditorium.

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