

Glasstress - The Modern Art Revolution in Venice

Glasstress 玻璃应力

展览地点
清华大学艺术博物馆
Exhibition Venue
Tsinghua University Art Museum

F1
Hall 1/2/3
2026
4.1-5.5

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现代艺术
演变在威尼斯
THE MODERN ART
REVOLUTION IN VENICE

清华大学美术学院
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TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM
berangostudio

On April 1st, 2026, the international exhibition *Glass Stress - The Evolution of Modern Art in Venice* was inaugurated at the Tsinghua University Art Museum. This exhibition was organized by the School of Art of Tsinghua University, the Tsinghua University Art Museum, and the Berengo Studio in Italy. It brought together over 60 works by 56 artists from 20 different countries (including 6 British artists). The artists, within the specific glass culture context of Venice, responded to the proposition of the transformation of traditional craftsmanship in the contemporary context, exploring new artistic expressions and possibilities of glass in the context of globalization and multiculturalism.

Glass has been closely related to the development of human civilization throughout the long history. Due to the 'stress' generated during its preparation and shaping, it exhibits unique technical properties and thus becomes an artistic medium capable of expressing aesthetics, symbols, and concepts. 'Glasstress' as a physical concept refers to the situation where the amorphous structure of glass is 'frozen' during its transition from the molten state to the solid state, thereby retaining the stress state within the material. On one hand, it has given rise to the unique production techniques of glass; on the other hand, it also constitutes the material basis for the fragility, tension, and potential danger of glass. In artistic works, this 'critical state' between stability and fragmentation is often transformed into resources with aesthetic tension and spiritual metaphor.

For a long time, glass art has been mostly regarded as merely a 'decorative medium', and the inherent properties of the material have often been overshadowed by artistic concepts. The core breakthrough of this 'Glasstress' exhibition lies in establishing the 'active nature' of glass materials - the transparency, brittleness, and stress marks of glass are no longer mere by-

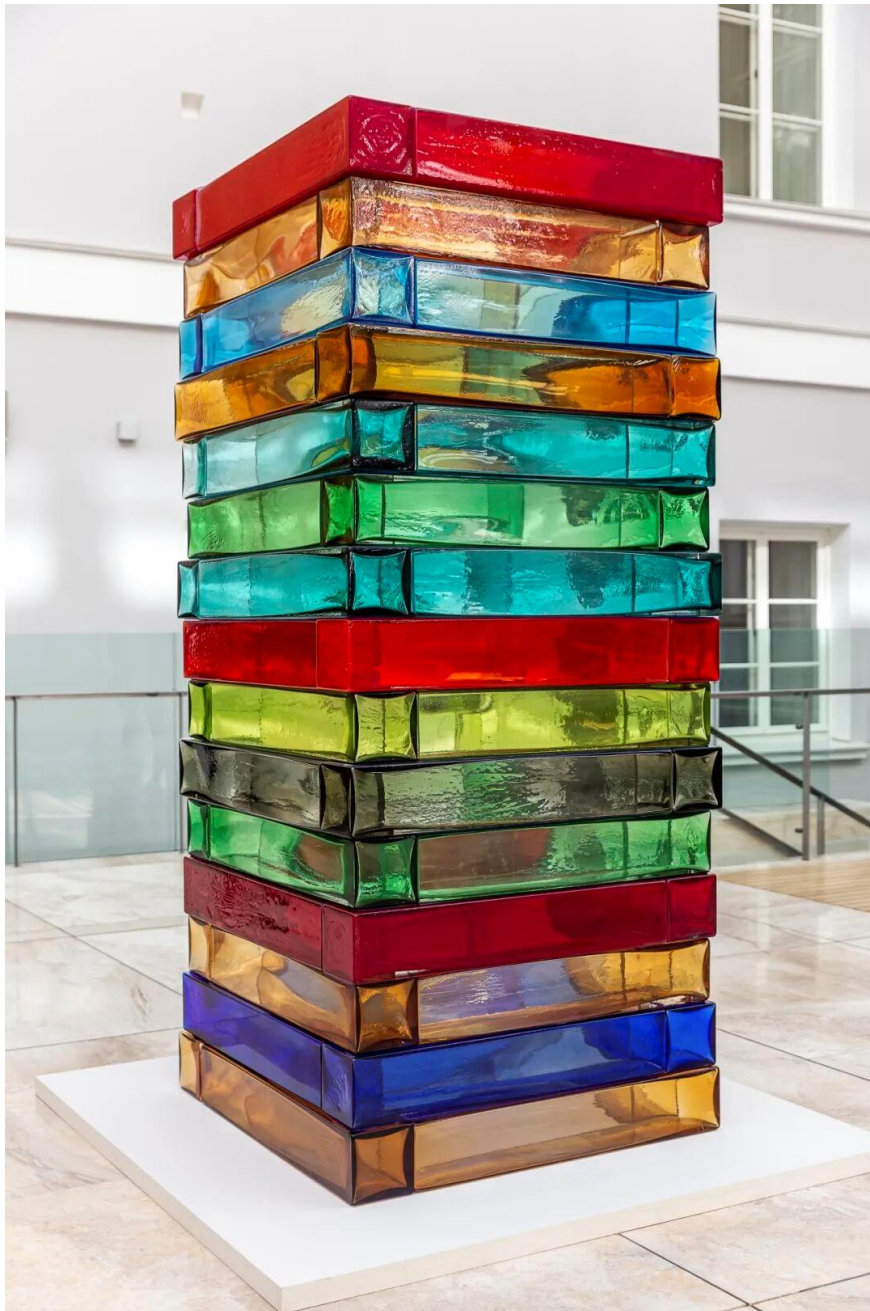
products in the production process, but rather 'material grammar' that participates in the generation of artistic meaning, deeply influencing the conceptual construction and emotional expression of the artists.

In the exhibition, British artist Tony Cragg's 'Spine Green' is made of molten glass. Through precise control of the annealing speed, natural stress patterns are formed inside the glass, simulating the texture and tension of plant growth. In the changing light and shadow, the resilience and fragility of life are presented, and the glasstress is transformed into an expression of life imagery.



Spine Green, Tony Cragg.

Sean Scully is an artist born in Ireland and currently residing in the United States. He works in painting, printmaking, sculpture and photography and is widely regarded as one of the most influential abstract painters. He is renowned for creating large-scale abstract paintings composed of horizontal and vertical stripes, interwoven color blocks, and gradually changing geometric patterns. Through these geometric forms, his works have become carriers of emotions, memories and spiritual landscapes.



Venice Stack, Sean Scully.

The French artist César Baldaccini was one of the most important sculptors in post-war France and played a central role in the New Realism movement. He compressed objects such as cars and industrial materials, and transformed ready-made items into dense blocks through twisting, stacking, and collapsing. By doing so, he transformed common everyday objects into artistic forms full of visual tension and raw power. In this exhibition, his work 'Compression' uses industrial glass as the material. Through external force compression, it creates controllable stress deformation, and uses the 'critical state' of glass stress to metaphorically represent the pressure and balance of modern society.



Compression, César Baldaccini.

German artist Josepha Gasch-Muche is renowned for her unique and expressive glass sculptures. She has extended the form grammar and material thinking of Bauhaus into the contemporary field of glass art. By arranging thousands of industrial glass fragments into geometric shapes, she showcases the visual tension of glass in the light and shadow.



03.20.2012, Josepha Gasch-Muche.

American artist Karen LaMonte is renowned for her large and exquisite female dress sculptures made of cast glass, ceramics, and bronze. She is also one of the representative artists of modern glass art. Her works are composed of hard and thick materials but exhibit the softness and draping texture of silk. While creating a strong contrast, they express artistic concepts such as the absence of the body, traces of existence, and the carrying of material on historical memory.



Reclining Nocturne, Karen LaMonte.

Iranian-born artist Fariba Ferdosi has long centered her practice on questions of culture and identity, weaving natural imagery and cultural symbols into layered metaphor.



Nido / Corona, Fariba Ferdosi.

Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos is internationally celebrated for her exuberant, large-scale installations, and was the first female artist to hold a solo exhibition at the Palace of Versailles. She is adept at deconstructing traditional aesthetics through everyday materials and amplified scale, frequently employing textiles, plastic vessels, and kitchen utensils, assembling them into vividly colored, structurally complex installations of architectural proportion.



Babylon, Joana Vasconcelos.

The work '*Even More Mythical Animals Are on Their Way*,' by Chinese artist Qiu Zhijie combines the symbols of Eastern gods with glassstress. By leveraging the transparency of glass and the refraction of stress, this work enables traditional cultural symbols to gain a new life in the contemporary context, achieving a congruence between the material characteristics and the cultural spirit.



Even More Mythical Animals Are on Their Way, Qiu Zhijie.

These works fully demonstrate that glass stress has become the "creative language" of contemporary glass artists. Through precise control and artistic transformation of glass stress, artists have enabled the glass material to shift from 'passive bearing' to 'active expression', enriching the expression dimensions of contemporary art.

At the same time, the exhibition also established a platform for dialogue between Eastern and Western glass art: Eastern artists focus on the

symbiosis of glass with nature and culture, using simple and restrained aesthetic expressions to integrate Eastern philosophical thoughts into glass creations; Western artists, on the other hand, pay more attention to experimentation and conceptualism, through the ultimate exploration of glass stress and form, expressing their thoughts on modern society and human existence. This cross-regional and cross-cultural creative practice provides international glass artists with opportunities to learn from each other, and also confirms the unique value of glass art as a 'borderless language'.



On-site photograph

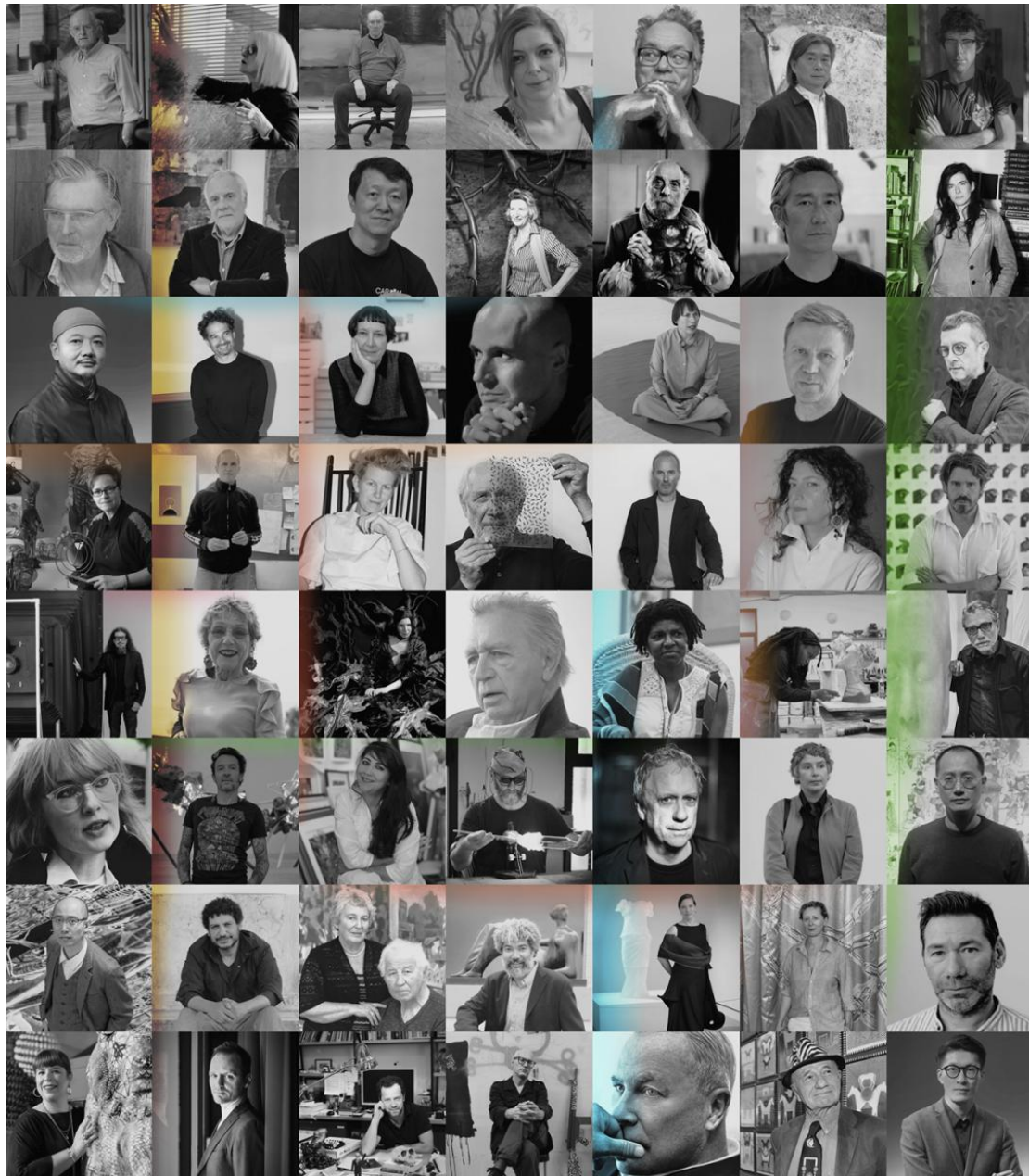


On-site photograph



On-site photograph

Artists



Tony Cragg (UK), Josepha Gasch-Muche (Germany), Sean Scully (USA),
Gu Liming (China), Ted Noten (Netherlands), Marta Klonowska (Poland),
Dustin Yellin (USA), Thomas Schütte (Germany), Mimmo Paladino (Italy),
Zhang Lei (China), Bai Ming (China), Maria Grazia Rosin (Italy), César
Baldaccini (France), Fiona Banner (UK), Michael Joo (USA), Jaime Hayon
(Spain), Cornelia Parker (UK), Javier Pérez (Spain), Polly Apfelbaum
(USA), Mirosław Bałka (Poland), Loris Cecchini (Italy), Penny Byrne

(Australia), Charles Avery (UK), Laure Prouvost (France), Emilio Isgrò (Italy), Erwin Wurm (Austria), Fariba Ferdosi (Iran), Koen Vanmechelen (Belgium), Halim Al-Karim (Iraq), Judy Chicago (USA), Marya Kazoun (Lebanon), Jimmie Durham (USA), María Magdalena Campos-Pons (USA), Osaru Obaseki (Nigeria), Jaume Plensa (Spain), Marie-Louise Ekman (Sweden), Arne Quinze (Belgium), Chila Kumari Singh Burman (UK), Massimo Lunardon (Italy), Tony Oursler (USA), Anna Jermolaewa (Russia), Qiu Zhijie (China), Wu Jian'an (China), Wael Shawky (Egypt), Ilya & Emilia Kabakov (Ukraine), Fred Wilson (USA), Karen LaMonte (USA), Monica Bonvicini (Italy), Mat Collishaw (UK), Joana Vasconcelos (Portugal), Hans Op de Beeck (Belgium), Vik Muniz (Brazil), Antonio Riello (Italy), Robert Wilson (USA), Pedro Friedeberg (Mexico), Li Jing (China).

(The text was compiled by Dr Jianyong Guo and Dr Dian Shi based on the exhibition's promotional materials. All the figures in the text were provided by the organizing committee of this exhibition.)