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Mosaic Glass Dish

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Mosaic Glass Dish

Hellenistic period (late 2nd/early 1st century B.C.)
Eastern Mediterranean; Greco-Roman

Glass; h. 3.2 cm (1 1/4 in.), diam. 13.6 cm (5 3/8 in.)

KATHERINE K. ADLER ENDOWMENT, 2004.722



This shallow, curving dish was formed in the composite cast mosaic glass technique, a centuries-old method of manufacturing highly prized luxury goods that continues to be used today, for example at the famous Murano glass manufactory near Venice.¹

To fabricate the vessel, the glassmaker started with preformed, translucent blue and purple glass canes, both of which feature an opaque white spiral radiating outward from a tiny central rod of a contrasting color. He then sliced the canes crosswise to create circular disks, and perhaps also longitudinally, forming rectangular segments with pairs of parallel white lines.

Afterward, he pieced together these small patterned disks and rectangles, along with squarish bits of opaque white and yellow glass, to form the body of the dish. A separate cane of translucent purple glass was then added to the rim, and the parts were fused together. Its particular combination of colors and patterns indicates that this object was made in the late second to early first century B.C., probably in an aesthetically progressive workshop located in a prosperous region bordering the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.²

The vessel has been reassembled from many fragments, and there are some areas of fill, especially along the rim, and a particularly skillful restoration on the interior.³ When set against an opaque backdrop, its decoration is strikingly geometric in character, but when it is lifted to the light, the translucent, multihued design is revealed. It is also apparent that, during the fusing process, many of the translucent glass segments flowed slightly so that their white layers angled, creating the illusion of great depth.

The town homes and country villas of the elite featured brightly frescoed walls, colorful mosaic floors, and lush, private gardens adorned with fine decorative sculpture and minor arts. Favorite items included exquisite vessels wrought in glass, gold, and silver, made for the sumptuous alfresco banquets that were a favorite evening pastime. This delicate, intricate dish was likely used—and much admired—at one of these festive events.

KAREN MANCHESTER



Food Vessel (Fangding), pp. 28–29.

1. See Chen Mengjia, *In Shih seidōki bunrui zuroku* [A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections] (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1977), cat. A70. Doris Duke acquired the *fangding* in 1942. Chen also coauthored the Art Institute's 1946 catalogue *Chinese Bronzes from the Buckingham Collection*.

Shi Wang Ding, pp. 30–31.

1. This *ding* has appeared in important catalogues including Rentao Chen, *Jinkui lungu chuji* [Essays on Chinese Antiquities] (Hong Kong: Yazhou shi yin ju, 1952), cat. 6; and Jessica Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Harvard University Press, 1990), vol. 2, p. 297, fig. 21.6.

Group Pilgrimage to the Jizō Nun, pp. 32–33.

1. The painting was published in its current formation in Onshi Kyoto Hakubutsukan, *Ike no Taiga meigafu* [Master Works by Ike Taiga] (Kyoto: Benrido, 1933).
2. For more on Taiga's unusual techniques, see Joan Stanley-Baker, "Finger Painting in Tokugawa Japan," in Klaas Ruitenbeek, *Discarding the Brush: Gao Qipei (1660–1734) and the Art of Chinese Finger Painting*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum/Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju and Zoon, 1992).

Delphine, pp. 40–41.

1. Carol Reese in "Conversation between Carol Reese and Diana Thater," in *Secession: Diana Thater; Delphine*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Secession, 2000), p. 23.
2. Diana Thater in *ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Big Boy, pp. 42–43.

1. Yinka Shonibare in Kobena Mercer, "Art That is Ethnic in Inverted Commas," *Frieze* 25 (Nov. 1995), p. 41.

Near the Lagoon and Untitled, pp. 44–45.

1. Jasper Johns in Roberta Bernstein, *Jasper Johns' Paintings and Sculptures, 1954–1974: "The Changing Focus of the Eye"* (UMI Research Press, 1985), p. 34.

Mosaic Glass Dish, pp. 46–47.

1. For more on this technique, see Donald B. Harden et al., *Glass of the Caesars*, exh. cat. (Olivetti, 1987), p. 2. This object was previously published in Christie's, London, *The Collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Cameos and Intaglios formed by the Late Henry Oppenheimer, Esq. F.S.A.*, sale cat. (July 22–23, 1936), lot 114.
2. For a similar bowl from the same period, see Sidney M. Goldstein, *Pre-Roman and Early Roman Glass in the Corning Museum of Glass* (Corning Museum of Glass, 1979), cat. 466.
3. See Suzanne R. Schnepp, condition report, Aug. 9, 2004, files of the Ancient Art collection.

Saint Michael and the Devil, pp. 48–49.

1. For a reproduction of Van Eyck's *Madonna of Canon van der Paele*, see Till-Holger Boehert, ed., *The Age of Van Eyck: The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting, 1430–1530*, exh. cat. (Thames and Hudson, 2002), p. 78, fig. 92.
2. For this comparison and for Pedro Millán's *Saint Michael* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, see Dorothee Heim, *Der Erzengel Michael von Pedro Millán* (Munich: privately printed, 2002), pls. 12, 18.
3. For an illustration of this work, see Judith Berg Sobré, *Behind the Altar Table: The Development of the Painted Retable in Spain, 1350–1500* (University of Missouri Press, 1989), p. 66, fig. 28.

Crucifix, pp. 50–51.

1. For more on Algardi's life and career, see Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (J. Paul Getty Trust/Yale University Press, 1985), esp. vol. 2, pp. 327–39.
2. For more on these casts, see Jennifer Montagu, ed., *Alessandro Algardi: Paltra faccia del barocco*, exh. cat. (Rome: Edizioni de Luca, 1999), cats. 33, 93. The Art Institute's version came to light after Montagu's 1985 and 1999 publications were issued.

3. This is mentioned as "un Crocifisso di bronzo, d' Alessandro Algardi Bolognese," in Francesco Bartolomeo dal Pozzo, *Le vite de' pittori, degli scultori, et architetti veronesi* (Verona, 1718), p. 309.

4. This drawing, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., represents a variant on the bronze Christ and may be a preliminary study for it; see Catherine Johnston, "Cristo sulla croce," in Montagu (note 2), cat. 93.

Wine Jug, pp. 52–53.

1. Two identical wine jugs were sold in 1907; see Christie's, London, *Catalogue of Fine Old English Silver*, sale cat. (June 13–14, 1907), lot 45. In 1908 one was purchased by the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, where it remains to this day; the other was bought by the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Cologne. For more on silver by the Kändler, see Peter Cameron, "Henry Jernegan, the Kändler, and the Client Who Changed His Mind," *Silver Society Journal* 8 (Autumn 1996), pp. 487–501.
2. For more on this possible relationship, see Cameron (note 1).

Sideboard, pp. 54–55.

1. For these quotations, see, respectively, Juliet Kinchin and Paul Stirtton, *Is Mr. Ruskin Living Too Long? Selected Writings of E. W. Godwin on Victorian Architecture, Design, and Culture* (Oxford: White Cockade Publishing, 2005), p. 373; and Susan Weber Soros, *The Secular Furniture of E. W. Godwin: With Catalogue Raisonné* (Bard Graduate Center/Yale University Press, 1999), p. 15.
2. For illustrations of these, see Soros (note 1), cats. 304–304i.
3. Hermann Muthesius, *The English House*, ed. Dennis Sharp, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Crosby Lockwood Staples, 1979), p. 157.

The Nativity, pp. 56–57.

1. For an illustration of the *Mystical Nativity*, see Richard Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli* (London: Elek, 1978), vol. 1, pl. 9.

Portrait of a Gardener and Horn Player, pp. 58–59.

1. Although we do not know the sitter's name, Schindler confirmed his identity in writing; on the verso of the frame is a paper label inscribed *Ein Mohr / Waldhornbläser / Gärtner in Laxenburg bei Sr Maj. / dem Kaiser Franz I. / gemalt von Natur Albert Schindler* (A moor / horn player / gardener in Laxenburg to his Majesty / Emperor Francis I / painted from life Albert Schindler).

Water Lily Pond, pp. 60–61.

1. For more on the Art Institute's water lily canvases, see Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet* (Taschen, 1996), vol. 5, cats. 1628, 1683, 1833, and 1889.
2. For more on the Orangerie cycle, see Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet in the Twentieth Century*, exh. cat. (Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 252–79.

Interrelation of Volumes from the Ellipsoid, pp. 62–63.

1. For the series, which probably comprised seven works, the artist drew on conventional and ancient mathematical systems; for his sources, see Georges Vantongerloo, "Principe d'unité," *I 10 internationale review* 1, 3 (1927), pp. 94–96.
2. Georges Vantongerloo, as quoted by Joshua Kind, *The Geometric Impulse: Selected Works from the Lillian H. Florsheim Foundation for the Fine Arts* (De Kalb, Ill.: Swen Parson Gallery, Northern Illinois University, 1981), p. 29.
3. See Jan Ceuleers, *Georges Vantongerloo, 1886–1965*, exh. cat. (Antwerp: Snoeck-Ducaju and Zoon, 1996).

Venus de Milo with Drawers, pp. 64–65.

1. Salvador Dalí, "Objets surrealists," in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (Dec. 1931), p. 16.
2. Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier (Dial Press, 1961).
3. Sigmund Freud, *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens "Gradiva"* (Vienna: F. Deuticke, 1907).
4. For illustrations of *Atmospheric Chair* (1989.56) and *City of Drawers* (1963.3), see Robert Descharnes and Gilles Néret, *Salvador Dalí, 1904–1989: das malerische Werk* (Taschen, 1993), cats. 516, 625.
5. I am grateful to Robert Descharnes and Patrick Derom for helping me clarify the history of the plaster *Venus*. The ten bronzes, painted white to look like plas-