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Wintery days call for colourful lights

Now glass designs lift the spirits



Victoria Woodcock FEBRUARY 7, 2024

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"I'm obsessed with colour," says jewellery designer Solange Azagury-Partridge. Since she launched her eponymous label in 1999, colourway choices have been her USP. In her west London office, walls range from sugary pink to zingy yellow; a gold-topped dining table sits on a multicoloured carpet; a fireplace glows with neon flames and pendant lights shimmer in garlands of bunches of red and green Swarovski crystals. Across the road, both her fine jewellery shop and its next-door little sister – home to the Hot Lips diffusion line – are fronted with eye-catching stained-glass panels.



Maarten de Ceulaer, Table Lamp 155, €18,000 (level 1475) © Filippo Pinzotti

66 **I like thinking about how the different colours and shapes talk to each other**

Paola Petrolibelli, designer

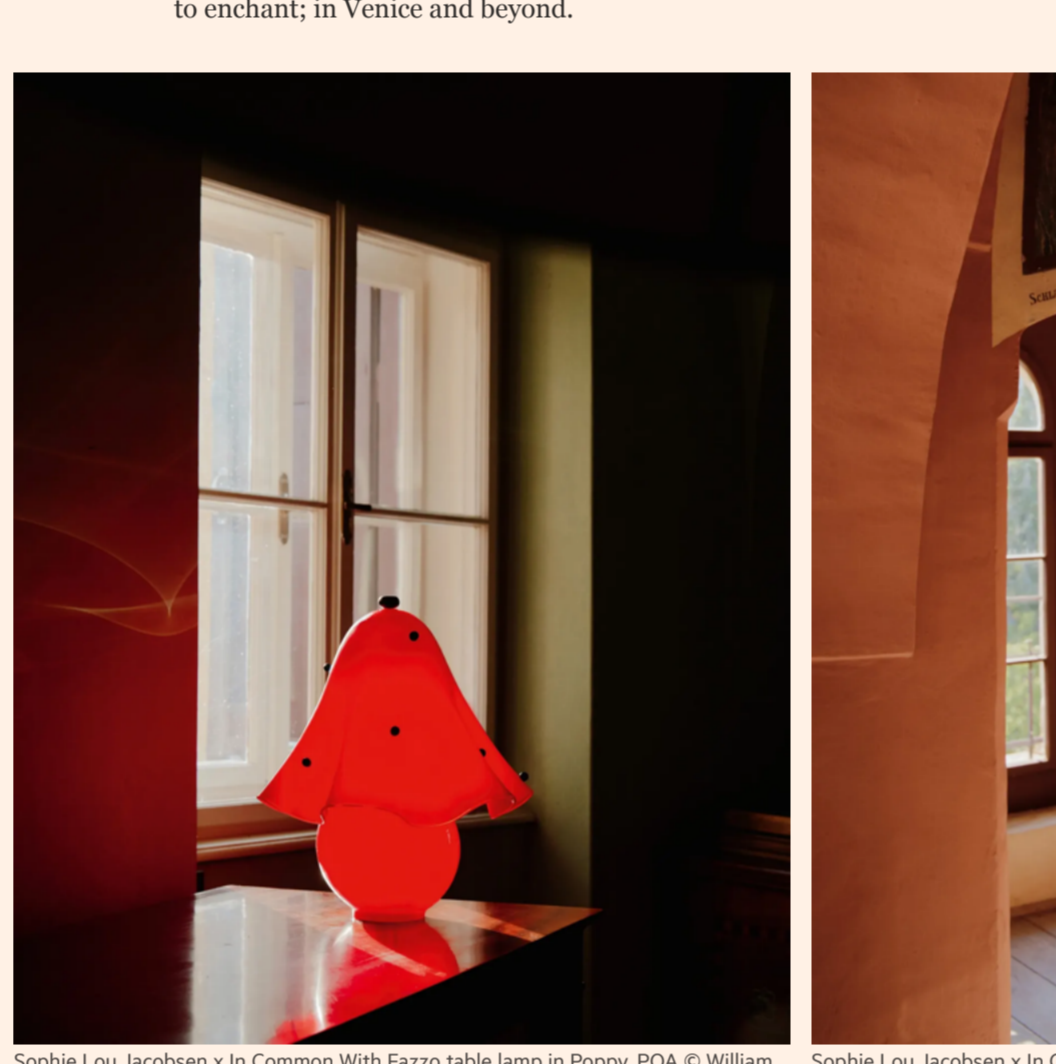
"I've always thought that glass is like jewellery – precious, with an edible quality to it," says Azagury-Partridge. She has just released a series of Murano-glass table lights with Green Wolf Lighting. The collection of five designs – each produced in a limited edition of 1,000, and priced from £60 ([fabrik.com](#)) – is a new take on the brand's candle-like centrepiece design, first released in 2002. To the portable, USB-charged cylinders of handblown glass, Azagury-Partridge has added miniature lamp-worked sculptures. They're motifs that are always present in my work," she says of the intricately wrought Rainbows, Sun, Cloud, Home and Eden designs – the last of these a symbolic diorama of the Garden of Eden, with a central tree accompanied by an apple and a snake.



Green Wolf Lighting by Solange Azagury-Partridge (clockwise from left): Murano-glass table lamps, from £50 © Martha Wolf

"I'm interested in how lighting can set a mood and ambience," says Green Wolf Lighting founder and creative director Rebecca Marks, a former film producer. The two women have known each other since the 1990s; together, they worked with four different Venetian workshops, because "the old guy doesn't make the rainbow; that's a totally different technique," says Marks.

Murano's glassmakers have long lent their skills and proprietary hues – secret formulations passed down from one generation to the next – to showstopping lighting. For designers today, the alchemy of light and coloured glass continues to enchant, in Venice and beyond.



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Sophie Lee Jacobson's Flora collection, in collaboration with design studio In Common With, was created with Brooklyn glassblower Adam Holtzinger using the centuries-old Italian fazzoletto technique; elegantly arching and undulating forms come in shades of blue, plum, pink, poppy and white. In Brussels, Maarten De Ceulaer's multicoloured Shaded Glass Lights are formed from swirling sheets of mouthblown glass. In Mexico City, Fabien Cappello has been combining geometric stained-glass-style construction with a vibrant palette, while Camilla Holberg works with Finnish glassblowers on her glowing strings and stacks of pebble-inspired shapes.



Inclusive, 2020, by Camilla Holberg © Katja Hagelström



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New York-based Dana Arbib worked with Murano specialists on her statement Rami Chandelier (\$17,250) – a sprawling sea-creature-like lamp, its lurid yellow tentacles holding up "bubbled" sea-green shades. Drawing inspiration from Gio Ponti, it is the focal point of a lighting collection first shown at New York gallery Tina Silver last September, which also includes the two-tone Suoko table lamp and the plant-like Florie Sconce – Arbib's favourite. "Personally, I'm more attracted to neutral earth tones, but I'm trying to push myself towards brighter, more saturated colours," she says. "And with a chandelier you do want to make a statement."



Lumen series by Diane Bennett du Roy, €10,000 each © Photograph by Paul Hertzogoff



2x3, 2021, by Paola Petrolibelli, €70,000 © Courtesy of the artist and Siegfried Contemporary

"Glass comes alive when you put light in it," says London-based Italian designer Paola Petrolibelli, a former molecular biologist who has worked with the same glassblowers in Murano since 1998. For the past 10 years, she has been creating striking lights from stackable moulded-glass elements, in a sweet-sharp spectrum of transparent and opaque shades. "I'm thinking about how the different colours and shapes talk to each other," she says, citing inspirations from vintage Venetian glassware to the designs of Ettore Sottsass and Carlo Scarpa. Last year, she featured in an exhibition with artist and designer Richard Woods, showing her modular forms alongside his graphic, hand-painted "tree stumps"; the collection swiftly sold out at a pop-up show at Siegfried Contemporary, Saanen. Most recently, her work has reached new heights, combining up to 12 individual pieces in totemic sculptures.

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Many glass pieces function as artwork by day and light source by night. De Ceulaer refers to his lamps as "radiating three-dimensional abstract paintings". Brooklyn-based Jamie Harris calls himself an artist who makes "poetically glass objects and sculptural lighting". And while French artist Diane Bennett du Roy is best known for her luminous abstract oil paintings, her work shines in lamp form at Design Miami in December. The Lumen columns, each 1.6m high, softly merge coloured lacquers to "reflect Diane's painting research in sculpture," says Galerie Scene Ouverte founder Laurence Bonnet. "I love how they create a magical, mysterious atmosphere. They invite escape and meditation."

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