

Ceramic art
Curator: György FUSZ

The ceramic material in the exhibition The Art of Fire is exciting and has never before been presented together in this form and context. It provides a fascinating cross-section of the development and evolution of Hungarian ceramics over several centuries and of the high quality of contemporary ceramic art.

In the material starting from the end of the 16th century, we present simple utilitarian ceramic dishes that clearly show the incorporation of Turkish forms and patterns, which had mainly developed in the time-span when the two cultures met. This reveals the emergence of a specific and rich world of patterns, which later appeared mainly in popular culture. It is very exciting to see that the mixture of oriental and typical Renaissance patterns has resulted in a very unique collection of pieces, characteristic of the Carpathian Basin, created with excellent technical and artistic skills. This is illustrated by the rich and very varied selection of jars, where the Oriental-Turkish motifs can easily be detected.

The huge development of the Hungarian economy in the second half of the 19th century led to the foundation of several large ceramics and porcelain factories, which are still in operation today and have a considerable international reputation. Among these, Herendi Porcelain Manufactory Ltd. and Zsolnay Porcelain Manufactory Ltd. in Pécs represent the characteristics of the period and the changes that took place. In the Zsolnay factory's early search for a new path the use of oriental and, within this, Ismiki forms and patterns are particularly interesting. These were a great success at world exhibitions, including those around the 1900s. Both factories played a significant role in the development of contemporary Hungarian ceramics and in the careers of many artists.

The selection of contemporary material presented includes the most outstanding, internationally acclaimed Hungarian artists and their emblematic works of the last twenty years. Most of the works are from the collections of the Foundation for Contemporary Ceramic Art and the International Ceramics Studio. They include some very recent works from a year or two ago. Hungarian ceramic art is characterised by a direct creative use of the material and, at the same time, by transferring a sense of inherited historical struggle. It was also important to learn about the location when choosing the objects and the artists because the rustic exhibition space provides a good home for strong sculptural works mainly.



17th Century Palank Ceramic Plate, Wosinsky Mór Museum, Ethnography Collection



Herendi Porcelain Vase, 2024



Julia Vase with Ismiki Patterns, Zsolnay Manufacture Jsc.



Agnes Husz, Rainbow Flame Stoneware, 2021

THE ART OF FIRE
Turkish influences in Hungarian glass and ceramics

The concept for the current Istanbul exhibition, 'The Art of Fire', was inspired by an exhibition which took place 20 years ago at the Getty Museum, where curator Catherine Hess explored the influence of Islamic glass and ceramics in Italian Renaissance art. At the time, the exhibition highlighted a number of interesting details, reminding of the fact that the basic concepts and techniques of Renaissance ceramics and glass art essentially came to Europe from the Islamic world, in which Venice's role became increasingly important from the 16th century onwards. At the same time, the Ottoman Empire essentially synthesized the influences of the classical Islamic world and the art of the Eastern Roman Empire, while at the same time entering into a lively commercial and cultural dialogue with the rest of Europe, making Eastern influence a constant feature in Western art. The title of the exhibition is partly a tribute to the American exhibition of 20 years ago, and partly a way of transposing this concept into the wider context of Hungarian ceramics and glass art as well as of Turkish-Ottoman-Islamic ceramics and glass art. After all, the influence of Turkish art on Hungarian applied art was greater and deeper rooted than that of its European counterparts. Through the deep-rooted common roots, the Turkish influence found its way into Hungarian folk art quickly and permanently, both through its techniques and its representational methods. The "Floral Renaissance" of the court of the Transylvanian Principality, which existed as a Turkish vassal during the 17th century, was not

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only the easternmost bastion of the European Renaissance, but it also absorbed the noble patterns of Anatolian textiles and Iznik pottery that came to the court as an indelible influence, so that the people of the villages made this style an integral part of their own artistic expression. When the Hungarian national awakening gained new momentum in the 19th century, this historical process took place in parallel with the birth of modern, autonomous industrial art in Europe. The canonisation of Hungarian folk-art coincided with the great Orientalist renaissance of Western art. By international standards the Hungarian artists of the period were more enthusiastic and more prolific in their use of the treasures of Ottoman art than their European counterparts. This trend was driven by the already flourishing friendship between the two nations. The revival of Orientalist interest during the French conquests in the 19th century had a very different impact in Hungary. The "Turkish-style" trend found parallels with the idea of the Hungarian national awakening, and thus very quickly found a basis for its growth. "Hungarian Orientalism" had its own unique character, different from the rest of Europe, since it was simultaneously influenced by the German in a scientific way, by the British and French in an artistic way, while in a political and "emotional" way it was linked to the idea of Turanism and the idea of the national awakening in Hungary. This intellectual environment inspired many contemporary artistic creations at the time in their own individual way, creating a unique artistic fusion of Eastern and Western influences and national particularity. With this in mind, the aim of the exhibition is to reveal the common, often intangible roots

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KKA KÖZTÁRSASÁG KÉZMŰVÉSZETÉRT ALAPÍTVÁNY



Spatial Spiral - European Contemporary Glass Art Museum Planned for the City of Veszprém by the Bohus-Lugossy Foundation for Contemporary Glass Art, 2020

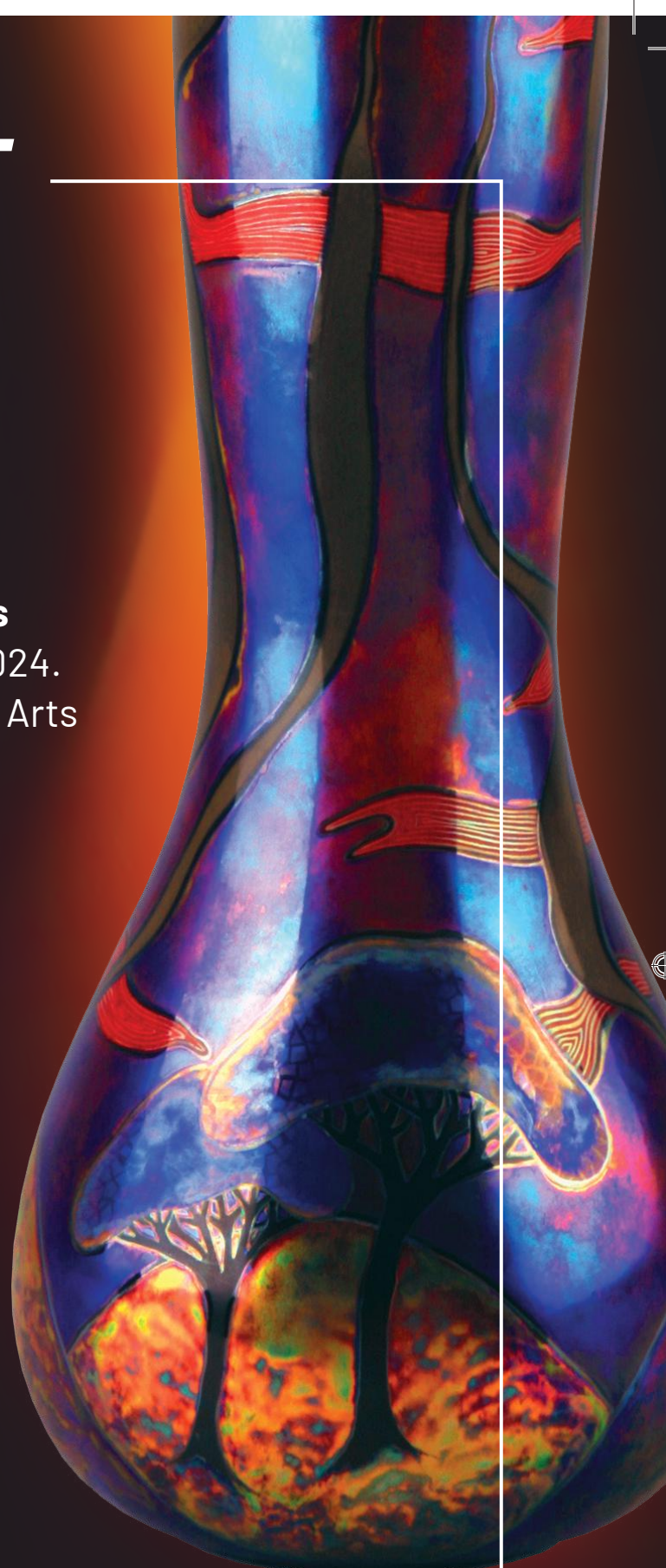


of Hungarian and Turkish applied arts - almost bordering on poetry. In ceramic art, the bokály (a slender, single-handled, pear-shaped, clay wine container; the word comes from the Italian word boccale meaning 'jug'), in glass art, the Parád ornate glasses represent this elusive, emotionally based artistic layer. Moving on to the orientalizing crafts of the 19th century, we present some typical examples from the age of the birth of modern European craftsmanship, illustrating how significant artists showed receptivity for the arts and crafts of the East in Hungary in the 19th century. By showcasing the autonomous ceramics and glass art of the 20th and 21st centuries, we aim to show how the "art of fire" in Hungary developed from these common roots after the earlier intense cultural relationship had practically ended. In the course of time, the turbulent history has pushed the Hungarian and Turkish cultures further apart, and today this relationship is not as clear as it was in the times of the Transylvanian princes and the Rákóczi, or even in the 19th century. That is why it is important to keep this connection alive and thriving in the relevant areas of contemporary Hungarian applied arts. With this exhibition, we would like to strengthen the relationship between ceramics and glass art of these two nations and give it new content for the 21st century. Alongside the historical past we would like to present the future-oriented achievements of our contemporary ceramics and glass art. Our aim is to make the dialogue within the genre as active again as it was in the past, when the "art of fire" could mutually grow by each other's achievements and accomplishments.

The exhibition is jointly organised by the Bohus-Lugossy Foundation for Contemporary Glass Art and the Foundation for Contemporary Ceramic Art.

THE ART OF FIRE

Turkish influences in Hungarian glass and ceramics
 15 November - 18 December 2024.
 Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts



Volcano eosin vase Zsolnay Porcelain Manufacture Jsc.



Parád (1708 – 2006)

Today Parásasvár is a settlement of just three hundred inhabitants. But the small village is special and visibly different from other similar small villages in the Mátra in the north of Hungary. The area lies close to the castle of Eger, which became famous during the Turkish wars, and still has some of the most northerly Turkish architecture in the world, such as the minaret of the town's former mosque. Glass has been produced in the local valleys since the 13th century. The wood-fired glassworks migrated from forest to forest, and with them the travelling masters of the villages. Parado Huta, Suhuta, Ótházhuta, Fiskálshuta, these are the names of the villages that still bear the memory of the glassmakers. The typical 'longhouses' of the glassmakers are a special ethnographic feature of the area. So it was no coincidence that after the Turks had left, Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II founded the first glass factory here in 1708, which

itself wandered for decades between the above-mentioned settlements until it arrived in the Tarna stream valley behind the Károlyi family's Sasvár in 1767. The characteristic so-called 'ornamented bottles' are located at a particular intersection of Hungarian folk art and industrial history. The twice-fired, 3D painted 'himes bottles', made with a secret recipe, and the plastically painted curved vases were unique products of the glassmaking industry of the Matra region. The so-called 'crane vase' was named after its characteristic bird motif, which was also popular in Turkish art. It was a masterpiece of the Parád glass painters, who preserved the centuries-old tradition of 'himes glass', rooted in the Middle Ages and based on elements of Hungarian folk art, until the factory closed. The stylistic link between the decoration of dark glassware with plastique paint and Turkish ceramics is quite striking.



Green, hand-painted glass with Hungarian folk motifs, 1930
Attila Sik Collection

Leo Valentin Pantocsek (1812 – 1893)

Leo Valentin Pantocsek was born in Kielce, Poland in 1812. He came to Hungary as a young man and graduated in medicine from the University of Pest but never practised his profession, as he was already interested in photography at that time. However, the chemistry of glass negative emulsions was more exciting to him than photography itself, so he very soon 'changed genres' and chemistry became his main occupation. In fact, it was this that led him to glass art when he went to Zlatno to the glass factory founded by János György Zahn in 1833, where he began his experiments in chemistry. In 1849, he invented a process called hyaloplasty, which he used to make glass coins and for which he won a prize at the first world exhibition in London in 1851. His invention that had the greatest impact happened by chance. One day, there was a celebration in the Zlatno factory, and Valentin

Pantocsek wanted to light a Greek fire. During the celebration, however, no attention was paid to the cooling glassware, on which an iridescent layer had formed by the morning. This accident led to another world-famous invention, the Art Nouveau iridescent glass, which was patented and exhibited at many world exhibitions in the 1860s and 70s. His work mainly reproduced Roman glass objects of the period by copying the iridescent layer that in case of the Roman glass objects naturally formed in the ground over the centuries. It was these contemporary success articles that Louis Comfort Tiffany spotted, and he himself began to use Leo Pantocsek's world-famous invention. Leo Pantocsek's invention was used by glass artists all over the world, and many future Hungarian glass artists used the technique of hyaloplasty and iridescent glass, including Márton Horváth and Ágnes Szmecana.



Iridescent glass vase by Pantocsek Leo Valentin, 1860
Attila Sik Collection

Veszprém (Veszprém)

Veszprém is not only the largest town on the northern coast of Lake Balaton, but also one of Hungary's leading cultural centres. In the 16th and 17th centuries the region was a conflict zone between the two empires during the Turkish-Hapsburg wars. Unable to resist the Turks to any great extent, it changed hands a total of ten times between 1552 and 1683. The countryside around the town was largely depopulated by the 17th century, while the population was further divided by the religious conflict between the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. During the Rákóczi War of Independence, Veszprém, which had sided with the Kuruc, was ruthlessly ravaged by imperial troops led by Sigbert Heister in 1704. Later masses of German settlers arrived in the area, defining the culture of the Bakony region for the next 300 years. They also brought along the traditions of German glassmaking. German glassmaking families came to the glassworks

mainly from the Black Forest region. Three of the glassworks in Bakony were located in the forests of the Veszprém Bishopric's manor of Stadtlöd (Pille, Csehbanya, Németbánya), three in the Eszterházy family's manor of Csesznek (Lökut, Pénzeskút, Somhegy), while the Zichy family of Nagyvászyon founded two glassworks in Úrkút. The Pillei glassworks was founded around 1715 and remained in existence until 1762. To run it, 20 Bavarian families were settled. Its founder and first master was János Rubner. Following in the footsteps of these glassworks in Bakony, and based on their professional knowledge, the Ajka Glass Factory was established, which for a long time was the centre of Hungarian glass production. Even after the factory's closure in 2020, the region remained a centre of glass production and processing in Hungary, a fact that is also demonstrated by the objects exhibited here by Varga from Ajka.



Blue vase with geometric cameo decor from Ajka Crystal, 2010
Attila Sik Collection

István Sovánka (1858 – 1944)

István Sovánka originally trained as a sculptor with János Fadrusz, one of the greatest artists of the period, at the Zayugroc woodcarving school. He then worked in the studio of one of the most productive public sculptors at the turn of the century, György Zala, and it was not long before he made the famous statue of Matthias in Cluj, which was eventually completed by his classmate János Fadrusz. Perhaps it was disappointment, or perhaps the lure of new paths, that led him to take a job the following year, in 1884, at the Zayugroc glassworks, which was then particularly open to the new, modern artistic style of Art Nouveau. He also approached the material of glass as a sculptor: he shaped his monumental vases using the sculptor's approach, and began to use the methods of the greatest French artists of the period, Emile Gallé and Jean Daum. Over time, he became more and more technologically independent and developed his own multi-layered etching technique,

sometimes including photographs on the glass surface. His work was well received at the 1896 Millennium Exhibition, winning a certificate of merit in Turin in 1902 and a gold medal at the 1906 Milan World Exhibition. After the turn of the century, he tried to innovate the 18th-century glass production in the central part of the Upper-Country (Felvidék), in the Gömő region of Újantálvölgy, but the people here were not very receptive to his innovative ideas, so he moved on, leaving his narrowly defined homeland, today's Slovakia, and went to Transylvania, where he started working in a small glass factory in Sepsibükszád in the Székely region. The storms of history swept this enterprise away, and Sovánka remained in Transylvania, annexed to Romania, and gave up glassmaking. In the 1920s he set up a toy factory producing first-rate wooden children's toys, which he traded successfully until his death during the Second World War. His descendants still live in Transylvania.



Five layered, acid etched glass vase by István Sovánka, 1912
Attila Sik Collection

Giergl Henrik (1827-1871)

Born in Bavaria, Henrik Giergl began his apprenticeship as a glassmaker in Subotica, now part of Serbia. Following a serious accident, he began his independent career as a master glassmaker in the 1840s, which, as was typical of the profession at the time, began with a European tour. He continued his studies in Murano, then, after Neckarbischofsheim and Mannheim, the 'spring of nations', the revolution of 1848, reached him in Berlin. He immediately returned to his chosen homeland to join the Hungarian freedom fighters, where he became a national guard. His exciting memoirs, published later, reveal how decisive he considered his revolutionary experiences to be in his lifelong commitment to the creation of a Hungarian national artistic style. To create this style, he turned to the

orientalising style of oriental art, especially the ornamentation of Turkish vessels. In this way, he almost spontaneously reinforced the artistic significance of the common roots of Hungarian and Turkish art. Henrik Giergl's favourite method - which caused his early death - was acidification, which he used to decorate his works with colourful enamel paintings. Henrik Giergl stood out from his contemporaries not only because of his own works of art, but also because of his exceptional collection. During his travels and business trips, he was obsessed with collecting glass artifacts from all periods and from all over the world. His company distributed the Tiffany objects of Emile Gallé, Jean Daum and Louis Comfort in Hungary.



Two layered, ocher yellow glass jug by Henrik Giergl, Zayugroc, 1880
Attila Sik Collection

Transylvania

After the defeat of Mohács in 1526, Hungary suffered a serious civil war. The nobles supported the House of Habsburg, while the common nobility supported János Szapolyai on the Hungarian throne. Sultan Suleiman supported Szapolyai's succession to the throne, so his son, the child Sigismund John, with the support of the Shining Court, became the leader of the Eastern Hungarian Kingdom with the help of his mother, Isabella of Jagello, who created a flourishing Renaissance court in Gyulafehérvár, the centre of the principality that later enjoyed autonomy from the vassalage of the Turkish Empire. In the 17th century the state flourished and in 1620 its greatest prince, Gábor Bethlen, brought masters from Murano to his court in Porumba, who soon established internationally renowned workshops in the foothills of the Fogaras Hills. They were later replaced by German masters who introduced the popular decorative glass of the time to Transylvania. By the 18th century, Transylvanian glass art was on a firm footing. Thanks to the growing demand, new glassworks were established

throughout Transylvania, especially in the Székely region, such as in Sepsibükszád and Zalánpatak, a factory which was already in full operation in 1694. In addition, so-called 'glass barns' were established in Zagon, Covasna, Bodzabárkány and Görgény. The Bükszád glassworks (üveghuta) was founded by Count Ferenc Mikó, probably before 1750. Initially, 12 families worked here, but by 1860 the village's population had grown to over 1,000. At the turn of the century, the glassworks (huta) found itself in a difficult situation: following a fire in 1898, the 'glass barn' temporarily stopped production. István Sovánka arrived here as a co-tenant in 1907 to turn the factory's fortunes around after decades of crisis. Unfortunately, this did not succeed and the Bükszád glassworks only operated until 1914, the outbreak of the World War, making it the last of the series of Székely region glassworks established in the 17th and 18th centuries that closed down. The Transylvanian glass on display at the exhibition demonstrates the high professional standards of the Hungarian glass industry in Transylvania at that time.



Transylvanian ink tank, 1730
Attila Sik Collection

Karcag (1940 –2006)

Throughout its existence, the Karcag glass factory was a bastion of innovation, home to a series of experiments and inventions. Although it was nationalised after the war, the authorities allowed Zoltán Veress (1901-1965), the polyhistor who founded the factory, to remain as director, where he was awarded the Kossuth Prize, the highest state award in 1955 for his glass that could be soldered with metal. In 1957, a young engineer, Zoltán Suha (1932-), who graduated from the Veszprém University of Chemical Industry, arrived at the factory and became Zoltán Veress's first employee and later his successor. Their most influential joint invention on glass art was the 'veil glass' process, which they jointly patented in 1961. When creating the 'veil glass', Zoltán Veress was interested in how to create the sparkling, shimmering effect in glass that polished decorative glass has after processing. The

solution was to blow two thicker layers of the heat-resistant glass he had developed, with a thin layer of coloured potassium glass between them. Due to the different coefficients of thermal expansion of the two types of glass, the thin layer in the middle burst during cooling, but this stress was absorbed by the two thick heat-resistant layers, so that the object remained intact. The other famous patent is the Karcag eosin iridescent technology. Its special feature is that its (substrate) surface is the factory's 'black glass', which is a particularly deep shade of selenium red and cobalt blue glass. Using a unique technology developed by Zoltán Suha, the rainbow layer is applied to this surface, where the specific interaction of these two materials results in an even richer iridescent surface than before.



Green veil glass with leaf motifs from Karcag, 1990
Attila Sik Collection

Iridescent glass

The word iridescent is derived from the Greek word ἶρις iris (gen. ἱριδος iridos), which means rainbow, and which, combined with the Latin suffix -escent, means 'prone to rainbows'. Iris is a goddess of Greek mythology, personifying the rainbow, who acted as a messenger of the gods. The books written by the renowned alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan (721-815), known to many as the "father of chemistry", include a treatise on coloured glass, with a special chapter on iridescent glass. The treatise also gave

a specific recipe for 'abu qalmun'. The word 'abu qalmun' has several meanings, including the colour variations of the chameleon, or the different colours seen on peacock feathers. Unfortunately, no such early iridescent glass has survived, but we do find similar ones in Egypt from the 11th to 12th centuries. The technology had largely died out by the Middle Ages, so that artists of the 19th century were faced with the new challenge of reconstructing the brilliant effect of the past.

The Hungarian autonomous glass art

Júlia báthory and the "small-trainer"

In the 1930s, the career of the first autonomous Hungarian glass artist, the „school creator” Júlia Báthory, began in Paris. Júlia Báthory founded the company La Girouette Studio in 1930. Her son id. András Szilágyi and her daughter-in-law Júlia Kovács took over the business, creating an intellectual workshop that had been in continuous operation for over 80 years, a rarity in the art of glassmaking. Báthory's works in the field of sandblasting and polishing were recognized internationally as pioneering. The success of Júlia Báthory rivalled those of the Hungarian Art Nouveau glass sculptures: she presented her works at the world exhibitions in Paris, New York and Brussels with great success. Júlia Báthory's greatest "creation", however, was the foundation of Hungarian glass art education. In 1952 she was the first in Europe (10 years ahead of the American studio glass movement) to start a glass art department. The glass art department at Török Pál Street School, still being a determinant factor today. For more than 10 years, this workshop was the only glass artist training institute in the country. Many of its students, such as Erzsébet Hamza, János Fábry and Magda Németh, who are featured in the exhibition, found a place for themselves in the newly reviving Hungarian glass industry. For more than 40 years, the

school was led by Zsuzsa Vida, a pupil of Júlia Báthory, who learned the art of glassmaking in the Czech Republic, one of the centres of European glass art.

Zoltán Bohus and the Hungarian studio glass

An independent glass artist course was established in 1965 under the leadership of György Z. Gács at the College of Applied Arts, founded in 1948. His successor, Zoltán Bohus, was there from the very beginning, first as an assistant lecturer from 1966, and from the 1970s he gradually took on increasingly important tasks. After the death of György Z. Gács he became Head of the glass department, and was thus - together with Márton Horváth, teacher of the hot glass technique - the determinative master of Hungarian glass art for almost 40 years. The workshop is still running today under the management of artists such as Péter Borkovics and Gergely Pattantyús. Thanks to György Gáspár, also a Bohus student, the University of Pécs now also offers glass art training in the framework of the Object creation basic course (with Ceramic Design, Glass Design, Metalworking (metalworking), Fashion and Textile Design specializations). This period in the 70s-80s was the most successful one in the history of Hungarian glass art: not only did factories, such as the

world-class factories in Ajka, Salgótarján, Tokodi and Karcag, which mainly produced for export, provide production opportunities and professional support for artists, but glass art students graduating from college succeeded in conquering the most prestigious galleries, museums and public collections of glass art, achieving success after success. The Hungarian glass designer Zsófia Kanyák, who died tragically young, worked with Murano master Lino Tagliapietra in Salgótarján and also designed for the Rosenthal factory during her short life. The works of Zoltán Bohus and Mária Lugossy broke through the Iron Curtain in 1979 when their works were acquired by the Corning Museum in New York. From this day on, Hungarian glass art has always remained at the forefront of international art. The latest work by György Gáspár was added to the collection in 2014. The international reputation of the works of László Lukácsi and Péter Borkovics shows that the "Bohus disciples" now hold a special place on the international scene. Even after the turn of the millennium, a good number of Hungarian artists continue to appear on international platforms. One only has to mention the recent successes of Balázs Sipos, Balázs Telegdy or Daniella Koós, who have won such prestigious international prizes as the Libensky Prize or the Red Dot Prize.