



Hacer nuevo vidrio o el nuevo vidrio no es nuevo.

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RESUMEN

Este ensayo se centra en el proyecto transformador *New Glass* en el Museo del Vidrio de Corning en Corning, Nueva York, una serie de exposiciones y publicaciones (1959-actualidad) que han dado forma significativa al paisaje del vidrio como material artístico. *New Glass* ofrece un excelente estudio de caso de las interacciones entre instituciones y artistas, demostrando un modo de colaboración que coloca al museo en el centro del cambio creativo y, en última instancia, genera oportunidades tanto para la institución como para los artistas. Este ensayo analiza los orígenes de *New Glass* como concepto, las cuatro principales iniciativas de *New Glass* y sus impactos, junto con las características del proceso especial de *New Glass*. Concluye con una visión de aplicar el enfoque centrado en el artista de *New Glass* a museos de todos los géneros que intentan interactuar con comunidades de todo tipo.

PALABRAS CLAVE: vidrio; museos; artistas; colaboración; cambio institucional; participación de la comunidad.

MAKING NEW GLASS OR NEW GLASS IS NOT NEW.

ABSTRACT

This essay focuses on the transformational project New Glass at The Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York, a series of exhibitions and publications (1959 – present day) that has significantly shaped the landscape of glass as an artist’s material. New Glass offers an excellent case study of the interactions between institutions and artists, demonstrating a mode of collaboration that places the museum at the center of creative change, ultimately building opportunities both for the institution and the artists. This essay discusses the origins of New Glass as a concept, the four major New Glass undertakings and their impacts, along with the characteristics of the special New Glass process. It concludes with a vision of applying the artist-centered approach of New Glass to museums across genres that are attempting engage with communities of all sort.

KEY WORDS: glass; museums; artists; collaboration; institutional change; community engagement.

HACER NUEVO VIDRIO O EL NUEVO VIDRIO NO ES NUEVO.

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This essay focuses on the transformational project *New Glass* at The Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York¹. *New Glass* constitutes a multi-decade series of exhibitions and publications starting in 1959 that has significantly shaped the landscape of glass as an artist's material. *New Glass* offers an excellent case study of the interactions between institutions and artists, demonstrating a mode of collaboration that places the museum at the center of creative change, ultimately building opportunities both for the institution and the artists. It is a case study that applies well beyond the field of glass-specific museums.

This topic is a personal one for me. I served as the curator of postwar and contemporary glass at the Corning Museum of Glass for 7 years. In that role, I organized the third *New Glass* exhibition. Titled *New Glass Now* and accompanied by historical exhibition that investigated the history of the *New Glass* process, it was a catalytic showcase of more than 100 works made by artists from 31 countries. *New Glass Now* was on view in Corning from May 2019 - January 2020, and subsequently traveled, in a smaller form, to the Smithsonian American Art Museum and to the Toyama Museum of Glass Art in Japan.

The goal of *New Glass Now* was to spark new directions in glass, start new conversations and build new audiences for the work of contemporary glassmakers, workers, and thinkers. The exhibition featured a range of works including vessels and other traditional glass objects, alongside videos, performance documentation, installations, and material experiments that push the boundaries of glass physically and conceptually. The curatorial assumption was that these new works—both newly made and presenting new ideas—expand our understandings of what the incredible material of glass is and what it could be.

While *New Glass Now* and the artworks featured in it were new, the idea of *New Glass* decidedly is not. *New Glass* is an initiative of The Corning Museum of Glass that stretches back 60 years, nearly to the Museum's founding, and encompasses three major exhibitions, their catalogues, and one longstanding annual publication. Unified by a shared methodology, these projects have contributed meaningfully to the way contemporary glass has been seen, collected, written about, and produced from the mid-twentieth century through today.

The three major *New Glass* exhibitions are *Glass 1959: A Special Exhibition of International Glass (Glass 1959)* and *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey (1979)*, and *New Glass Now (2019)*, which, alongside its companion exhibition *New Glass Now: Context* (the latter co-curated with Colleen McFarland Rademaker) celebrated the 40th and 60th anniversaries of the earlier shows. Each of these undertakings profoundly changed the field of contemporary glass in its time. *Glass 1959* coalesced the field for the first time, creating the landscape out of which the American Studio Glass Movement, which introduced glass as an artist medium, would grow just a few years later. *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* brought the ideas of that Movement to a global stage, spurring institutions and individuals to begin collecting the material. By circulating ideas in glass from around the world, *New Glass Review* has created an annual clearinghouse for information about glass that also serves as a legitimating tool for the artists and museums that use it. And the latest incarnation, *New Glass Now*, as discussed above, has reoriented conversations in glass so that they are in the image of today's makers.

More than anything else, *New Glass* is about creating change.

ORIGINS OF NEW GLASS

The Corning Museum of Glass was founded in 1951 by Corning Glass Works (now Corning, Incorporated) as a “gift to the nation” with a mission to “tell the world about glass”². The advertising motto of the glass company at the time was, “Corning means research in glass”³. And that idea, that research is essential, that mining the unknown is a critical component to understanding the material of glass, infused the Museum in its earliest moments.

Even though the Museum's first exhibitions covered established subjects such as Renaissance Venetian and early American glass, the Museum's orientation was also toward new modes of glassmaking that had not yet been shown or understood within a museum context. By 1956, just five years after the Museum's founding, its leadership identified the goal of telling the story of contemporary glass, ultimately deciding on an exhibition of international glass as the solution⁴.

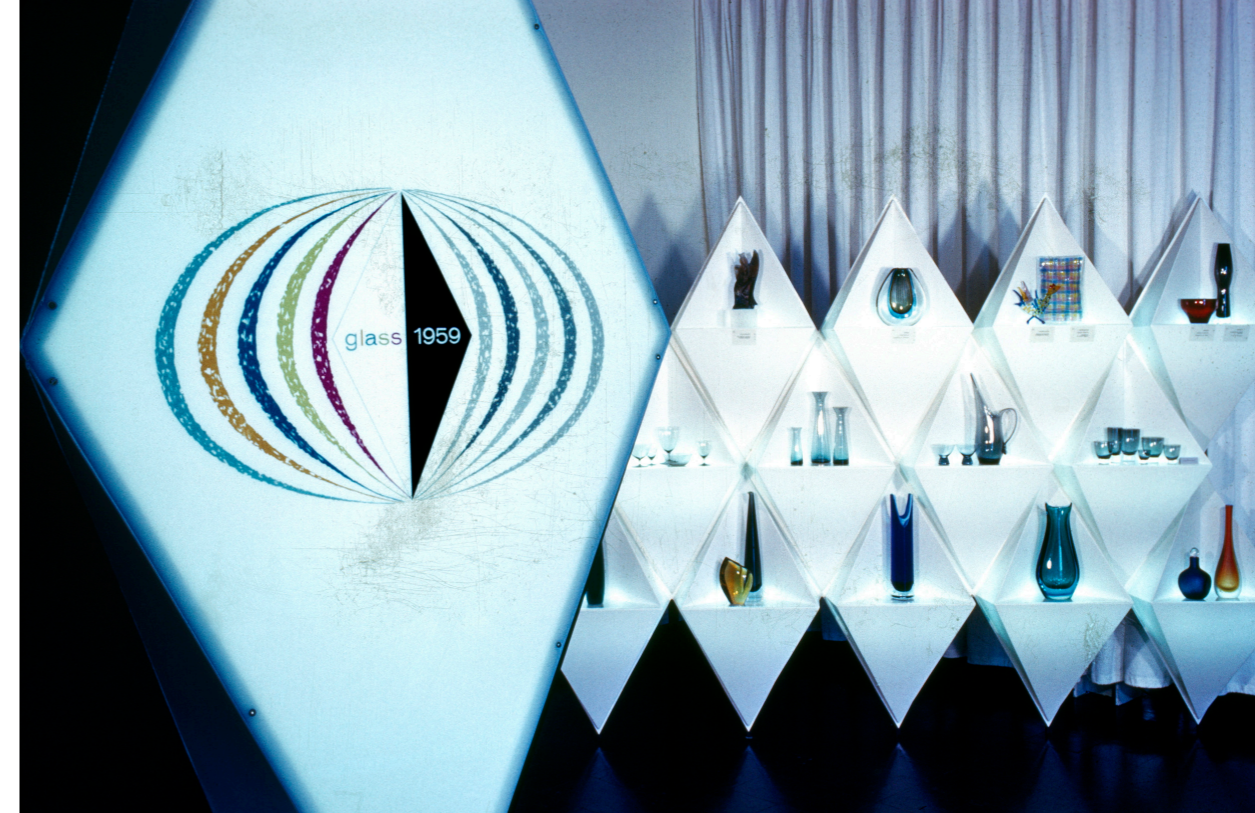


Figura 1

Glass 1959.
Installed in Corning.
Courtesy of the
Rakow Research
Library, Corning
Museum of Glass,
Corning, NY
(www.cmog.org).

The time was right for an exhibition like this. Despite generally increasing interest in design objects in the postwar period in the United States and abroad, and an increasing interest in the potential of glass as a craft material in the United States, there had not yet been a museum exhibition devoted specifically to showcasing contemporary international glasswork. As the Corning Museum's founding assistant director Paul Perrot recalled in 2018, he and founding director Thomas S. Buechner arrived at the idea after seeing, “...that there was a need. We saw all this incredible work happening around the world, and we saw that there was an opportunity to bring those artists and designers into conversation with each other”⁵. The idea of bringing artists into conversation with each other permeated the project, shaping Buechner and Perrot's aims for the exhibition and creating the context for the way the show would be organized.

Buechner and Perrot wanted to make a major impact on the language of objects, to firmly establish glass as an important field of cultural production. To accomplish this, they knew the exhibition could not showcase the viewpoint of only one curator, because the view of one person was too easy to dismiss. Even worse would be the anonymized consensus of a group of people just from the Corning Museum, because the viewpoint would be too narrow. Instead, they understood that to have an impact that would extend beyond the walls of their museum and truly create conversation in glass they needed to bring in people from the wider fields of art, craft, and design.

And so, Thomas Buechner developed an innovative, democratic model that has been the cornerstone of all *New Glass* projects since then: he invited submissions of objects from glassmakers around the world and asked a panel of designers, theorists, and curators to select amongst them, displaying their selections in a traveling exhibition and illustrated catalog. All told, in preparation for the 1959 exhibition the Museum invited submissions from 750 glass manufacturers worldwide. These manufacturers sent 1,814 objects to New York City, where they were evaluated in person by 5 selectors who ultimately chose more than 300 objects from 23 countries for *Glass 1959*⁶ (Fig. 1).

NEW GLASS IS CREATING CHANGE

Typically, when thinking about exhibitions, scholars, critics, and the public only think about the objects on display. Sometimes they focus on the artists who made the objects, but in general, great attention is not paid to the people behind the scenes making the choices. This is curious, because it is those people—the curators, selectors, judges, administrators—that shape what the viewer sees and what becomes the history they read about.

Buechner and Perrot understood that it was the layered voices of the selectors that created the particular outcome of their exhibition. And they understood that making the selectors' choices transparent for the viewer would give their project the power to speak more convincingly to the public. And so, rather than present *Glass 1959* as a work of full consensus, they emphasized the selectors' individual choices, devising a system of initializing selections that is still in place in every *New Glass* project. Each selector was given a certain number of pieces they could choose themselves (100 in the case of *Glass 1959*) and every object in the catalogue was annotated with the initials of the people that had chosen it⁷. Some entries had only one set of initials, some included the initials of all five selectors.

Including the selectors' initials was a subtle, but radical act that lifted the veil on the curatorial process, revealing that there is no singular, objective vision of what is good in glass (or in any artistic endeavor). Instead, the practice emphasized that the show was formed by a chorus of voices, each of whose selections and tastes were valid. The inclusion of initials represented a loosening of institutional control that paradoxically served to strengthen the authority of the Museum's voice.

By showing that there was not consensus even among the lauded selectors of *Glass 1959*, the Museum was effectively inviting viewers to form their own opinions, make their own decisions, and develop their own sensibilities about what constituted "good glass". This practice is an essential characteristic of the *New Glass* model, and critical for museums looking to expand their reach. Because if a viewer feels invited into a conversation, if they feel they can participate even in a small way, the conversation gets wider. And wider conversations bring health, vitality, and expansion.

THE SELECTORS: 1959

The panel for *Glass 1959* consisted of five established leaders in the arts who ranged from arts administrators to designer-craftsmen, cultural critics and magazine editors. Four were American: Edgar Kauffman, Jr., Russell Lynes, Leslie Cheek, and George Nakashima. And one was international: Gio Ponti, the famed Italian designer (*Fig. 2*). Because the particularities of their vision gave shape to the show and were so important to its organizers, short biographical sketches follow.

Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. had cut his teeth at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City, where he worked from 1941 - 1955. He was most known for "Useful Objects" and "Good Design," a series of exhibitions in the 1940s and 1950s respectively that featured affordable



Figura 2

The jurors of *Glass 1959*.

First row, left to right: George Nakashima, Leslie Cheek, Russell Lynes, and Edgar Kaufman, Jr. The Museum's curator Axel von Saldern, standing.

CMGL 713976. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org).

objects of exceptional design for the home. Kaufmann's family had been the founders of a department store in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and his retail sensibilities came through both in those exhibitions and in his selections for *Glass 1959*. His three "Juror's Choice" selections for *Glass 1959* demonstrate the purity of his design vision, with the inclusion of a wide, thin-walled goblet by the Austrian firm Riedel and a heat resistant dish with a single handle by the British firm Jobling⁸. But Kaufmann was not without whimsy; he also allowed himself to choose a turquoise blue tile with a folksy animal stamped into it by the visionary Swedish designer Erik Hoglund for Kosta Boda.

The next selector was **Russell Lynes**, a preeminent arbiter of taste, connoisseur of culture, and the long time editor of Harper's Magazine, one of the "oldest general interest" magazines in the United States. Lynes had made discernment the focus of his career. In 1949, he authored an essay called "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," about the intersection of class and style, later included in his book *The Tastemakers*⁹. But Lynes was not all seriousness—he also authored a book called *Snobs* about the self-importance of good taste run amok—and

in his juror's statement for *Glass 1959*, he categorized his criteria for selection as "delight," presaging the present-day Japanese organizing superstar, Marie Kondo. Lynes's juror's choice selections are as expansive as the field of glass at the time¹⁰. He chose a highly colored "Zanfirico" vase by the Venetian maestro Dino Martens, a playful vase by the Swedish designer Bengt Edenfalk that today might be thought of as "emoji-filled," and a restrained goblet by Riedel, a different piece in the set from the one chosen by Kaufmann.

It is telling that the Museum would choose a selector that had spent as much time as Lynes had thinking about choice and taste. They were not just aiming for a panel that would choose "the best" glass work (as if that is something that could be chosen), they were trying to choose a panel that would be really good at looking, but one that would also understand that the point of *Glass 1959* was to create an opening for conversation.

The third selector was **Leslie Cheek, Jr.**, the innovative director of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA). As one of the most progressive arts administrators in the United States at the time, Cheek too was known for broadening conversations in art. Among his most well-known projects was the Artmobile, an airconditioned trailer full of paintings that traveled throughout rural areas of the state bringing art experiences to people that did not otherwise have access to, or potentially even interest in, museums¹¹. He also made several attempts within the VMFA galleries to make the museum experience more engaging, playing music and extending the hours of operation into the evening to make the museum more accessible¹².

In short, Cheek was at the vanguard in his thinking about the role of museums. His choices in glass, however, were less expansive. He chose the most traditional bottles; made a specific attempt to choose things that looked old and that functioned as vessels. As he noted in his essay, "Glass is so bound up in its ancient tradition of being useful that I do not appreciate it as a material for higher aesthetic expression"¹³. His selections are a reminder that it is possible to be highly progressive in one arena and incredibly conservative in another.

The fourth selector was acclaimed American woodworker, **George Nakashima**. A leading participant in American Studio Craft, Nakashima worked both as an independent craftsman making pieces entirely with his own hands and in limited production, hiring others to see his designs through. It is notable that the Museum included a craftsman in its jury, even though glass was not yet widely used as a craft material in the United States. Nakashima's inclusion signaled the direction the Museum saw glass going and is the clearest recognition by the Museum of the craftsmen beginning to experiment with glass in small-scale studio settings.

On first examination, however, his "Juror's Choice" selections do not necessarily signal his craft orientation (*Fig. 3*). Like Lynes and Kauffman, Nakashima selected an elegant piece of stemware. He, like the other selectors, chose a delightful little vase by Bengt Edenfalk. But his inclusion of a little bird by the Finnish designer Kaj Franck—a piece he writes was probably not intended as art of any kind and was likely made from "a cast off piece of glass from another job"—was important, "because of its spontaneity, whimsy and joy in being". He continues, "We often need relief from a grim aesthetic determinism, and yearn for leprechauns and small demons"¹⁴. The desire for relief he referred to is what Studio Glass, in many ways, was developed to provide.



Figura 3

George Nakashima "Juror's Choice" selections *Glass 1959*, featuring (from left to right): bird by Kaj Franck for Notsjö Glass Works, goblet by K. Holosko for United Glassworks, vase by Bengt Edenfalk for Skruf's Glasbruk.

CMGL 714815. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org).

And finally, the last selector was **Gio Ponti**, the famed Italian designer and editor of the Italian design magazine *Domus*, who unveiled his massive architectural achievement the Pirelli Tower in Milan in the same year he came to judge the works in *Glass 1959*. Ponti was both the oldest (fourteen years older than the next oldest, Nakashima) and the most forward thinking of all of the selectors. His "Juror's Choice" selections included one of the few sculptural handmade pieces in the exhibition, a funky, roughly blown anthropomorphic vase by Argentinian designer-maker Lucrecia Moyano de Muñiz (he commented, "I wanted to steal the barbaric vase by Madame Muñiz!")¹⁵. He also chose a casserole dish and an exceptionally restrained tumbler of "good design" by the Czech designer Verá Lískova for the Austrian firm Lobmeyr. (Twenty years later in *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey*, Lískova would gain renown with her large sculptural work *Anthem of Joy*). In choosing Moyano de Muñiz's handblown work alongside the other two conventional design objects, Ponti both signaled the future of artist-made glass and saw the continuation of design. He straddled both worlds, but still pointed ahead.



Figura 4

Glass 1959.
Was designed to be reminiscent of a home's interior.
 CMGL 713974. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org).

A GLASS WORLD IS FORMED

It is nearly impossible to overstate the impact of the *Glass 1959* exhibition. The very first international museum survey of contemporary glass, it brought the idea of glass for design and art to audiences in six American cities. After Corning, it traveled to the Metropolitan Museum in New York City; then to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia; The Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio; the Art Institute in Chicago, Illinois and finally the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. In each city, it was covered extensively in newspapers, with articles aimed directly at consumers, particularly women who, in the postwar era, had increased dominion over purchases for the home.

The retail ethos of the exhibition was baked into the design of the show. In many places, it looked like a stage setting for a house, albeit one firmly set in the atomic era. Artworks were displayed on diamond-shaped sideboards and bookshelves made of diamond-shaped niches, which framed a central dining table complete with place settings (Fig. 4). Like Kaufmann's "Good Design" exhibitions before it, *Glass 1959* was, in part, an attempt to help people envision the way the objects they saw in the show would look in their home, another attempt to draw the viewer into a personal relationship with the objects.

But the greatest impact of *Glass 1959* may have been on the glassmakers themselves. Within the show's dense, atomic-era displays, artists, designers, and manufacturers from around the world could see themselves as part of a global dialog for the first time. Before the exhibition, there was no such thing as being a "contemporary glassmaker". Instead, there were simply artists and designers making things in glass, each in their own studios, ateliers, or factories. *Glass 1959* coalesced this disparate activity into a field, an unfolding global dialogue.

The diverse objects on display also presented approaches to the material unseen and unimagined before. The sculptural potential of the medium was on display in works by the Americans John Burton and Edris Eckhardt, the Japanese designer Awashima Masakichi, and of course Lucrecia Moyano de Muñiz. But nowhere was this sculptural potential more pronounced than in the work of the Czech artists.

Incredibly, *Glass 1959* was the first time the pioneering cast glass work of Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová was seen in the United States, offering wholly distinct ways of thinking about glassworking (Fig. 5)¹⁶. Their objects, and work of other pioneering Czechs artists and designers almost did not appear in the exhibition. The jurors, so focused on design and utilitarian objects such as vessels and goblets, had completely overlooked this work. Their initial selections had not included a single artistic Czech submission. It only appeared because of the foresight of the Museum's employees, who inserted more than 60 works for "geographic diversity"¹⁷.

The exhibition overall, and the inclusion of artistic Czech work, had a direct impact on the development of the American Studio Glass Movement, which would flower just a few years later starting in 1962. In that year, Harvey Littleton, son of the first physicist at Corning Glass Works, and later professor of ceramics at University of Wisconsin-Madison, held the "Toledo Glass Workshops" on the grounds of the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio. These summer workshops brought artists together to experiment with glassblowing outside of factories for the first time in the United States.



Figura 5

Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová.
Head I.
 CMoG 62.3.132.
 Glass 1959 was the first time the work of these pioneering Czech artists was seen in the United States.
 Digital image courtesy of The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY
 © Jaroslava Brychtová and Stanislav Libenský

Littleton had been working towards putting glass in the hands of artists for several years, but he was not alone in bringing the idea to fruition. Instead, what became the Toledo Glass Workshops grew out of a series of meetings, including one at the third annual conference of the American Craftsmen's Council (now the American Craft Council) held in Lake George, New York from June 19 - 21, 1959, just a few weeks after *Glass 1959* opened¹⁸. Several panels included glassworkers of various kinds, an incredible feat considering how few artisans worked in glass in the United States at the time. One panel on the "purpose of [the craftspersons] product," featured Michael Higgins, who along with his wife Frances, operated a noted fused glass company out of Chicago, Illinois. He commented that, "We are now trying to stimulate glass-blowing [sic] in American design schools," as a reaction to what he saw as the dissolution of the American blown glass industry as a result of a lack of good design awareness.

Another panel specifically on stimulating an artistic glass movement in the United States was moderated by Harvey Littleton and featured fused glass craftsman Earl McCutcheon and Paul Perrot, the Corning Museum's assistant director. In his statements Perrot commented, "No contemporary material can challenge the creative skill and ingenuity of the whole man as an artist-craftsman more than glass. For the individual craftsman, it can be called a 'new material' offering limitless possibilities of experimentation and creation"¹⁹. He also identified glassblowing as "the most important in the glass medium and epitomized the whole virtue of the material"²⁰. The panel decided that the most expedient way to ignite interest was to publish two booklets on the topic, with Perrot serving as the editor.

Littleton and Perrot had been in touch for at least a year prior to this meeting, and in the weeks, months and years following the meeting, Littleton continued his correspondence with Perrot, as well as with several other institutions, looking to galvanize a movement for artist-made glass²¹. He was turned down by Corning Glass Works and the Corning Museum, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Syracuse University, all in upstate New York, before finally receiving funding from the Guggenheim Foundation to conduct his experimental workshops at the Toledo Museum of Art, thus inaugurating the Studio Glass Movement²².

NEW GLASS IS MAKING GLASS VISIBLE

Soon after *Glass 1959* opened, Buechner left Corning to become the director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York, New York. Ten years later he returned to Corning full of zeal for the Corning Museum's mission to "tell the world about glass"²³. This time, his attention was on the Studio Glass Movement, which had grown immeasurably in the years he was away. Interested in having the Museum actively contribute to the growth of the Movement, Buechner organized a meeting in 1975 with leading American Studio Glass artists, members of Steuben Glass, and Paul J. Smith, director of the Museum of Contemporary Craft in New York City (now the Museum of Arts and Design)²⁴.

Over the course of two days, the meeting participants brainstormed ways the Museum could contribute to the growth of the Studio Glass Movement. Among these ideas were recommendations to create "major circulating surveys" that would be "national and international" with a "good detailed catalog". Also recommended was the development



Figura 6

Installation view of *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey in Corning*. CMGL 20603. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library, Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org).

of a "slide archive with regular distribution or set sale arrangement"²⁵. These ideas were seeds that would grow into the publication *New Glass Review* and the 1979 exhibition *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* and its accompanying catalog. And, incidentally, they are the recommendations that the Museum would continue to act on for the next 40 years—and keep acting on today—even though this meeting and the recommendations that came from it have largely been forgotten both inside and outside the institution.

By 1976, the Museum was already putting these recommendations into motion. In that year, the Museum launched the precursor to *New Glass Review*, a publication called *Contemporary Glass* that was published for three years²⁶. Like *Glass 1959* before it, and every *New Glass* project since, *Contemporary Glass* was curated from an open call for entries. Though it was not the most user-friendly—*Contemporary Glass* was published on microfiche, which required artists to bring it to their local libraries to view—it demonstrated the interest of the Studio Glass community in greater visibility and dialog.

By 1977, the Museum had begun planning *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* (Fig. 6). Conceived as a follow up to *Glass 1959*, the new exhibition was organized along similar lines. Artists and designers from around the world were invited to submit works. However, given the expansion of the field and the range of objects made by glassworkers in this iteration, first round selections were made via slides. And in place of sending letters of solicitation, the Museum could now use the well-established communication tools of the Studio Glass Movement itself to promote the opportunity. For instance, the early Studio Glass blower William Bernstein wrote two songs promoting the call for entries, which were published in the *Glass Art Society* newsletter²⁷.

In all, 970 artists and manufacturers submitted over 6,000 slides to the exhibition; 427 objects made by 196 artists from 28 countries were ultimately chosen for display²⁸. Also, it is worth noting that unlike in 1959, when most works came from glass companies, in 1979 only 20 glass companies were represented. The rest of the objects were made by 176 individual artists.



Figura 7

New Glass.
A Worldwide Survey
 selectors (from L to R)
Werner Schmalenbach,
Paul Smith, and
Franca Santi Gualteri
 considering slides.
 CMGL 20603.
 Courtesy of the Rakow
 Research Library,
 Corning Museum
 of Glass, Corning, NY
 (www.cmog.org).

THE SELECTORS: 1979

The selectors the show organizers at the Corning Museum chose for this exhibition demonstrated the ways the field had grown in the years since *Glass 1959* and revealed its aspirations for the future. Where the 1959 panel had included designers among its jury, the 1979 one consisted solely of arbiters of taste, including the directors of two museums (one of craft and one of contemporary art) and two prominent magazine editors. While the panel had been reduced to four members rather than the previous five, it now included two international members and *New Glass's* first female panelist (Fig. 7).

Italian magazine editor **Franca Santi Gualteri** was the first woman involved in *New Glass*. She had started her career as an editor of *Stile Industria*, a magazine dedicated to industrial design and an offshoot of Gio Ponti's *Domus*. At the time of *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey*, she was the editor of *Abitare*, a leading magazine of interior design, product design and architecture. Given this background, it is unsurprising that her sensibilities were highly inflected by industrial design.

Gualteri's selections in *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey*, like those of all of the selectors were expansive, however the selections she made alone offer insight into her proclivities (there were no "Juror's Choice" selections in 1979). Her initials alone appear next to many housewares in the exhibition, cups, small goblets, restrained vases, and a set of beautifully designed baking dishes by Leila and Massimo Vignelli. Her solo sculptural selections, which included two heart shaped paperweights by James Carpenter for Steuben Glass and a triangular column that amplified and reflected its ovoid interior by the Japanese firm Hoya, also tended to be austere, modernist, or simple in form.

Werner Schmalenbach, director of the Museum of Modern Art in Dusseldorf was the other international selector on the *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* panel and the other outsider to the world of Studio Glass. A leading voice on modern art and a frequent panelist for international exhibitions, Schmalenbach was suspicious of the notion that glass could be considered art. In his juror's essay he commented, "It is nonsensical to want to bring the 'art' of glass unconditionally into the field of fine art". Nonetheless, he asserted that there was often more "artistic genius" at work in the glass pieces he evaluated for the show

than in many works of painting and sculpture²⁹. Schmalenbach was happy to move between the different types of work submitted for the show noting the "cheerful pluralism of style" that existed in a field wide enough to incorporate both utilitarian objects for the home and sculptural works of free expression³⁰.

Paul Smith, by contrast, was the innovative director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City (now the Museum of Arts and Design). From his vantage at the Contemporary Crafts Museum, his viewpoint was more aligned with Studio Craft and Studio Glass than any of the other selectors, a fact made apparent in his selections. Though he did choose industrially designed objects, his choices were primarily of Studio Glass objects. Notably, his initials appear alone on objects more frequently than any other selector, including on several pieces which have since become icons of the Studio Glass Movement, including Tom Patti's *Banded Bronze*, a fused and inflated vessel that was featured on the cover of the exhibition catalog (Fig. 8).

Finally, **Russell Lynes** and his criteria of "delight" made a repeat performance on the *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* panel with selections equally as broadminded as in the earlier exhibition.

One of the most striking things about the *New Glass* process is its interactive nature, which combines consensus and solo decision making. The mix of approaches brings the disparate views of the selectors in contact with each other in deep and nuanced ways, encouraging and ensuring that the resulting selections will be more expansive than any selector would have chosen alone. It is through this process that selectors like Werner Schmalenbach, who thought artistry was out of place in glass, and Franca Santi Gualteri whose vision was so informed by homewares, could end up choosing works as highly experimental as Dalibor Tichy's *Sunrise*, a hot-cast work with pulled tendrils resembling an abstract crown and Mary Warren's slumped *Bowl #2*, presented with its tangle of slumping wires still attached. It is a method designed to amplify the voices of the artists over the preconceived notions of any one judge.

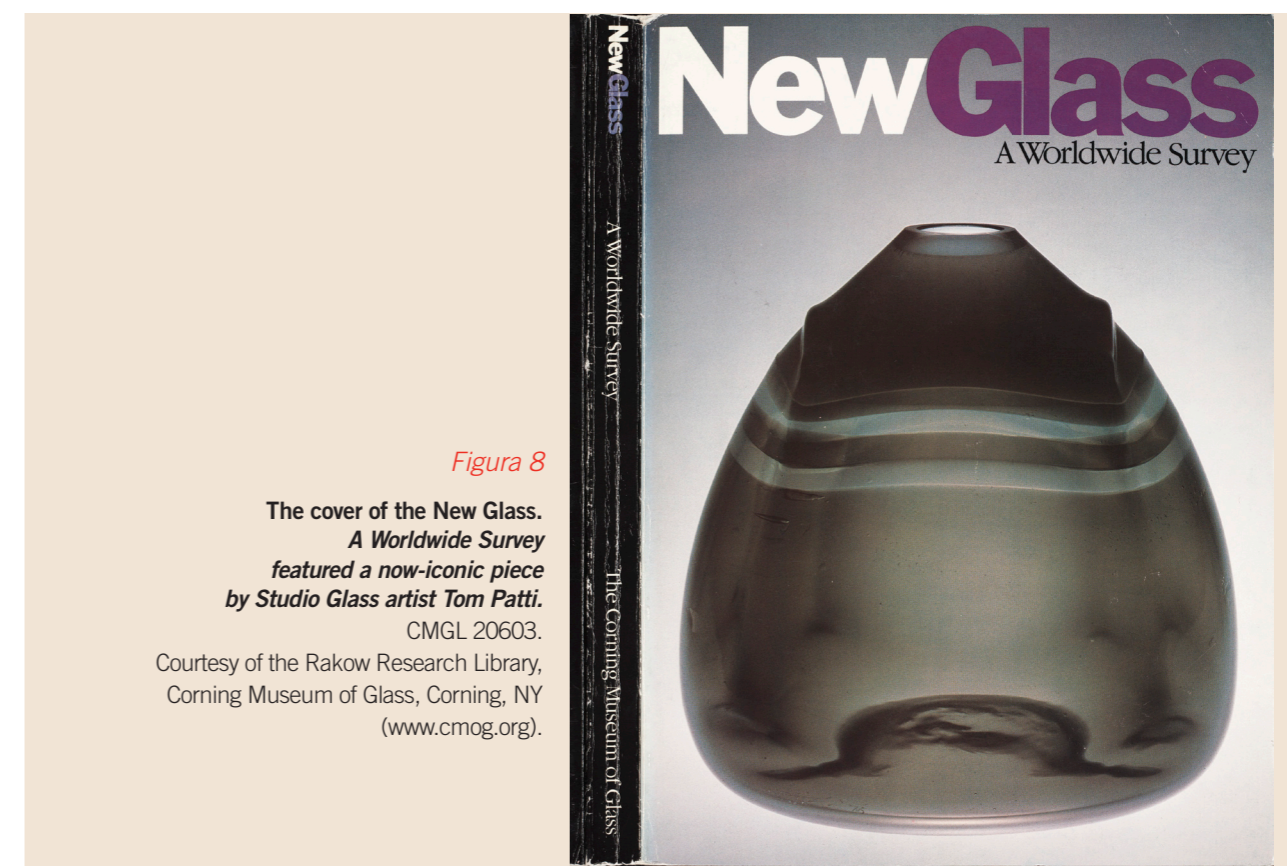


Figura 8

The cover of the *New Glass.*
A Worldwide Survey
 featured a now-iconic piece
 by *Studio Glass* artist **Tom Patti**.

CMGL 20603.

Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library,
 Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY
 (www.cmog.org).

NEW GLASS GROWS UP

Where *Glass 1959* laid the groundwork for the Studio Glass Movement to develop, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* marked its maturity. The works selected for the exhibition demonstrated the breadth of the contemporary glass field and the incredible strides that artists had made in their command of and conceptual approaches to the material. In all, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* catalyzed new collections, showed people how to see glass in new ways, and garnered increased attention and recognition for the work of artists in glass.

The exhibition traveled to four venues across the United States after opening in Corning: The Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, Ohio; the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC; The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California. It also traveled internationally to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, United Kingdom, to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and to the Seibu Museum of Art, Seibu, Japan. Nearly every institution purchased works from the show. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, even hosted a companion exhibition of French Studio Glass, securing a grant from the government to collect this material for the first time³¹.

Just as in 1959, the sheer volume and breadth of the work opened new avenues for artists in glass. But even more importantly, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* brought popular and critical attention to the field as never before. The show garnered significant press as it traveled, reaching audiences far outside the visitors to the exhibit. It was even covered in a multi-page photo essay in *Life* magazine³². At the time, *Life* magazine was the most popular publication in the United States, and being published in it was the equivalent of going viral on social media today. Studio Glass was suddenly visible to national and international audiences as never before.

At the same time, the 1979 exhibition spurred collecting by institutions and individuals. The inveterate and truly inspirational George and Dorothy Saxe of San Francisco, California began collecting glass after seeing the catalog for the exhibition³³. Later, they purchased several works from the show including *Volumenes*, by Joaquin Torres Esteban, the only piece by a Spanish artist (and selected only by Paul Smith), starting a collection that would become one of the most lauded in the country. The Saxes would go on to train generations of collectors in the United States and become major patrons of Studio Glass, funding exhibitions, lectures, and catalogues over several decades³⁴. All told, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* heralded a new era for Studio Glass.

NEW GLASS REVIEW AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Following the success of the 1979 exhibition, the Corning Museum launched *New Glass Review*, which, for the subsequent 43 years and counting has cataloged developments in the field using all of the tools of *New Glass*: an open call for submissions and selections made by the Museum's curator of contemporary glass and a rotating panel of makers, thinkers, and critics in glass and other allied disciplines. From 1980 - 2018, the format of the publication was largely unchanged. The volume was approximately 128 pages in length with a glass green cover (a nod, perhaps, to the band of green glass in Museum's new building designed by Gunnar Birkerts and opened in the same year as the publication launched). Inside, images of 100 artworks by artists from around the world appeared in alphabetical order, followed by contact information for the artists, and a review of recent important acquisitions by collections around the world. Though it provided little in the way of contextual information about the artworks beyond basic identifying information, having one's work published in *New Glass Review* was and is a benchmark experience for the included artists.

When I arrived at the Museum in 2016, I recognized the opportunity to update the publication and make it of better service to the field of contemporary glass, which was again in a moment of transition. I had spent the previous 16 years working in glass studios, writing about contemporary glass, teaching glass history, and curating in institutions around the United States. Through this experience, I became aware of a mismatch between the concerns of museums like Corning and those of artists. Like Buechner and Perrot in 1959, I saw a phenomenal opportunity in the 40th and 60th anniversaries of the previous exhibitions to bring attention to the work of these artists, hopefully opening new lines of conversation. And so *New Glass Now* was born.

In preparation for *New Glass Now* and in recognition of the increasingly conceptual nature of the works being submitted to *New Glass Review*, I worked closely with the publication's then editor, Richard Price and book designer Jacolyn Saunders to update the look and feel of the publication in 2018. We transformed the publication into an exhibition-in-print by changing the layout so that the works were arranged visually and thematically rather than alphabetically. And, extending Buechner's practice, I asked the selectors to write short personal statements that would appear with their by-lines next to their selected images. We also changed the cover, making it more immersive and inviting. The goal was to reanimate Buechner's intentions for a new era, sparking engagement in glass by making a publication that was visually engaging, inviting, and informative for experts and novices alike.

At the same time, we were deep into preparations for *New Glass Now*, an exhibition we hoped would be a gesture grand enough to catalyze change within the field, opening new conversations in glass and encouraging museums, galleries, and collectors to broaden their sense of what contemporary glass is and could be (Fig. 9). Like all other *New Glass* projects, *New Glass Now* was curated from an open call by a panel of selectors, with the understanding that our chorus would be stronger than a singular curatorial voice alone. Knowing that *New Glass's* particular selection process would ensure that the panel would challenge each other's thinking to choose



Figura 9

Installation view of
New Glass Now at Corning.

Digital image courtesy
of The Corning Museum
of Glass, Corning, NY



Figura 10

New Glass Now selectors.
(from L to R) Beth Lipman,
Susanne Jøker Johnsen,
Aric Chen, and Susie J. Silbert.
New Glass Now East Entrance.

Digital image courtesy
of The Corning Museum
of Glass, Corning, NY

a wide range of works, I chose selectors whose vision and thought processes augmented and extended my own ways of thinking. Finally, because I was hoping to recenter conversations in glass on the concerns of the artists, designers, and thinkers that use the material, I included both practitioners and museum professionals on the selection panel (Fig. 10).

SELECTORS: 2019

The artist **Beth Lipman**, who had previously served as a selector for *New Glass Review*, has long used glass as the primary vehicle in an artistic practice that defies the strict categorization of “glass art” while being supremely rooted in it. A gifted educator in addition to being an artist, she has worked at many of the leading glass education spaces in the United States and conceived of the material perhaps more expansively than any of the other selectors. Her choices in *New Glass Now* emphasized concept over pristine technique and embraced absurdity and playfulness as a virtue. Her selections brought a social consciousness, particularly around gender and sexuality.

Susanne Jøker Johnsen from Denmark is also a gifted maker, known for exquisitely crafted blown glass vessels, though is perhaps best known for the ambitious curatorial projects she runs as Head of Exhibitions at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. The survey shows *European Glass Now* and *European Ceramics Now*, attempt to show the state of making across the continent in their respective media every four years. Jøhnsen brought a deep attention to and reverence for traditional craftsmanship to the discussion, which is reflected in her selections. But equally, she—as all of the other selectors are—is a broad thinker, and fully embraced the remit to create a grouping of objects that represented contemporary glass in its widest expression.

Aric Chen is an American design critic and curator, who was based in Shanghai at the time of selection, where he was instrumental in the development of the M+ Museum of design. He entered the experience with the least glass-specific knowledge but was also the most attention to visitor experience throughout the deliberations. As his background would suggest, his selections tended toward design, and, in particular, toward objects that embraced environmental concerns, represented geographic diversity, and otherwise expanded the conversation.

I was the final selector, having managed the previous two *New Glass* cycles. Hopefully, my selections in the exhibition speak for themselves. I take the position that glass in all of its guises—from design to craft to art to who knows what—are worthy of engagement. I hope my choices reflect that.

CHANGE REQUIRES GRAND GESTURES

New Glass Now featured just over 100 artworks by 100 artists or collectives from 31 countries. To arrive at this selection, we evaluated nearly 4,000 images sent by more than 1,400 artists, designers, and glass firms in 53 countries. We used a selection process honed over the 40-year history of *New Glass Review* consisting of four rounds. In the first



Figura 11

Tamás Ábel.
Video still from Colour Therapy: Washington, D.C. + Budapest.
 2 min., 40 sec., Photo: Terre Nguyen and Benedek Bognár,
 Courtesy of the artist.



Figura 12

Krista Israel.
Video still from the Lapi Boli Project, wheel-thrown glass.
 with research assistance from Ayako Tani and Hans De Kruijk
 and project assistance from Hao Ran Zhu, Wilma Hornsveld,
 4 min. Photo: Liu Peng, Courtesy of the artist.

three rounds, which whittled the list to close to 250 artworks, all decisions were made by consensus. In the final round, each selector was tasked with choosing 25 pieces by themselves. Once everyone had chosen their 25 pieces, the other selectors could add their voices to each other's choices and the final selections, including the initials of the selectors, were recorded both in the exhibition catalog and in the gallery labels.

Just as in the earlier iterations of *New Glass*, the works in *New Glass Now* opened new avenues of inquiry, challenging long held conceptions of what contemporary glass is now and what it can be in the future. The included works exhibited a broad range of objects. There was a strong showing of design, including objects from the firms Iitala, Lobmeyr, and Kosta Boda, which would have been at home in either of the 1959 or 1979 iterations of *New Glass*. Other works highlighted a range of voices and approaches that have not found their way into the mainstream history of glass before. The show catalogue contains a detailed discussion of the many artists, approaches, and artworks included in the exhibition. Below is a survey of the survey – a few individual pieces to meant to demonstrate the breadth and aims of the show.

Several pieces advocated for glassy spaces—and the broader world as a whole—to become more inclusive and welcoming to people of a range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Tamás Ábel's video work, *Colour Therapy: Washington, D.C. + Budapest*, for instance, was a powerful and subtle performance that advocated for the centrality of queer communities within the cultural fabric (Fig. 11). In this piece, he projected the Pride flag onto national monuments in Hungary and the United States using a rainbow-colored laminated glass mirror, in what can perhaps best be described as a beautiful and ephemeral statement of presence. Suzanne Peck and Karen Donnellan's *Blow Harder: Alternative Lexicons for the Hotshop*, skewered the gendered and sexualized language used in English-speaking glass studios, humorously opening up opportunities to shift the tenor of the medium by shifting the language used.

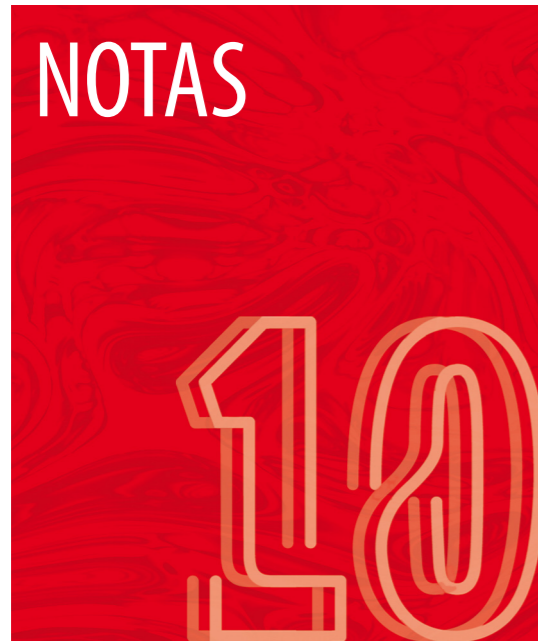
AtelierNL, Stanislav Muller/Mullerova, and Andrea Da Ponte, meanwhile, draw our attention to ecological concerns in the face of the ever-growing, onward march of globalization. James Magagula's *The Chief Herdsman and His Cattle*, Miya Ando's *Kumo (Cloud) for Glass House (Shizen)*, Ans Bakker's *Zeeuws Licht no. 1 / The Light from Zeeland*, and several others speak of the importance of place, both to the practice of glassworking and to our own, human understanding of the surrounding world.

Works from Krista Israel et. al's incredible *Lapi Boli Project*, with its wheel thrown pate-de-verre, to Karina Malling's epic *Transcendence*, and Nikolaus Fruin's *High RI Bottles*, among others, demonstrate a level of engagement with the very materiality of glass and glass formulations in a way rarely seen since the earliest days of the Studio Glass Movement (Fig. 12). Overall, humor, care, experimentation, and exemplary craftsmanship abound in these works, demonstrating the confidence and abilities of contemporary glass artists and thinkers and reflecting the nuance and complexity of societies more broadly.

BEYOND NEW GLASS

The *New Glass* project, from its earliest founding in the 1950s, is a story about the power of collective action, about the power of institutions to reflect the communities of artists and makers they say they represent. *Glass 1959* grew out of a need the Corning Museum's leaders identified through their close observation and interactions with members of the glass field they were trying to build. And while it is highly likely that the Studio Glass Movement would have started without the Corning Museum, the Museum's support, and the international convening that *Glass 1959* constituted, no doubt sped the process up and made it more international in scope. By the same token, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey* grew out of a series of conversations the Corning Museum facilitated directly with the leaders of the Movement and grew out of the artist's recommendations, with the end result of launching both the Museum and Studio Glass onto a much larger stage. Similarly, the 2018 redesign of *New Glass Review* and *New Glass Now* were attempts to recenter artists within the institution, aligning the actions of the Corning Museum with the needs and desires of glassmakers and glass thinkers. The full results are yet to be seen, but the hope was to ignite new communities, spark new conversations, and build new bridges to the future of glass.

Because of its radical centering of artists at the core of institutional action, *New Glass* offers an excellent case study for museum practice far outside of glass. In the current generational moment where museums are rethinking how they should engage with their communities, and indeed, who their constituents truly are, it is also a case study for the ways museums across the artistic spectrum can orient themselves towards and fashion themselves in the image of, artists. *New Glass* demonstrates a mode of collaboration that places the museum at the center of creative change, ultimately building opportunities both for the institution and the artists. It is an example of leading with the artists and objects, and following that lead to engaging with communities directly.



¹This essay is adapted from a lecture given at II Jornadas Vidrio Mallorca_II Glass Meeting Majorca, October 16, 2023. The lecture was itself a significant expansion of an essay published in the catalog to the exhibition *New Glass Now*.

²"History | Corning Museum of Glass," accessed June 3, 2019, <https://www.cmog.org/about/history>.

³"Corning Means Research in Glass," Advertisement, *Illinois Technograph* 65 (April 1950): 19.

⁴"Five Year Plan, 1956 -1961", 1956, RG09 S04, The Corning Museum of Glass Board of Trustee Minutes. RG09 S04. The Rakow Research Library, The Corning Museum of Glass.

⁵Paul Perrot, phone conversation with the author, Summer 2018.

⁶"Preface," in *Glass 1959: A Special Exhibition of International Contemporary Glass*, by Thomas S. Buechner (Corning, N.Y: Corning Museum of Glass, 1959).

⁷*Glass 1959: A Special Exhibition of International Contemporary Glass*, by Corning Museum of Glass (Corning, N.Y: Corning Museum of Glass, 1959), front matter.

⁸Corning Museum of Glass, *Glass 1959: A Special Exhibition of International Contemporary Glass* (Corning, N.Y: Corning Museum of Glass, 1959), 12.

⁹LYNES, R., *The Tastemakers*, New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1954.

¹⁰LYNES, R., *Snobs*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1950; Corning Museum of Glass, *Glass 1959*, 22.

¹¹"Art: Cheek's Changes," *Time*, December 7, 1959, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,811549,00.html>.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Corning Museum of Glass, *Glass 1959*, 9.

¹⁴Corning Museum of Glass, 23.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶FRANTZ, S. K. (ed.), *Stanislav Libenský, Jaroslava Brychtová: A 40-Year Collaboration in Glass*, Corning, New York, The Corning Museum of Glass and Prestel-Verlag, 1994, pp. 9-10.

¹⁷"Preface".

¹⁸American Craftsmen's Council, *The Craftsman's World: Third Annual Conference* (New York: American Craftsmen's Council, 1959).

¹⁹Council, 176.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Harvey K. Littleton papers, 1946-1975. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

²²*Ibid.*

²³LORD, B. and DEXTER, G., *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, Rowman Altamira, 2002, p. 25.

²⁴"The Corning Museum of Glass Contemporary Glass Artists Conference", *Glass Art Magazine*, 3, no. 2, April 1975, pp. 8-9. Those in attendance included: Andre Billeci, James Carpenter, Dale Chihuly, Fritz Dreisbach, Henry Halem, Tom Kekic, Dominick Labino, Albert Lewis, Marvin Lipofsky, Harvey Littleton, Tom MCGlaughlin, Joel Philip Myers, Paul Smith, Eric Hilton and Paul Schulze.

²⁵Meeting participant Henry Halem shared a photograph of the initialed list of recommendations with the author on December 12, 2018.

²⁶Corning Museum of Glass, "Contemporary Glass", A Corning Museum of Glass Text-Fiche (Corning, N.Y: The Museum, 1977 - 1979).

²⁷BERNSTEIN, W., "Glass 1979-Traditional Blues", *Glass Art Society Newsletter*, 2, 1977, p. 87.

²⁸Corning Museum of Glass, *New Glass: A Worldwide Survey*, Corning: The Museum, 1979, p. 11.

²⁹Corning Museum of Glass, 32.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Musée des arts décoratifs, *New glass: une sélection internationale ; Verriers français contemporains, art et industrie, 2 Avril-5 Juillet 1982*, Paris, Musée des arts décoratifs, 1982.

³²"Graceful Magic of Art in Glass," *Life*, April 1979, pp. 83-88.

³³DREXLER LYNN, M., *Sculpture, Glass, and American Museums*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005, p. 59.

³⁴Dorothy Saxe also generously donated in support of the exhibition catalogue for *New Glass Now*.



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