



glass

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COVER
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Public Art Project, *Mirage*

Callahan, and Brian Gillespie—presents an intricate glass panel titled “Truchet Screen” that resulted from their 2023 John H. Hauberg Fellowship at Pilchuck. These makers bring their backgrounds in architecture, engineering, glass, and other art forms to bear in a complex design based on digital fabrication and slumped glass “tiles.” The resulting work is scalable and grid-like, yet organic with its imperfect edges and rhythmic, curling lines that float across the surface. The dynamic lightness of the overall pattern and white tones are grounded by the intriguing joinery of the tiles.

While these works form the basis of the exhibition, there are subtle insertions of work by other artists that add texture and depth. Esque Studio, under creative director Andi Kovel, presents vibrantly hued vessels covered with chunks of glass-casting billets, with apt titles such as “Superchunk, Neo Midnight.” An evocative and incised wall panel by Dawn



Esque Studio's “Superchunk” series seeks to reimagine 1970s acrylic decor in glass by adding casting billets to provide relief and texture, creating geometric surface patterns in saturated hues.

Bassett is formed from her signature plaster techniques that transform the centuries-old media of Venetian plaster and Tadelakt plaster, which contains ground obsidian glass. One of Anna Skibska's otherworldly orbs made of flameworked, stretched glass rods appears to have landed in just the right place amidst all of these elegant oddities.

Curated by Vetri director Sheila Strobel, this inclusive approach feels very intentional and further expands the field for glass art. In fact, “Disruptive Innovation” could be titled “expansive innovation” in the way it suggests how groundbreaking techniques can extend into fascinating aesthetics and intriguing narratives, suggesting new possibilities for glass in the overlapping worlds of design, craft, and art.

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Karen Donnellan

“COSMIC WETNESS”
RHA CORNER GALLERY
ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY
DUBLIN
AUGUST 24–OCTOBER 1, 2023

A joyous, affecting congruence of feminine erotic pleasure and sensory knowledges, “Cosmic Wetness,” situated in the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA), sees Karen Donnellan's return to the Irish contemporary art scene. Deviating from the formalist, highly skilled glassmaking that Donnellan has refined, this show sees glass used in unconventional ways. Donnellan forgoes coldworking processes of grinding, polishing, or sandblasting, allowing for unrefined, raw materials to take precedence. This considered imperfection showcases intentional cracks, sharp edges, and unpolished surfaces. “Cosmic Wetness” sees Donnellan queering modalities of glasswork and challenging its presentation while introducing playful explorations of

material and form. The work in this show sees the contrast of high-value materials like blown glass with confectionery, found objects sourced from dumpster dives and crystal shops, playdough, a flameworked bong, and a 3D-printed clitoris.

Upon entering the gallery space, one is immediately drawn to reach out and touch all that is on display, but these urges must be met with resistance; the boundaries placed down by the institution forbid a tangible relationship between viewer and object. Still, the enticingly curvaceous forms of shining glass and soft, fleshy marshmallows invite you in. Reminiscent of a scattered bedside table or vanity, *Iridescent Intimacies or Sacred Geometries with Your Titties Out* (2023) presents an assemblage of various objects placed on a shelf. These forms interact with one another through taunting distance and teasing proximity, with some objects mounting others. Evocative of intimate domestic interiors, crushed eyeshadow fans out across the shelf surface. Glass, rope, and latex intermingle, and mounds of slumped glass and playdough lay slack. Ridged conical vessels stand erect, an upturned laboratory funnel penetrates an iridescent blown glass amplifier shape, while other blown glass forms lie on their side, blooming out and tapering in to form pointed nipples, placed oh so teasingly close yet not quite touching one another. Iridescent geometric formations, crafted from holographic cardboard, shimmer against their glass surrounds, deepening the dimensionality of this assemblage. At the center of this congregation stands an enlarged areola of pink glass, upright, exposing itself to the room with proud conviction. Placed upon another shelf, jutting pertly out, sits *St. Agatha or Disco Tits or 5318008* (2022). Crafted from carved rose quartz, imitation pearls, Blu Tack, and consent, these anthropomorphic crystal breasts, complete with faux pearl nipples, incite a sense of playfulness that is echoed in the jovial exclamations of those within the gallery space.

In one corner of the gallery, affixed to the windowed walls with lavender masking



Karen Donnellan, *Iridescent Intimacies or Sacred Geometries with Your Titties Out*, 2023. Assemblage. Dimensions variable. COURTESY: THE ARTIST

tape, is a scattered cluster of dichroic glass fragments, refracting the sunlight as it passes through. This work, titled *Dykro Stained Glass* (2023), de-pedestals traditional modalities of stained glass production and display, proffering a guerilla alternative. Textured, rippled shards of glass cut at uneven asymmetrical angles and curves splay across the window in a scatter of puzzle pieces, none quite fitting together. Disparate yet together—a communing of offcuts. Each fragment a lens offering alternative views of the world beyond; dulled concrete structures afar are clouded in hues of pinks, greens, and blues, their rigid lines flexing and distorting as they bend through the rippled glass.

Donnellan's use of confectionery throughout “Cosmic Wetness” can be initially read as a playful exploration of everyday objects, but when confronted with the work, the soft, fleshlike mounds, dusted in sugar, incite the taste buds and evoke a multisensory response, awakening primal desires and eliciting cravings for satiation. This deeply affectual response is most potent when viewing *The World Would Be a Better Place if We All Ate More Pussy (for Brett and Rise) or Sile na Gig (Diptych)* (2023) a work which sees two Mikado biscuits—the most sexually suggestive of teatime accompaniments, their gentle pink mounds parted with a streak of red jam—placed side by side on the gallery wall. One pristine, untouched; the other appearing to have been licked out by the firm urgency of a wet tongue sweeping through parted marshmallow mounds,

lapping up its sticky innards. Facing this work, on the far wall, is *Cosmic Flaccids, Supines, and Languids* (2022–ongoing), a series of geometric forms shaped from marshmallows, Jelly Tots, wooden skewers, cocktail sticks, flying saucers, and syntropy. Soft, pillowy marshmallow blooms and encrusted gelatinous mounds are interconnected, creating networks of anthropomorphic relations. Sacred geometry ascribes symbolic and sacred meanings to certain geometric shapes and proportions due to the prevalence of geometrical patterns and forms found in the natural world. The title, suggestive of passive inertness, nods to the effortless manner with which we find ourselves connected, interwoven with others through the geometrical underpinnings of the cosmos.

“Cosmic Wetness” reimagines unexpected materials within queer contexts, inciting affectual responses to seemingly innocuous everyday objects while forming new relationships between unlikely mediums. Donnellan's practice aims to challenge the *kyriarchal* attempt to separate bodies from spirit, sexuality from divinity, and distort sacred truths. “Cosmic Wetness” succeeds in creating a realm of exuberant eroticism through its holistic appeal to the senses, mind, body, and spirit.

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Venice Glass Week 2023

MURANO, VENICE, AND MESTRE, ITALY
SEPTEMBER 9-17, 2023

In a literal sense, Murano is built on glass. For hundreds of years, in the furnaces on its islands, the *scarti* (scraps) and cuttings thrown away during the glassmaking process were used as landfill, remaining there as new layers of the town were piled up over the top. If you dig deep enough, says Leslie Ann Genninger, you can still find them. Such scraps, discarded by the *maestri* with whom she has worked and collected by her over many years, form the basis of her latest work, *Scarti Redux*. This is a pair of sculptures in the shape of floor lamps, with metal armatures into which hundreds of *scarti* of varying textures and colors have been woven, creating a sort of brilliant glass foliage lit from within. The work was exhibited at the Glass Hub in the *piano nobile* (second floor) of the Palazzo Loredan, as part of the seventh and highly successful edition of the Venice Glass Week this September.

In the Glass Hub's “Under 35” exhibition on the palazzo's ground floor, there was a decided trend away from craftsmanship and toward more conceptual pieces. The risk with these, as remarked to me by a colleague from the art market, is that it is all too easy to see them as derivations of contemporary art that fail to make sense on their own terms. One piece that, for my money, did make sense was *Imposter Vessel*



Laura de Santillana, *7 Elements*, 2015. Blown glass elements set in steel base. H 70, W 106, D 18 in.