

Omer Arbel

OMER ARBEL PRESENTS MATERIAL EXPERIMENTS, THE FIRST LIVE GLASS-BLOWING DEMONSTRATION AT THE V&A

This London Design Festival 2022, Canadian multidisciplinary artist Omer Arbel will present a nine-day glass blowing demonstration and display at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London

LONDON, 3 August 2022 - As part of London Design Festival 2022 Canadian multidisciplinary artist Omer Arbel, founder of design and research studio Bocci, will be presenting *Material Experiments* at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. For the first time in the museum's history, the John Madejski Garden will transform into an immersive glass-blowing studio, with Arbel's iridescent, fragile sculpture *113* taking centre stage over the course of the nine-day demonstration. During the performance, common copper and glass antiquities procured from flea markets and vintage stores will be returned to their raw materials, and used to create a series of new *113* artefacts.



Live glass-blowing demonstration to be held at Victoria & Albert Museum, during London Design Festival, 17-25 September 2022 (Image credit: Fahim Kassam)

A delicately intricate sculpture, *113* is created as a result of an ongoing series of experiments exploring the relationship between copper alloys and glass. *113* embodies the unexpected beauty of manipulating the two materials to create significant discrepancy in their respective rates of expansion. Over the course of the nine-day demonstration, the sculptures will be carried from the museum's John Madejski Garden in several dignified, exalted processions, into the V&A's Santa Chiara Chapel.

In the creation of *113*, a glass form is blown conventionally, then molten copper is poured into the hot glass vessel. Due to the stark differences in the two materials composition, the glass form shatters off during the cooling process, leaving behind a metallic shadow of itself. The metal, when hot, does not come in contact with oxygen on the glass side of the form, leaving an iridescent finish; creating an eye-catching contrast with the coarse oxidised finish found on the inside surface. This research process has been meticulously documented in Arbel's monograph, [*Omer Arbel*](#) - a dynamic, highly visual, and in-depth study of the celebrated multi-disciplinary artist and designer. The monograph, published by Phaidon, captures Arbel's varied output, bringing together twenty of his signature projects across sculpture, lighting, industrial design, and architecture.



113 Group by Omer Arbel, to be exhibited at Victoria & Albert Museum, during London Design Festival, 17-25 September 2022

These works demonstrate Arbel's signature process, which is to let the intrinsic properties of a given material suggest its form, rather than impose an external idea of form upon the material. What remains of 113 are the shattered fragments of glass, and the delicate beauty of wafer-thin, fragile sculpture, like an archaeological artefact.



Live glass-blowing demonstration to be held at Victoria & Albert Museum, during London Design Festival, 17-25 September 2022 (Image credit: Fahim Kassam)

*"For many years, I have been researching and experimenting with fabrication processes, searching for novel methods that yield unique form. For 113, I explored coaxing molten glass and copper to interact in such a way that creates form neither material could achieve on its own. The performance of this work, staged by the glass blowers, requires great skill and happens at great speed, with the glass and copper at first fusing when very hot, and then, as they cool, rejecting each other. The result is a completely unique artifact capturing, mid-process, an act of unpredictable circumstance. I was inspired by the seemingly infinite collection of wondrous artifacts at the V&A... I wondered what it might mean to literally use cultural relics as raw materials to make a new work of art." - **Omer Arbel***



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NOTES TO EDITORS

Material Experiments
Omer Arbel at Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Rd, London SW7 2RL

Press preview

16 September 2022, TBC

General Admission

17 - 25 September 2022
Monday / 10:00 - 17:45
Tuesday / 10:00 - 17:45

Wednesday / 10:00 - 17:45

Thursday / 10:00 - 17:45

Friday / 10:00 - 22:00

Saturday / 10:00 - 17:45

Sunday / 10:00 - 17:45

About Omer Arbel

Based in Vancouver, Omer Arbel cultivates a fluid position between the fields of architecture, sculpture, invention and design. Focal themes of his work include investigation of intrinsic mechanical, physical, and chemical qualities of materials and exploration of light as a medium.

<https://omerarbel.com/>

About Omer Arbel | Phaidon Monograph

This monograph brings together twenty-two projects by practice founder Omer Arbel – lighting works for Bocci, sculpture, furniture and conceptually motivated houses – to reveal Arbel's radical design ethos, rooted in material experimentation and collaboration. *Omer Arbel* is organized by four thematic chapters: "Uncanny," "Entropy," "Transdisciplinary," and "Futurism." Throughout, beautiful product photography is interwoven with preparatory drawings and ephemera. A collection of guest essays from contributors such as American curator Glenn Adamson and senior design curator at the V&A Brendan Cormier illuminate the nuances and significance of Arbel's highly diverse practice.

<https://bocci.com/product/omer-arbel/>

About Victoria & Albert Museum

The Victoria & Albert Museum, London is the world's leading museum of art, design, and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination.

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>

London Design Festival, 2022

<https://www.londondesignfestival.com/>

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