

Baldwin & Guggisberg: Amphore Métaphore 25 June to 27 November 2022

Press preview & reopening of museum:
25 June 2022



Baldwin & Guggisberg: wall installation, 2022

Musée du Verre de Conches is pleased to announce a new solo exhibition by Philip Baldwin (b. 1947, New York) and Monica Guggisberg (b. 1955, Bern, Switzerland) who are among the foremost international artists working in glass. The exhibition marks the official reopening of Conches' newly expanded glass museum following a 5 million-euro redevelopment project.

The nine installations will explore the artists' ongoing fascination with the amphora and its history. They reveal not just Monica and Philip's sense of awe at the vessel's beauty – together with its perfect marriage of form and function – but also a provenance far more ancient than they had previously imagined. Their journey takes us back an astonishing 20,000 years, during which

they ask us to reflect on the fact that this simple jar with its gentle curves and characteristic, pointed bottom appears to be a form so innate to humans that it recurs again and again across millennia and different cultures, from China to India and Siberia to the Levant.

Monica and Philip say: 'Until we started our research for this show the only amphorae we knew were the iconic ones we find in classical civilizations: Crete, Phoenicia, Greece, Rome. In fact the earliest ones known to date were discovered in Xianrendong cave in China and take us back deep into the last ice age, to c18,900-17,000 BCE. Made by people who were hunter-gatherers, they dispel myths that early peoples did not make pots, and that settled agriculture was the beginning of civilization.



Baldwin & Guggisberg: amphora installation (detail), 2022



Historical inspiration: Harappan civilization amphora, c2500 BCE

We tend to look at the past as a series of abrupt and isolated innovations, but it's important to acknowledge that breakthroughs in early societies were based on a collective body of knowledge accumulated and shared over hundreds and thousands of years.

'We are today a culture of increasingly not knowing nor caring historically speaking, of thinking only of the future. As artists we are highly engaged with history, with trying to make sense of where we come from as individuals and as part of a wider cultural community. Unless we acknowledge what's gone before how can we go forward? No past? No future. Remembering gives us the freedom to move forward.'

Accompanying the exhibition will be a new Conches museum publication in English and French (to be published in September)

For further information and images
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Notes to editors

- 2022 is the UN-designated Year of Glass
- The exhibition marks the first contemporary show at the newly reopened museum in Conches, which reopens to the public in June 2022 following a 5 million-euro redevelopment project
- 2022 marks forty years since the artists opened their first studio together in Nonfoux, Switzerland
- Baldwin & Guggisberg are renowned for their mastery of battuto, an Italian technique involving the cutting of the surface layers of the glass to reveal coloured layers beneath

About Baldwin & Guggisberg

Philip Baldwin (b. 1947, New York) and Monica Guggisberg (b. 1955, Bern, Switzerland) have been working as a team since 1980 and established their first studio two years later in Switzerland, before moving to Paris in 2001. Since 2015 they have been based in rural Wales, enjoying a view over the hills – a third act in a long, nomadic journey. Their work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, including at Ebeltoft Glass Museum (*Walking in the Void*, 2020), Canterbury Cathedral, UK (*Under an Equal Sky*, 2018), Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt, Germany (2012), the Musée Ariana in Geneva, Switzerland (*Au-delà du verre*, 2011) and Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv (2001). Their work is installed in public and private spaces throughout Europe and the US, and is represented in collections around the world.

About Musée du Verre de Conches

The Musée du Verre de Conches was originally founded by the town of Conches in 1996 to conserve a rare set of pâte-de-verre stained glass windows by François Décorchemont (1880-1971). The museum has since expanded to include different types of glass art ranging from the late 19th century to the beginning of the 21st. In June this year, following a three-year building project, the museum will move to Conches's former hospital building, which has been completely renovated to create a permanent home for the museum's collection of glass art, stained glass and contemporary sculpture as well as provide space for exhibitions by important contemporary master glass artists.



Baldwin & Guggisberg: wall installation (detail), 2022