

BIBIANA, International House of Art for Children  
RONA, Lednické Rovne

present an exhibition titled:

## **Fragile!**

(About Glass)

The fourth of a series of exhibitions about materials is dedicated to glass - both rare and extraordinary material due to its physical properties that are more than fascinating. GLASS is hard and fragile at the same time, absorbs and refracts light, but is also able to "reflect objects", it can zoom in the universe, enlarges the infinity, and stimulates our fantasy.

Open 20. 5. –30. 10. 2005

**„SKLO je číry kúsok neba,  
pred ktorým sa SKLOniť treba.“**

(Glass is a limpid piece of the skies

To which we should bow...).

**Theme and script editing by Ms. Eva Čárska**

**Rhymes by Mr. Tomáš Janovic**

**Art design by Mr. Tomáš Ciller**

Objects by **Ms. Eva Fišerová** and students of Bratislava's Academy of Fine Arts

Music by Mr. Norbert Bodnár

Video by: Mr. Peter Hudák

Photographs by: Mr. Miloš Krajčovič

Project implementation by Implementation Department lead by Valéria Marákyová in cooperation with DESTIN a.s.

### **GLASS AS A MATERIAL**

For almost every one of us, GLASS is an everyday companion. Thanks to glass, we can light our lamps that shine down our way, thanks to glass the wind keeps away from our homes, and we use glass for embellishing our homes.

We take glass as something more than commonplace. There are many influences upon the process of making glass. Despite the fact that everywhere it is melted according to the same method, it can eventually be of different properties on a case-by-case basis. The melting process in particular gives the glass-making industry the hallmark of extraordinariness and rareness, maybe even enigmatic mysteriousness. The glass industry is sometimes called (and talked about as if it really were) the Art of Fire.

**GLASS MAKING RANKS AMONG THE MOST ANCIENT AND MOST IMPORTANT TECHNOLOGICAL INVENTIONS OF MANKIND. THIS INVENTION IS REGARDED AND CHERISHED AS THE WORLD'S CULTURAL HERITAGE.**

***Our exhibition is intended to introduce and outline this exceptional and mysterious material in a manner that allows us to show all of its magic properties and the ways of making use of it. The method we have chosen for performing this show can be seen as a kind of "dramaturgical and philosophical" span, a sort of philosophical approach to presenting glass from its place of origin deep in the burning bowels of the earth up to the all-encompassing universe.***

**In nature, glass** is found in the form of minerals. These minerals are called volcanic obsidian (or volcanic obsidian glass) and crystal, or crystal glass. But there is also one almost incredible natural phenomenon - the formation of glass on sand beaches due to lightnings striking the sand. When an electrical discharge is powerful enough (such as a lightning produced by a thunderstorm), so-called fulgurites are formed, which are tubular glass "roots" found in the sand. In other words, a fulgurite is a vitrified sand tube produced by the striking of lightning on sand.

**The invention** of glass, more specifically the manufacture of glass, is vividly described in the writings of the Roman historian Pliny the Elder (*Gaius Plinius Secundus*) as follows: *Phoenician merchants, trading in Natron, a soda-based enabling material, built a campfire on the beach, using the soda as a windbreak. The next morning the merchants found the inside of the soda block had fused with the beach sand to give a primitive form of glass.* This story may (but may not) be true. One way or another, there can be some logic seen in it. According to many historians, glass initially emerged as a by-product of ceramics manufacture or of the melting and casting of metals.

**The oldest remaining glass object is a five-thousand-years old greenish small glass ball originating from Thebes.** Archeological finds tell us about gradual development of the industry. **Two archeological discoveries dated to around the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD are regarded as a breakthrough, namely the discovery of translucent cast glass that began to be used for glassing windows and the find of a glassblower's blowpipe enabling the production of glass in hollow shapes.** In the territory of what is now our country, glass first appeared in the Early Bronze Age.

**The first written mentions of glass production in Slovakia are dated back to 1350 (the glassworks of Sklené Teplice near Banská Štiavnica, then Schemnitz) and 1360 (the glassworks of Sklené). Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as many as 73 glassworks were established in various places of Slovakia.**

The authors of the current exhibition did their best to incorporate the history of this invention and the manufacture of glass into the exhibition in an artistically meaningful way. There is a volcano, lava, a lightning, pyramids, a glass melting furnace, tools for the hand manufacture of glass, a big glasshouse, optical glass, glass buttons...

**The exhibition's grand finale** is the chapter devoted to art glass and the special glass used for space-related purposes. This part of the exposition consists of artistic objects by the excellent Slovakian glass artist Ms. Eva Fišerová whose artworks revealing the peculiar inner world of glass with its mystical tension and mysteriousness represent various space bodies that we can see through a spacecraft's windows.

**Finally, we along with our visitors are placing a (made-of-glass) full stop after this exhibition.** And eventually, after everything we have seen, we are pronouncing the words that the poet Mr. Tomáš Janovic has written for this occasion - saying that *SKLO je kúsok neba, pred ktorým sa SKLOniť treba...* Which, translated into English, means that Glass is a limpid piece of the skies to which we should bow...

On behalf of all authors and implementers of the project (who truly bowed to glass),

Eva Čárska