

# NEWS

## letter

March 1989

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF GLASS MUSEUMS AND GLASS COLLECTIONS

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### Contents

1. Preliminary Program for the International ICOM Glass Committee meeting in connection with the ICOM XV General Conference in Hague 29th August - 3rd September 1989.
2. Report of the ICOM Glass Committee meeting in Glasgow 1988.
3. Suzanne Netzer: Prints from Glass Plates.

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List of members, April 1989.

Reply form for papers and informations.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF GLASS MUSEUMS AND GLASS COLLECTIONS

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Preliminary program for Glass Committee ICOM XV General Conference.

Tuesday 29 August 1989

am: Travel from Hague to Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Working  
Session I. Papers and information are welcome and  
wanted. Please inform the Secretary on the reply  
form enclosed in this mailing.

Lunch.

pm: Rijksmuseum: it is planned to have all glasses of the collection available in the study collections area.

Willet-Holthuysen Museum: a small but excellent collection of Venetian, facon de Venice, and Dutch engraved glass of 16th, 17th & 18th centuries.

Frichs Lemeris: dealer.

Evening: Reception in Amsterdam.

Wednesday 30 August 1989

am: Travel from Haque to Leerdam.

National Glassmuseum: general collections specializing in modern Dutch glass and special exhibition of work of Andreas Copier.

Leerdam: Visit to glass factory.

Lunch.

pm: Travel to Rotterdam for visits to

Boymans-van Beuningen Museum or Historical Museum.

Evening: Reception in Rotterdam.

Thursday 31 August 1989

am: Reserve collections Gemeentemuseum, Hauge.

Van der Doel Glass Gallery.

Lunch.

pm: Working Session II.  
Papers and informations are welcome and wanted.  
Please inform the Secretary on the reply form  
enclosed in this mailing.

Evening: Reception in the Hauge.

Friday 1 September 1989

am: Hague to Leyden: working session III in De Leken-  
hal.

Lunch.

pm: Visit Collections of De Lakenhal & Museum van Oudheden.

Evening:                   Leyden.

Saturday 2 September 1989

Members will be able to join commercial excursions or a visit could be arranged to glass collections in Brussels.

Sunday 3 September 1989

Excursion to Zwilen, Amerongen, Kroller-Moller and ending at Het Loo.



Report of the meeting of ICOM's International Committee of Glass Museums and Glass Collections held in Glasgow, Scotland from 15th May to 24th May 1988.

The Committee's Chairman, Brian J.R. Blench, had kindly invited the Committee to hold its meeting in Scotland. Our headquarters were at the Art Gallery & Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow. Here, we were warmly welcomed by the museum staff. Many People had worked hard for weeks to prepare the excellent programme for us.

Participants from 12 countries attended and, in addition, members of the museum's staff were present. This contributed much to the committee's knowledge of Scottish glass.

**Wednesday, 18. May - first Business Session.**

A.A. Auld, Director of the Glasgow Museums & Art Gallery welcomed us to Scotland and wished us well with our meeting.

Peter Ritsema van Eck was prevented from attending but sent warm greetings in a letter in which he reported on the forthcoming 15th General Conference to be held in The Hague, Holland from 27th August to 6th September 1989.

It was decided that the Committee's own meetings would be held from 29th August to 1th September, possibly in partial collaboration with the Decorative Arts Committee.

The central ICOM had asked individual committees to contribute extra financial support to ICOM Paris. There was a majority against doing this, especially in view of the fact that ICOM Paris had abolished the annual grant to the work of the international committees. Among the reasons for not contributing extra financial support was the fact that the international committees were themselves the heart of, and on of the central ideas behind, ICOM.

Brian Blench then presented the Glasgow glass collections. The acquisition of Kelvingrove House in the 1880s had provided the starting point. The extensive, 1888 international exhibition in Glasgow had produced a surplus, which was used to build the present, stately Art Gallery and Museum in Kelvingrove.

In 1901, new displays were prepared and the museum was extended. In the exhibition of Decorative Art an attempt was made to demonstrate the production techniques used. In the 1920s and 1930s, a review of the collections resulted in parts of them being returned to the donors, as the object were then outmoded.

Today, Pollok House, on the outskirts of Glasgow, is part of the museum's Department of Decorative Art. This houses, among other things, a costume collection, which it is hoped will develop into a Museum of Fashion. This will involve considerable reorganization. It is planned to separate Decorative Art from the rest of the museum in the 1990s and house it in a new building.

Brian Blench also mentioned the private Burrell collection, presented to the city, and now placed in a new, interesting building in the grounds of Pollok House.

Finally, we heard about the People's Palace, home of the local historical collections, which also contains a large collection of stained glass, much in fashion around the turn of the century.

With Brian Blench as our guide, we were taken behind the scenes of the museum and also visited the conservation department, where we saw several fine examples of restored glass.

The Lord Provost of Glasgow invited us to lunch at the City Chambers, where we enjoyed genuine, Scots hospitality - with that same openness and kindness which we came to experience and value during the week.

The afternoon was devoted to an excursion to the Burrell Collection and Pollok House. The Burrell Collection has an exquisite collection of European glass, a considerable portion of which was on display.

We were also able to visit the modern and extremely secure depositories. Here we also saw the rest of the glass collection and took part in a discussion which became, from time to time, quite intense.

Pollok House, one of the jewels of the City of Glasgow, was the last point on the afternoon's programme.

After a demanding afternoon, everyone enjoyed the reception at the Fine Art Society, where we also saw the current exhibition.

**Thursday, 19th May - Day trip.**

In the course of the morning we visited the Glass Factory of Stuart Strathearn in Crieff, Perthshire. Stuart Glass produces mainly traditional glassware.

The next stop was at Perthshire Paperweights Ltd., Crieff. Here there is a large and varied production of paperweights in traditional patterns, especially millefiori. Skilful glassworkers were producing perfect products.

After lunch we visited Caithness Glass, Perth. The basic product here is also the paperweight in traditional millefiori and lampblown versions as well as the more modern patterns. In recent years, they have also begun a limited production of other glassware.

In Caithness, we also saw the 9th Annual Exhibition of the Scottish Glass Society. This was a large and very Varied exhibition, giving a good indication of the tendencies in Scottish glass.

**Friday, 20th May - Working Session.**

The day was devoted to a series of contributions of various lengths.



Suzanne Netzer, Veste Coburg, GDR gave an interesting talk on Prints from Glass Plates. The talk was illustrated by slides. The main section of the talk is reprinted at the end of this report.

Fred Woodward of the Department of Natural History, Glasgow Museum spoke on Blashka Glass in Glasgow. There had been a problem for natural historians, who wanted to exhibit molluscs. It was not until the middle of the 19th century, when Blashka began to experiment with producing them in glass, that a satisfactory solution was found. During the 1880s, a number of museums bought Blashka's excellent mollusc models. A number of these have been preserved in spite of their fragility.

Olga Drahotova, Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, Czechoslovakia spoke on English and Bohemian Glass Parallels, Difference and Contacts in the Past. This was an extremely informative talk, that gave rise to considerable discussion.

Kaisa Koivisto of Finland's Glass Museum, Riihimäki, Finland spoke on Gunnel Nyman 1909-1948. In many ways, Nyman was one of the pioneers in the field of modern Finnish glass.

Jan Kock of Aalborg Historical Museum, Denmark spoke about the work involved in the reprinting of old catalogue material and about Bent Eshøj's compendium on glass restoration.

Wendy Evans of the Museum of London, Great Britain gave a short presentation of the fashion between 1660 and the 1680s of having hollow, water-filled stems. This may have been a Venetian speciality.

#### Saturday, 21st May - Working Session.

There was another discussion of the 1989 General Conference in the Hague. There was agreement on a partial participation in the Decorative Arts Committee's meeting.

As Peter Ritsema will be occupied in arranging the whole conference, he has asked to be released from the task of the detailed planning of our committee's meeting. It was left to the Chairman and Secretary to establish the necessary contacts in Holland.

Leyden and Leerdam were mentioned as some of the places that should definitely be visited.

At the Hague conference in 1989, a new executive will have to be elected for our committee, as posts cannot be occupied for more than two periods. Gisela Haase was proposed as the new Chairman, however, she regretted that it was not possible for her to run for the Chairmanship at the moment. Brian Blench proposed an official approach to ICOM in GDR.

Brigit Bauer was suggested as Secretary and she accepted the candidacy.

Jan Kock was suggested as Vice-President and he accepted the candidacy.

The committee's 1989 meeting will take place in The Hague, Holland.

It is planned to hold meetings in Denmark and Czechoslovakia in 1990 and 1991, with the 1990 meeting presumably being held in Denmark.

There was a suggestion to contact ICOM's conservator Group for an explanation of the problem with Crissling Glass.

Mogens Schlüter, Denmark offered some Hoffmann glass to interested museums, who can apply direct to Mogens Schlüter.

The last part of the morning was spent in further studies in the museum's depositories.

The afternoon was devoted to individual visits to museums and collections in the city.

#### Sunday, 22nd May - Day trip.

The day was devoted to visiting Culzean Castle, Ayrshire on the Scottish west coast.

After an enjoyable reception, there was time to examine this beautiful castle, which gave a good impression of Scottish taste in the previous century. A thorough restoration has been carried out by the National Trust of Scotland.

#### Monday, 23rd May - Day trip.

The first item was a visit to David Kaplan and Annica Sandström's studio in Lindean Mill. Both of them follow the ideals of the Hot Glass movement. Experiments with a new technique were carried out in order to get several coloured glass plates to melt into figures by the use of heat.

After lunch we visited Selkirk Glass Ltd. Here again it was a matter of producing paperweights. In recent years, Scotland has become a center for these pieces of decorative glass.

#### Tuesday, 24th May - Day trip.

The morning was spent at Aurora Glass in Alloa. Emma Shipton, one of Scotland's best stained glass artists worked here on the design and construction of new windows and the restoration of old stained glass.

In Edinburgh, the Trustees of the National Museum entertained us to a buffet. A cordial and warm occasion.

The afternoon was devoted to a guided tour of the Glass Collection of the Royal Museum of Scotland and a visit to the depository. Later in the afternoon, we visited Coleridge Ltd., in Edinburgh where there was an exhibition of Studio Glass.



The Committee's meeting in Scotland came to an end in the evening with an informal yet magnificent dinner in the great kitchen at Pollok House. The desserts were especially impressive.

All participants expressed warm thanks to Brian Blench and his staff for the excellent organization and execution of the meeting. Thanks were also expressed to the following who made the meeting possible: - the City of Glasgow, the District Council, Coleridge Ltd., Fine Art Society Ltd., ICOM UK, the National Trust of Scotland, the Scottish Glass Society, Stuart Crystal and the Trustees of the National Museum of Scotland.

Each participant in the meeting received an ICOM Glasgow 1988 medallion designed by Frits Akerboom.

Jan Kock  
Secretary



Glass Engraving.

Suzanne Netzer: Prints from Glass Plates.

First of all I'd like to announce a forthcoming event:

the site you see in this slide will-hopefully-have become a new museum for contemporary glass in Coburg by about this time next year.

Here you see a small palace just outside of Coburg, where Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, much beloved husband of Queen Victoria, was born. This palace is situated in an English landscape garden - or rather: what is left of it - and in this garden there is a greenhouse, which will in future house glass instead of orange trees. I hope to be able to show you more of our new museum at next year's meeting. There shall be a catalogue of our collection of contemporary glass, which by now numbers about 400 pieces.

At present we are showing at the Veste Coburg - this is the Veste - an exhibition of 60 prints, prints not taken from stone or copper but from glassplates - vitreographies - as their name now has been established. Once again it was Harvey Littleton in the United States to be innovator. He took up the idea to try and print from glassplates.

There have been earlier experiments - the first one I know of actually here in Glasgow. In 1797 a Professor Wilson of Glasgow suggested to print from glassplates, not for mere pleasure though, for the arts, but for practical purposes, to print money. Apparently the inflation rate was high in those days - and the fear of forgery, because one big advantage of printing from glassplates is, that you can print innumerable proofs and they all look perfectly the same.

In the 19th century there have been the "clichés verres", a photographic process, where glassplates were used to carry the drawing to be exposed. We know "Clichés verres" for instance from artists like Corot, Théodore Rousseau, Daubigny and Delacroix - to name but a few. On the other side there were the little known Hyalographies, a graphic technique where drawings were etched into the glassplate. As a graphic medium these Hyalographies are the immediate predecessors of Littleton's vitreographies, which are mainly sandblasted instead of etched. These earlier attempts towards printing from glassplates had all been abandoned again, probably because of technical difficulties.

We know Harvey Littleton as glass artist, but he has been interested in the graphic arts as well for already quite a while. In 1975 he received a research grant to develop printing from glassplates. One of his friends describes Littleton's first forays into printing from glass: (now I am quoting)

"One day last summer Harvey Littleton appeared at our print shop door. He had five sheets of glass with him, on which he had done some sandblasting work, and he wondered if I could try to take some proofs from them on our intaglio press. A glass plate seemed a precarious item, but in this business one learns not to shy away from the novel idea. The first plate I tried inked up nicer than metal.



I adjusted the press to take its thickness and sent it through. There was a definitive CRUNCH... and when the felts thrown back we gazed upon a 12 x 15 inch area of powdered glass. Fortunately that was not the end of the story. We are all resourceful people and I made some further adjustments to the press and the rest of Harvey's glass plates printed like dreamboats."

This is a print by the American glass artist Dale Chihuly and here you see a work of his in glass from 1986.

Another print by Chihuly: you can see that he takes up the motif of Shells from his threedimensional glassworks also in the two-dimensional graphic medium. Some parts in these prints appear like traditional aquatints. But the procedure to create this effect takes far less time: instead of the lengthy etching process, sandblasting a glassplate only takes about 30 seconds and you need not use any acid. We saw a sandblaster yesterday in Crieff. On the other hand you cannot sandblast copper because it is too soft and lithographic stones are too difficult to handle.

During the last couple of years Littleton has invited all glass-artists who visited him in his studio to try and work in the new medium. So here you have a print by Stanislav Libensky from Czechoslovakia, and one by Tom Buechner, the former director of the Corning Museum.

It is interesting to see their completely different approach to the medium, Buechner very painterly, working with plains, and Libensky completely from the outline. The painterly effect of Buechner's print is similar to traditional monotypes, as you probably know, are unique proofs, from glassplates, you can't print more than just one copy.

With his usual enthusiasm Erwin Eisch from West Germany took up the idea. For Eisch, as he himself points out every so often, it doesn't really matter what material he is using. He tells his whimsical stories in whatever material you offer to him. This print is entitled "Teatime". It does not only show an overdimensioned essential to the ceremony but in between figures in a very fragile balance - "teatime" doesn't seem to be a very relaxing tome to the artist.

This print is entitled "Twilight" and shows one of Eischs characteristic figures, with its extremities developing a life of their own.

Ann Wärrff, now Ann Wolff, from Sweden, has been working with printing techniques on her glassbowls and objects already for many years, without being aware of the fact, that her technique, working with etching and wax resists, was basically a graphic technique. She had been working on glass only in a reverse process, taking off layers of coloured glass from cast objects, whereas the printing process means building up these colours, setting up different layers of colour on top of eachother.

This is a print of her's called "Kind witch". Ann's symbolic images spin around female, the relations of male and female, mother and child, images like the witch or the goddess, visualized in static patterns and choreographic motion. Sometimes, like here in a print called "Little goddesses" from 1984, these images are hypnotic, usually they are indefinite. After having worked in Littleton's studio Ann Wolff has developed a strong interest in graphic art, though she has not continued to work from glassplates but now works traditionally from copperplates.

Finally two prints by Littleton himself. This one is more or less a fancy, carries the title "birdshot", which is, what he did with the glassplate. He printed mainly the holes and cracks. This one is printed from different overlapping colourplates. In view of this graphic I'd like to make a few remarks on the technique and some special effects of such a print from glassplates.

There are two aspects Littleton always points out, both concern the colour: colours brought onto glassplates don't react chemically with the medium like with traditional metal plates. They therefore stay bright, intense and clear. When you print different colours onto eachother the result still is a colour. They do not become a greyish-brown, muddy tone, because by roughening the surface of the glassplate - either by etching or sandblasting - colours print in tiny dots, added colours develop a pointillistic effect instead of a dense plain. - There are two aspects of aesthetic evidence, I think you can see very well at this example.

Printing from glassplates also has advantages in the working process. One is, that glas is transparant, so artists can copy their original design from under the plate, they do not have to produce a working sketch in reverse. Afterwards, when cutting or etching on the reverse side of the glassplate, they can constantly check and prove the appearance of their later print by simply turning the glassplate around. They can also place several glassplates one above the other to try special effects. Since glass is transparant you can actually see the result beforehand. Finally, concerning the printing process itself: metal fatigues after a lot of printing, the proofs become less and less brilliant. Glass doesn't change, so the print always appears the same. Now this I don't know whether the art market appreciates, since, in traditional graphic media, early proofs can always be sold at higher price than the rest of the edition. With glassplates you can publish and infinite edition, so you can only destroy the plate to make proofs rare and thus expensive. This is a print called "Blue Plate Special" by the American Connor Everts.

This print, again by an American, Walter Bannard, is called "Carolina Sunrise". This print again is very painterly, and effect which is made possible by the fact, that the printers in Littleton's studio found that printer's ink resists in sandblasting. You can apply this fluid ink to the glassplate with a brush quite spontaneously.



12 AVR. 1990

There are disadvantages to this printing process: glassplates are heavy, so you can't really handle big sizes, and they are more delicate than metal. Some artists gave up soon. A major problem is that you can't correct your work as easily as in metal. Once you have drawn a line in a plate of glass it can hardly be removed again.

The artists who have worked in Littleton's studio have reacted quite differently to their experience with this new medium. Some, being used to work all by themselves, had to adjust themselves to work together with the experienced printer. For some the use of different tools, like the flexible shaft instead of a brush or a pencil, was a problem. For others this very fact was a challenge and made them redefine their working methods.

This is a catalogue on print by Hollis Sigler, with the title "Forever unobtainable" - I wonder whether that was her comment to the potential of the new medium. Anyway, a short video recording was produced with her, and I'd like to show you this tape now.

There is a catalogue on an exhibition of "Prints from Glassplates" in the United States. If you are interested in this catalogue I can give you the adress of Harvey Littleton: route 1, box 843, Spruce Pine, N.C. 28777, because we have sold out our copies at the museum.