

GUILD GALLERY



HYUNSUNG CHO



ROMAN AND WILLIAMS GUILD GALLERY
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HYUNSUNG
CHO

JUL 31, 2023 - SEPT 2, 2023

Guild Gallery is pleased to present the first solo New York exhibition of Hyunsung Cho, a Korean artist known for his work with glass. Over the past two decades, Cho has mastered the art of glassblowing, creating elegantly crafted vases that push the boundaries of this centuries old practice. For this exhibition, Cho will present a series of 32 new Veronese vases—glass vessels first inspired by one depicted in Italian Renaissance artist Paolo Veronese’s 16th-century painting, “The Annunciation to the Virgin.” Varying in scale, proportion, color, and form, these works combine traditional Murano glassmaking techniques with Korean iconography drawn from Cho’s heritage.

One of the few glass artists working in Korea today, Cho manipulates molten glass and organic elements from the earth using techniques of blowing, shaping, and coloring to create one-of-a-kind designs. Through his use of minimal forms and translucent color tones inspired by the natural landscape, Cho creates ethereal vessels that evoke a sense of purity and tranquility. He begins each work by sketching a vase on paper, which he then replicates through the glassblowing process. The contrast between the fragility of this medium and the extreme energy and strength required to blow the glass and control the fire is an ever-present dynamic in his practice.

The works in this exhibition, created over the past year in the artist’s glass studio in Seoul, reveal Cho’s unique style of glassmaking, which reinterprets the traditional Veronese vase through a Korean lens. Cho first became enamored with Murano glassmaking when he encountered a Veronese vase at the Corning Museum of Glass in New York and learned of its origin. Like the early Venetian glassblowers dating back to the 13th-century, Cho was attracted to this material because of its transcendent qualities, and was eager to learn the centuries-old techniques to master them himself in Korea.

Continuing to experiment with the Veronese form over the past decade, Cho has developed a signature style that is influenced by shapes seen in traditional Korean Moon Jars—porcelain vessels dating from the late Joseon period that are characterized by their evocative form. Like Moon Jars, Cho’s glass vases have a wider mouth and are tapered and slightly elongated towards the bases, giving the appearance that they are floating in the air. When viewed together, the works in this exhibition highlight the defining qualities of this ancient art form while expanding the possibilities and appreciation of this medium in the 21st century.



HYUNSUNG CHO SHAPING A PIECE AT HIS GLASS STUDIO IN SEOUL.

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NEUTRAL GRAY MEDIUM VASE AND LIGHT ALABASTER VASES, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

HYUNSUNG CHO
B. 1975, SEOUL, KOREA

Hyunsung Cho (b. 1975, Seoul, Korea) makes delicate, beautifully shaped goblets, glasses and vases in his glassblowing studio in Seoul. Trained in Korea and the U.S., Cho was first introduced to glass while studying at Namseoul University in Cheonan, Korea. He has continued to hone his practice as one of the foremost glassmakers in his native country, and received his second master's degree in glass from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2010.

Cho's work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions in Korean and American galleries and institutions, including the Glass Island Museum and the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art in Korea, among others, and was also honored with a "Best in Show" at BIGG: Breakthrough Ideas in Global Glass sponsored by Steuben Glass.



CHO'S WORK REINTERPRETS THE TRADITIONAL VERONESE VASE THROUGH A KOREAN LENS.

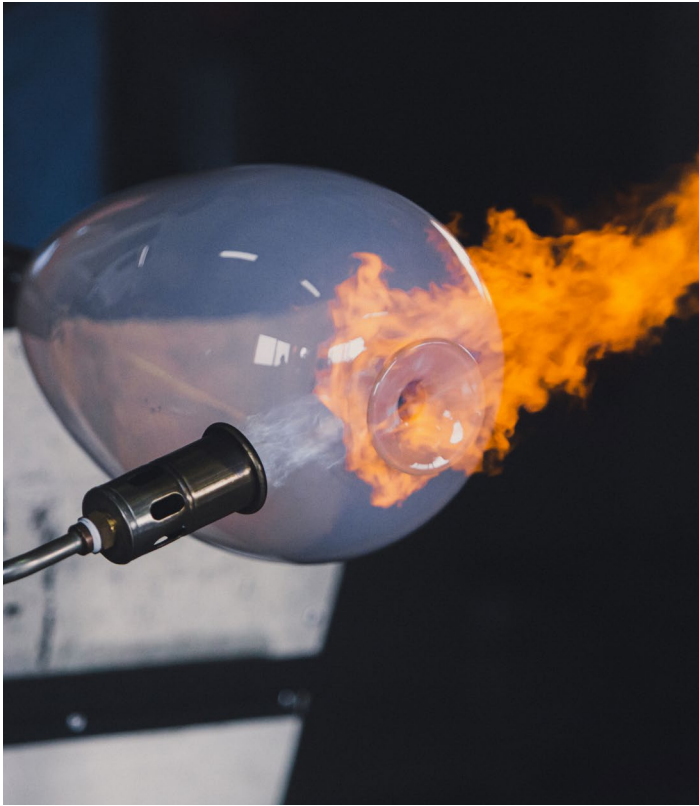
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CHO HAS DEVELOPED A SIGNATURE STYLE INFLUENCED BY SHAPES SEEN IN TRADITIONAL MOON JARS.



CHO'S PIECES SHOWCASE THE FRAGILITY OF THE MEDIUM IN CONTRAST WITH THE STRENGTH REQUIRED TO GLOW THE GLASS AND CONTROL FIRE.



HYUNSUNG CHO AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO IN SEOUL.



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CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION	2010	M.F.A. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE IN STUDIO GLAS	IL, USA
	2004	M.A. KOOKMIN UNIVERSITY IN GLASS DESIGN	SEOUL, KOREA
	2002	B.F.A. NAMSEOUL UNIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENT DESIGN & PLASTIC ARTS	CHON-AN, KOREA
EXPERIENCE	2016-2019	ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT GLASS ISLAND MUSEUM	ANSAN, KOREA
	2010-2016	RESIDENT ARTIST, CREATIVE GLASS CENTER OF AMERICA, WHEATON ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTER	NJ, USA
	2014	INSTRUCTOR, "SMALL OBJECTS WITH BIG STORIES", PENLAND SCHOOL OF CRAFTS	NC, USA
	2004-2005	INSTRUCTOR, "ADVANCED GLASS BLOWING", HOT GLASS STUDIO	SEOUL, KOREA
	2003	RESIDENT ARTIST, GLASS-EL STUDIO	KWANGJU, GYUNGKIDO, KOREA
SOLO EXHIBITIONS	2001-2002	RESIDENT ARTIST, TOOLBAR GLASS INSTITUTE	INCHEON, KOREA
	2021	"VERONESE: THE VASE", GALLERY WANNMUL	SEOUL, KOREA
	2017	"SPROUT", GALLERY WANNMUL	SEOUL, KOREA
	2015	"ON MY WAY HOME", DUNCAN MCCLELLAN GALLERY	FL, USA
	2015	"AN ORDINARY DAY", THE GALLERY OF FINE CRAFT AT WHEATON ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTER	NJ, USA
	2014	"SPROUT", CLAY COLLEGE, CUMBERLAND COUNTY COLLEGE	NJ, USA
	2012	"ENCOUNTER", WITT GALLERY, RIVERFRONT RENAISSANCE CENTER FOR THE ARTS	NJ, USA
	2010	"IN THE CITY", THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM ATRIUM GALLERY	IL, USA
COLLECTIONS		MUSEUM OF AMERICAN GLASS, WHEATONARTS AND CULTURAL CENTER	MILLVILLE, NJ
		USASOMRI ARTS AND CULTURAL CENTER	IKSAN, KOREA



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OLIVE GREEN BALL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (19.75" H X 11.5" DIA).

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THE VARYING COLOR, PROPORTION, AND SCALE OF THESE WORKS COMBINES TRADITIONAL MURANO GLASSMAKING TECHNIQUES WITH KOREAN ICONOGRAPHY.



THE VASES HAVE A WIDER MOUTH AND ARE TAPERED AND SLIGHTLY ELONGATED TOWARDS THE BASES.



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LEFT: OLIVE GREEN BALL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (19.75" H X 11.5" DIA).
 RIGHT: NEUTRAL GREY MEDIUM VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (21.75" H X 10.75" DIA).
 CENTER: LIGHT ALABASTER BALL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (17" H X 11" DIA).



NEUTRAL GRAY MEDIUM VASE AND LIGHT ALABASTER BALL VASE, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF.



MINT SMALL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (18.5" H X 10" DIA).



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STEEL BLUE VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (22" H X 13" DIA).



PINK MEDIUM VASE NO. 1, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (21.5" H X 9.25" DIA).



HYACINTH VIOLET VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (22.25" H X 9.5" DIA).



NEUTRAL GREY LARGE VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (23" H X 12" DIA).



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NEUTRAL GREY MEDIUM VASE, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF.

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LIGHT ALABASTER BALL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (17" H X 11" DIA).



GREY OVAL VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS (16.75" H X 12.5" W X 11" DIA).

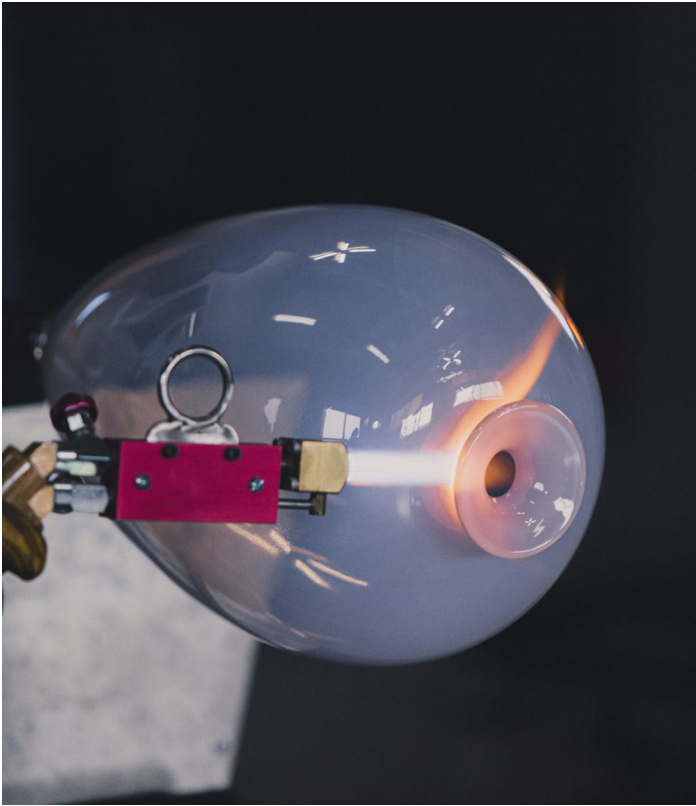


BLUE BALLOON VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (21.5" H X 9.5" DIA).



SALMON PINK MEDIUM VASE, 2023, BLOWN GLASS AND GOLD LEAF (21.5" H X 9.5" DIA).





CHO'S PIECES TAKE INSPIRATION FROM, AMONG OTHER SOURCES, A CHILDHOOD LOVE FOR BALLOONS.



THE PALE, MILKY, AND SMOKY COLORWAYS ALLOW THE LIGHTNESS OF THE GLASS TO SHINE.



WHILE THE GLASS IS STILL HOT, CHO ROLLS A LAYER OF 24-KARAT GOLD ONTO THE GLASS SO THAT IT MELTS INTO THE BASE.



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INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST HYUNSUNG CHO

BY
MACKENZIE WAGONER

From his hand-built studio in Seoul, Korea, artist Hyunsung Cho continuously explores the boundaries of a mythic 16th century vessel: the Veronese vase. Since first encountering the genre-shifting shape invented by painter Paolo Veronese at the Corning Museum of Glass, Cho has devoted himself to learning how to perfect—and defy its silhouette, introducing new contours to glass iconography by borrowing from traditions in materials as disparate as clay and rubber. The resulting 32 vessels (shown here for the first time) in all of their variations of dramatic scale, proportion, and color offer impossible lightness and ethereal fragility—as though, like bubbles, they may burst and disappear at any moment. From Seoul, Cho called to discuss his fascination with the form, and the sphere of influence that keeps him returning to it year after year.

MACKENZIE WAGONER: This show features so many variations on the Veronese vase, something you've been focused on in your work for years. When did you first encounter "The Annunciation," the Paolo Veronese painting that featured the first Veronese vase.

HYUNSUNG CHO: I actually first saw a Veronese vase at the Corning Museum of Glass in New York. I liked the shape, and I researched what it was until I finally knew it was from Veronese's 16th-century painting, which was the first Veronese vase in human history. It only could exist in the painting in that period—glassmakers didn't have the tools to make it. There are many other great works at the Corning Museum, and the Veronese was a small piece in there, but I really fell in love with the shape.

MW: Did you ever go to Italy to study the technique?

HC: No, I was determined to learn it myself. This is my dream of Italy.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a glass factory in Murano made the first Veronese vase. Since then, many glass artists have been making and reinterpreting the vase in their own sense. I wanted to introduce my style of making the Veronese in Korea, and to show the diversity of glass art. I've developed my own shape like a balloon. The shoulders are stronger, the size is larger—the original Veronese is small, something like 13 inches tall, mine are as large as 23 inches tall.

MW: And this larger mouth and shoulder has Korean influence.

HC: Yes! At first, I didn't know why I liked the shape, but a few months ago, at the Leeum Museum of Art exhibition featuring work from the last Korean dynasty, the Choson Dynasty, I saw a vase that was my shape. It comes from the Moon Jar. I finally know where my design comes from.

MW: The stems of your vases are similar to the Murano-style gold-leaf bulbs that we see in your glasses, which are carried at Roman and Williams Guild. In the glasses, the stem features a symbolic seed—the bulb of a plant—and the cup almost blooms from that. Are you bringing these ideologies together?

HC: Yes. That's kind of same idea to put the seed onto the vase too. The original Veronese also has that same kind of element. It's a merge. I blow it and while it's still hot, roll a layer of 24 karat gold leaf onto the surface of the glass to melt onto the glass. Goldleaf is very thin, so it's good to use on molten glass.



CHO AT HIS STUDIO IN SEOUL, WHERE HE DESIGNED EVERYTHING FROM THE MACHINERY AND GLASS FURNACE, TO THE REHEATING CHAMBER.



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MW: Talk to me about balloons, which you mentioned earlier—where does that come into play? In the palette alone?

HC: I loved balloons when I was young, so I think maybe that's why I like the shape. And balloons are very light. My piece is quite heavy—but I want it to appear lighter than its real weight. And I like pale colors. Glass is already gorgeous itself so I don't want to put too much onto the glass. It's why I use something pale, milky white, or smoky.

worked with so many great artists there. That was the best time for thinking and learning many things as an artist. All my working habits and styles were made at that time. I did my first solo goblet show after I had that job for 4 years, which was a great time to refine myself as an artist. I just wanted to find myself because my routine was very simple and tiring. I drew so many different shapes of cups and stems over and over again. It made me stronger than before.

MW: When did you first know you wanted to be a glass artist?

HC: When I was young, I drew everywhere. So naturally I wanted to be an artist from a young age. It was only before college that I visited a glass factory around my hometown, which was my first exposure to molten glass.

MW: Did you build your own studio in Seoul—with remarkably clean lines I might add—because glass is such a new tradition in Korea?

HC: You can't find old glass making machines in Korea. I could

“I WANTED TO INTRODUCE MY STYLE OF MAKING THE VERONESE IN KOREA, AND TO SHOW THE DIVERSITY OF GLASS ART.”

I had never seen glass melt—until then, I had only thought of glass as a cup or a window. Molten glass is totally different. It made me curious to make something from that material.

find parts, but I needed to design and build the machinery in my studio myself. So, in 2022, I was able to design everything in the studio, from the glass furnace that melts the glass powder into liquid to the reheating chamber that keeps the glass warm while I shape it to my preferences. Glass is a very sensitive material.

MW: Did you go to school to study glass?

HC: I went to art school [at Namseoul University], not knowing that they had just started glass program. I got lucky!

MW: You went on to study glass at Kookmin University in Seoul, in the US at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and as a senior resident artist at Creative Glass Center of America in New Jersey. Did you learn different approaches in each school? In each country?

HC: That's a tricky question. The education system, especially in glass, is very similar, because many teachers and professors study in America or Europe. In Korean culture, glass is kind of a new art material. We don't have many historical glass objects here. After I got a MFA degree in Southern Illinois University Carbondale, I moved to New Jersey for the Creative Glass Center of America, which is involved in Wheaton Art and Cultural Center. I had met and



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ABOUT GUILD GALLERY

Located on Canal Street, the vibrant, propulsive stretch of New York City's rising art scene, Guild Gallery celebrates the making of art objects by contemporary masters, drawing upon the millennia-long history of the decorative arts.

Guild Gallery is the natural extension of Roman and Williams Guild, on the corner of Howard and Mercer Streets. When we opened the doors of the Guild it was the realization of a decades-long dream: to create a living organism of people, objects and furnishings—an eclectic world, a modern-day guild of the senses.

We designed the Guild as a place to showcase the furniture that we make alongside the work of artisans we most admire for their skill and dedication to technique. We wanted to emphasize the everyday functionality of remarkably formed items and the significance of living with very beautiful things while valuing the utility of expert crafted pieces.

Guild Gallery is the next stage of evolution in this dialogue. We build on our commitment to help people appreciate the artistry as we celebrate individual makers. While the Guild celebrates a beauty that derives from function, the Gallery focuses purely on form. Whereas the Guild is all about an eclectic mix, the Gallery will spotlight the object, artist, and process.

We want to introduce you to artists who are working today, so that you can follow their trajectories and understand their work as an ongoing, organic narrative. We represent a group of ten remarkable artists, makers of extraordinary art objects, furniture—sculptors and other creators whose medium might be ceramic, glass or wood.

The Guild was founded on the principle that art and craft are not mutually exclusive entities. The contemporary works that we show at the Gallery experiment with line, form, and material, fusing the ancient and the modern through traditional techniques and references to a millennia-old lineage. These are living pieces, made by living artists.

They are living pieces, not just because you can—should—live with them, but also because they are made with materials that feel alive, like wood from trees or gloriously malleable clay. This is a guiding principle of everything we do in our own design practice and, by extension, at Guild Gallery.

These are pieces that are meant to be communed with, in our homes. So while key pieces by an individual artist are displayed at the Canal Street Guild Gallery to be appreciated as works of art in their own right, others will be seen at the Guild on Howard and Mercer, just a stone's throw away, interacting with other objects and furnishings, as it might in a home. Thus we hope to foster connoisseurship and demonstrate how they might be lived with.

The Gallery is a venue designed to support the rigor and discipline of the artists as they fashion their materials, to honor the human scale of their works. To that end, we designed the wooden pedestals on which we display the works; the Gallery emphasizes warmth, purity and focus. We invite you to explore Guild Gallery, to ponder the power of exchange across civilizations, countries and techniques. And investigate these objects that contain profound stories about nature, culture, craft and art.

— *ROBIN STANDEFER and STEPHEN ALESCH*

