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MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA'S LEADING GLASS ARTISTS SHINE ON WORLD STAGE AT VENICE GLASS WEEK, ITALY

DESIGN Canberra's signature exhibition GLASS UTOPIA featuring 12 Italian and Australian designers included in internationally renowned festival



Canberra, Australia: Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre and acclaimed Italian design consulting studio **Mr.Lawrence**, together with **1+1 Design Gallery, Milan**, will present the collective exhibition *GLASS UTOPIA* as part of the international Venice Glass Week from 3 until 26 September 2020.

A signature exhibition for DESIGN Canberra Festival 2019, the *GLASS UTOPIA* was curated by Mr.Lawrence co-founders **Annalisa Rosso** and **Francesco Mainardi** for Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre and presents a selection of 24 contemporary pieces by 12 leading Italian and Australian designers. As a realized utopia, *GLASS UTOPIA* tells of the new glass Renaissance that blossoms today both locally and internationally, demonstrating how the power of beauty is stronger than ever, and that creativity has no borders.

The exhibition features six Italian designers – in collaboration with many furnaces and companies from the heartland of glass Murano – and six Australian designers including: **Elizabeth Kelly, Federico Peri, Gala Fernandez, Jenni Kemarre Martiniello, Liam Fleming, Matteo Zorzenoni, Mel Douglas, Peter Bowles, Stories of Italy, Tom Skeehan, Federica Biasi, Zanellato/Bortotto.**

Craft ACT CEO and Artistic Director Rachael Coghlan said, *“DESIGN Canberra’s first international tour, to Venice Glass Week and Milan Design Week no less, is a momentous opportunity to celebrate the global context for Australian contemporary craft and design, and through that, to promote creative industries generally.”*

Italian Ambassador Francesca Tardioli commented, *“GLASS UTOPIA is a paradigmatic example of the vibrant cultural interconnection between our two countries. Ties between Italy and Australia are deep: heritage, people, culture. Art sector is one where such relationship is consolidated and fresh at the same time, and this is an inspiration for contemporary artists and designers. The decision of DESIGN Canberra to choose Italy for their first international appearance testifies to the vitality of our cultural ties and paves the way for further collaborations. The success of GLASS UTOPIA in Australia also proves the growing interest of the Australian public for Made in Italy design and artisanship. We are happy to host GLASS UTOPIA in Venice today and we are looking forward to seeing the exhibition in Milan in 2021”*

In 1967 Italian architect Enrico Taglietti installed, in the Italian Ambassador’s residence in Australia, three magnificent glass chandeliers from Murano, which seem fresh and contemporary, even today. With their modern design and remarkable craftsmanship, the two pieces generated a bridge between the two countries, connecting these considerable glass traditions. And it is within these ambassadorial rooms that the idea of GLASS UTOPIA project was born. This project aims to explore blown glass tradition, examining its future and the new stimuli that surrounds this material across geographical borders.

Mr. Lawrence Co-founder, design strategist and creative director Francesco Mainardi said, *“If it is true that in the last years a new generation of glassmakers and designers spontaneously revitalized the Murano glass blowing industry, it is equally important to highlight how a new sensibility – aesthetic, cultural, experimental – brought back in vogue an interest in glass making. This contemporary approach has captured the attention of a fascinated international market. In GLASS UTOPIA, visitors will see, almost instinctively, the common elements and the shared language among the blown glass from Murano and the pieces from Australia. A single DNA unites the works, forging a transversal community based on creativity and experimentation.*

“This exhibition is the start of an open dialogue which refuses sharp contrasts, but questions notions of borders and distance. In this way, we can redefine the value of tradition and innovation, aiming to discover surprising connections among the two countries, especially in terms of inspiration, technique, aesthetic and research.” **added Mr. Lawrence Co-founder, design writer and curator Annalisa Rosso.**

GLASS UTOPIA is a signature exhibition for the [DESIGN Canberra Festival](#) made possible with the generous support of [Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre](#), [Ausglass](#), [Design Tasmania](#), and the Embassy of Italy in Canberra. The exhibition’s international tour to Italy has been made possible thanks to the generous support of Intesa Sanpaolo Bank and Consorzio di Tutela Prosecco DOC.

GLASS UTOPIA premiered at the DESIGN Canberra Festival 2019, then toured to Design Tasmania. After being featured in the Venice Glass Week 2020 official program the exhibition will travel to Milan Design Week 2021.

ENDS

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IMAGES: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ex5LfIRvSw02QYEsbyZvyFH3jnLOMp0F?usp=sharing>

CATALOGUE including artist bios and essays: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/63255245/glass-utopia>

Image Caption: Installation view Glass Utopia, Canberra. Photo credit Anthony Basheer

NOTES TO EDITORS

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

GLASS UTOPIA @ Venice Glass Week 2020

Dates: 3rd September to 26th September 2020

Opening night: Thursday 10th September

Location: Dorsoduro 1389, Zattere, Venice

ABOUT CRAFT ACT: CRAFT + DESIGN CENTRE

Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre has played a vital role in sustaining Australia's high-quality studio practice and supporting craftspeople, designers and audiences for nearly 50 years. Craft ACT promotes and celebrates excellence and innovation in contemporary craft in everything they do – in their retail space, exhibition gallery, membership program, events and the annual **DESIGN Canberra festival (9-29 November 2020)**. <https://craftact.org.au/>

ABOUT DESIGN CANBERRA

DESIGN Canberra is the primary outreach program for Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre, a not-for-profit membership-based organisation which supports artists, craft practitioners, designers and makers at every stage of their careers. DESIGN Canberra seeks to develop new and expanded audiences for design and craft, whilst forging marketplace connections and unexpected collaborations, and acting as a source of inspiration. The festival is delivered in collaboration with industry, associations and educational institutions committed to the design arts and creative industries in Canberra. www.designcanberrafestival.com.au

ABOUT MR. LAWRENCE

Mr.Lawrence is a Milan based cutting-edge creative factory and consultancy studio focused on contemporary design and special projects. Founded by Annalisa Rosso, design writer and curator, and Francesco Mainardi, design strategist and creative director. From Italy, Mr.Lawrence conceives and develops design projects for private companies and public institutions worldwide. <https://www.mrlawrence.it/>

ABOUT 1+1 DESIGN GALLERY

1+1 design gallery, specializes in 20th century collectible design and contemporary projects, is based in Milan and regularly organizes special projects in the detached venue of Dorsoduro 1389. As part of the GLASS UTOPIA exhibition, 1+1 gallery will support the set up and lighting inside the exhibition space, and present lamps by the great Milanese master Ignazio Gardella, a series of design furniture and seats by architects Vico Magistretti and Ico Parisi and other designers, today

DESIGN CANBERRA



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perhaps less known but equally central in the development of design in the mid-twentieth century, including Antonio Scoccimarro, Angelo Ostuni, Renato Forti and Giulio Alchini. <https://www.1plus1.gallery/>

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Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre is a 50 year old membership organisation supported by the ACT Government, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy - an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments, and the Australia Council for the Arts - the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

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