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NEWS FROM THE GETTY

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Unknown maker. *Oinoche*, Greek, 6th-4th century B.C. Glass. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California.

MOLTEN COLOR: GLASSMAKING IN ANTIQUITY RETURNS TO THE GETTY VILLA

The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa

LOS ANGELES—*Molten Color: Glassmaking in Antiquity*, which opened this week at the Getty Villa, features more than 350 pieces of beautiful and rare ancient glass, acquired from the collection of Erwin Oppenländer. The 2003 acquisition of this collection placed the Getty Museum among the nation's leading institutions for the display and study of ancient glass.

The exhibition features approximately 180 pieces of glass and explores all facets of glassmaking in antiquity, presenting some of the earliest glass objects made, including perfume flasks, bowls, and beads. It highlights the remarkable quality and chronological and technical breadth of this group of works, which spans the entire period of ancient glass production.

Erwin Oppenländer (German, 1901–1988) assembled his collection in the mid-20th century. His determination to form a comprehensive collection is evident in the quality of the objects he acquired, which cover all periods of glass production, from its origins in Mesopotamia in about 2500 B.C. to Byzantine and Islamic glass of the 11th-century A.D. Also notable is the variety of ancient glassmaking techniques represented, such as casting, core forming, mosaic, inflating, mold blowing, incising, and cutting; techniques that are still used by glass artists today. The exhibition presents the objects arranged by their method of manufacture, and is accompanied by text and videos illustrating ancient glassmaking techniques.

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In antiquity, glass served a variety of functions. It was used for windows and for architectural decoration in the form of mosaics and inlays. In the first century A.D., glass began to replace bronze and terracotta as the preferred material for drinking, dining, and food storage vessels. Small glass jars were produced for perfumed oil and cosmetics. Objects such as jewelry, lamps, inkwells, mirrors, game pieces, and statuettes were also made of glass.

This popular show was one of the three inaugural exhibitions that marked the reopening of the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa in Malibu. It had closed in 1997 for major renovations and reopened with a new mission as an educational center and museum dedicated to the study of the arts and cultures of ancient Greece, Rome, and Etruria in 2006.

"When the Oppenländer collection was acquired in 2003, we were too far into the planning stages for the museum's galleries to include it in the displays of the permanent collection. In its initial installation, Molten Color showcased this remarkable collection of glass and was extremely popular with our visitors. I am very pleased that we are able to return the glass to display again since it richly deserves to be on view," says Karol Wight, senior curator of antiquities for the J. Paul Getty Museum.

Glassmaking Techniques in Antiquity

Many of the earliest glass vessels, dating to about 2500 B.C., were made in Mesopotamia by forming a core of ceramic-like material around a metal rod and then encasing it in molten glass. Flasks for scented oils were usually made this way. Another early technique involved pouring hot glass into a mold. These core-forming and casting processes were used for more than 1,500 years, and were the only techniques used until the appearance of mosaic glass in the 2nd-century B.C.

Like stone mosaic, mosaic glass is made up of a number of small pieces fused together. Ribbon glass was made by fusing canes or rods of glass placed side by side, while marbled glass was created from multiple colors of glass that were heated and melted together to form patterns similar to multi-colored stones. Mosaic glass vessels are among the most colorful types of ancient containers. In the mid-first century B.C., glassmakers working in and around Jerusalem discovered that molten glass could be inflated into a bubble at the end of a hollow tube. This blowing technique revolutionized the glass industry, allowing vessels to be made quickly and more cheaply, and glassware began to replace clay vessels for household use. Later, glass vessels were also manufactured by inflating glass into molds made of stone, clay, bronze, and plaster. The molds were designed with figural and floral decoration, and

sometimes even phrases in Greek or Latin, and could be used to make glass pieces of the same pattern over and over again.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that features the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

Visiting the Getty Villa

The Getty Villa is open Wednesday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed Tuesday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Villa is always free. A ticket is required for admission. Tickets can be ordered in advance, or on the day of your visit, at www.getty.edu/visit or at (310) 440-7300. Parking is \$15 per car, but free after 5pm for evening events. Groups of 15 or more must make reservations by phone. For more information, call 310-440-7300 (English or Spanish); 310-440-7305 (TTY line for the deaf or hearing impaired). The Getty Villa is at 17985 Pacific Coast Highway, Pacific Palisades, California.

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