

For Immediate Release

Ippodo gallery Tokyo - New York

**Glass Works by Laura de Santillana
'Tokyo - ga'**

May 24 (Sat.)– June 21 (Sat.) 2014

Ippodo gallery Tokyo



Tokyo - ga, 2014

The Ippodo gallery, which is based in Tokyo and New York, is delighted to announce its forthcoming exhibition of glass works by Laura de Santillana; entitled '*Tokyo-ga*' this will be the first solo exhibition by a non-Japanese artist to be held there. Ms. de Santillana is one of the most creative and innovative women glass artists on the scene today, producing beautiful, original works at her studio on Murano Island in Venice. The works to be presented in the '*Tokyo-ga*' exhibition were inspired by a movie of the same name that was staged in Japan; featuring her 'tablet' series, it will consist of more than twenty works, including her latest. It will be most interesting to see what kind of luminosity these works will produce in Japan.

Born in Venice, her grandfather was the great Venini and her father an architect, which meant she was brought up in an environment full of Western traditions and art. She studied visual art in New York where she worked in a design studio, concentrating largely on book design. Upon her return to Venice she began to work in the family company, producing Venini glass. However, she also goes beyond the traditions of Murano glass to create her own works, combining pared down forms with extremely simple combinations of color.

She says, "I have seen nearly all the movies by Yasujiro Ozu," and "When I first walked the streets of Kyoto, I felt I had returned to my spiritual home," and it is obvious from her works, particularly those in tablet form, that they are influenced by the rectilinear shapes found in the *tatami* mats, paper doors and folding screens, etc., that comprise traditional Japanese architecture. These works transmit a beautiful, soft light, like that which seeps through the handmade paper of translucent Japanese window screens; light and shade changing continually through the course of the day. This is not the beauty of Western decorative objects; the atmosphere they create within the surrounding space is evocative of the spirit of meditation.

This is why her work can be likened to music. The play of color is not so much a material existence; rather it resembles a combination of low and high notes, of major and minor keys extemporaneously woven together to resonate in the heart of the viewer. It is not only delicious to the eye, but also fills the space with an indescribable harmony, its long wavelengths seeming to spread forever.

The jet-black 'Diptych', the transparent 'Untitled' and the bronze work all possess a different aura. They are totally sculptural, heavy and divine. Their religiosity cannot be said to resemble an altarpiece or to express the emptiness embodied in the world of Zen Buddhism, rather they represent a new form of philosophy.

In the same way that Wim Wenders' movie, '*Tokyo-ga*' (1986) introduced the streets of Tokyo, her works are sublimated into objects that contrast everything. Chaos and order, heavy and light, darkness and illumination, the reality of plastic food samples, bustle and desolation; her creativity springs from this kind of contradiction.

It is for this reason that Laura's tablet works can be said to conjure up an image of the Japanese concept of *kekai* or spiritual barrier. This is something that separates reality from fantasy, a borderline over which people can pass, a doorway that opens between emptiness and the far side of existence. What kind of encounters will these beautiful doorways present us with in her beloved Japan.

Ms. de Santillana will herself be making a visit to Japan to coincide with the opening of this exhibition. In addition to the current exhibition, a subsequent exhibition, featuring Laura de Santilla's tea-ceremony utensils will be held at Ippodo Tokyo in the fall.

" It has been my pleasure to represent Laura de Santillana for the past 16 years. She is one of the most creative and innovative artists working in glass today. Never content to repeat the same series, she is constantly pushing herself through experimentation with form, color and content.

*As the granddaughter of the widely respected founder of the Venini Glassworks, Paolo Venini, de Santillana grew up surrounded by glass art in a city as distinguished as Venice. Her works are richly saturated and organic in nature. With a modernist stance on a traditional vessel, de Santillana creates sculptural and glowing vessels of pure color. The artist's *Flag* and *Tokyo-ga* sculptures employ the sophisticated Italian *incalmo* technique where glass vessels are blown and then flattened, creating glass stele. Although these tablets recall color field paintings, the glass surfaces have a luminous quality nearly impossible to achieve with paint and canvas.*

It is very fitting that Ms. De Santillana's Tokyo-ga series is now exhibited in the city that inspired her work. "

Barry Friedman
New York, March 2014



From the left top

Untitled h27.5 w29.5 d4.2cm

Water bag h32.5 w26 d5cm

Untitled h31.5 w46 d6.8cm

Tokyo-ga h28.5 w23.5 d5cm

Laura de Santillana

1955 Born in Venice

1975-77 She studies at School of Visual Arts, New York and works with Massimo Vignelli.

1975 She designs lamps and objects for the Venini Enterprises.

1979 First big travelling show at *New Glass* show in USA.

1989 First visit to India, which will become an annual pilgrimage.

1995 Starts collaboration with Simone Cenedese, which continues to this day.

1997-1998 Commissioned by firm of Japanese tea specialists to design a kaiseki cuisine range in glass,

lacquered wood and silver. Extended sojourns in Kyoto. Works with Japanese lacquer master Suzuki Mutsumi designing tea ceremony ware.
1998 Begins to work with Barry Friedman in New York.
1999 Paris exhibition at Galerie L'Arc en Seine, where for the first time she exhibits what will become her signature flat forms.
2001-2002 Begins working in bronze and in wax at the Fonderia Brustolin, Verona
2009 First residency at Museum of Glass (MoG), Tacoma, producing large – scale works exhibited at 53rd Venice Biennale.
2011 Exhibition at Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris
2013-2014 Begins new project in Czech Republic with Charlie Parriott, experimenting with new fusing techniques.

Colletions

Museo Vetrario di Murano, Venice, Italy
The Corning Museum of Glass, New York, USA
The Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, USA
Saint Louis Museum of Fine Arts, St Louis, MO, USA
Cooper-Hewitt national design Museum, NY, USA
Seattle Art Museum, Washington, USA
Denver Art Museum, Colorado, USA
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA
The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, CA, USA
Musée de Design et d' Arts Appliqués Contemporains, Lausanne, Switzerland
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA
Museum of Modern Art, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France
Mingei International Museum, San Diego, CA, USA
Kunstmuseum im Ehrenhof, Dusseldorf, Germany
Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Coburg, Germany
Ernsting Stiftung, Alter Hof Herding Museum, Coesfeld-Lette, Germany
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany
Neue Sammlung, Munich, Germany
IMA, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN, USA
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA
Smithsonian Institute, Renwick gallery, Washington, USA

Exhibition Venue

Ippodo gallery Tokyo

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Open from 11am-7pm / closed on Mondays

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* Office & private viewing Space. Please make a prior appointment for a visit. 7 days a week only by appointment.

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