

ONE TO WATCH

## Facial Expression

Designer *Lucia Massari* tackles the history of Murano glass head-on

**Y**ou practically live and breathe glass in Venice,” designer Lucia Massari says of her hometown. “It’s in the streets, in shop windows, in museums, in your friend’s house—it’s everywhere.”

She is referring to the age-old traditions of Murano, the fabled island where her mother grew up, her grandfather worked hand in hand with craft masters, and her grandmother made jewelry. Glass is also in her DNA.

The weight of that family history initially nudged Massari away from the medium. After a stint as a graphic designer, she enrolled at London’s Royal College of Art to focus on developing products. But when a residency brought her back to Venice, Murano glass awaited. “I realized I wanted to work with artisans,” she says. “In every piece, there’s a part of you and a part of the person who made it.” She just had to find her own language.

It happened at Barbini, the historic local hot shop. Creatively stuck, Massari gathered vitreous castoffs—the frilly, flowery bits that typically encrust chandeliers. Suddenly she saw faces in those decorative flourishes, whose curlicue forms would become lips and eyes in her *Teste Composte* (loosely translated, Composite Heads) series. “It’s an excuse to desacralize this Murano workmanship a bit, to play around with this intrinsic seriousness of the glass object,” she explains of the pieces, whose abundant ornamentation render their underlying mirror panels somewhat useless.

Those wonders soon gave way to light fixtures (she calls them *Toppings*) made from crinkled glass, with scalloped edges that evoke frosted pastry—a comparison Massari happily embraces. “The decoration of a cake is done for the same purpose,” she muses of the technique, which she is presenting as reflectors and floor lamps at the experimental *Alcova* fair during Milan Design Week (April 18 to 23), simultaneous with a local display of her blown-glass vessels at the Dolce & Gabbana flagship. Meanwhile, from May 6 to 28, anthropomorphic sconces star in “Ashes & Sand,” an exhibition dedicated to glass at Schloss Hollenegg, the Austrian design incubator. Massari, whose sketchbook is filled with faces to come, is just going with the flow. “I didn’t choose glass, it chose me.” [luciamassari.com](http://luciamassari.com) —HANNAH MARTIN



1. LUCIA MASSARI WITH EXAMPLES FROM HER *TESTE COMPORTE* AND *TOPPING* SERIES AT THE FORNACE MIAN WORKSHOP IN MURANO.  
2. *THE CLOWN MIRROR*.



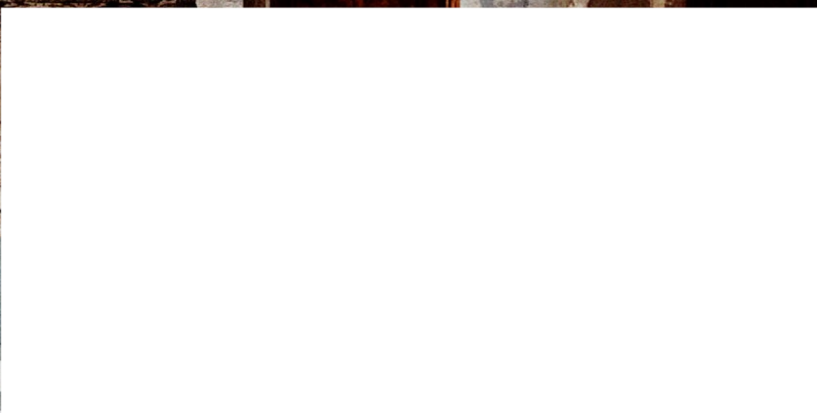


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