

GLASS, TRANSCENDING MATTER.

THE CIRVA COLLECTIONS

Musée Ariana, 24 April 2026 – 3 January 2027

PRESS RELEASE

Geneva, 9 April 2026

Musée Ariana presents the retrospective exhibition “Glass, Transcending Matter: The CIRVA Collections” from 24 April 2026 to 3 January 2027. Showcasing forty years of creative innovation at the International Centre for Research on Glass and Plastic Arts (CIRVA).

Glass, Transcending Matter: The CIRVA Collections is an exhibition that explores the properties of glass through the eyes of artists and designers. It revisits the myths and narratives surrounding the origins of glass, while also offering a physico-chemical perspective on the material. Above all, it highlights the artists’ drive to reinvent the ways in which glass can be worked, bringing new and unexpected forms into being.

Ten chapters unfold, alternating between the presentation of major series that have shaped CIRVA’s history and documentary groupings that immerse visitors in the creative process. The exhibition brings to light previously unseen archival material, offering an intimate glimpse into the artists’ approaches, doubts and discoveries. Conceived as a vivid and deeply human display, the exhibition weaves together video, music, drawings and sketches, moulds and technical trials, as well as photographs and correspondence.

Visitors can discover, for instance, how the artist Jean-Michel Othoniel simulated a volcanic explosion in the laboratory; the story behind the patent for projecting molten glass developed by the designer Gaetano Pesce in collaboration with the art centre (the “Mistral” technique); the research undertaken by Pierre Soulages at CIRVA to create a new type of glass for the stained-glass windows of the Abbey Church of Sainte-Foy; and the many transformations of a Ricard bottle imagined by the designer Wendy Andreu.

The exhibition also brings to light exceptionally skilled glassmakers whose expertise has been instrumental in the success of these pioneering projects. This marks the first presentation of the CIRVA collections on such a scale, bringing together nearly two hundred works.

A Glass Forum will take place on 30 and 31 October, featuring talks, round tables, guided visits and performances, and is open to all. Finally, a publication edited by JBE Books is available for purchase in the museum shop.

Co-curated by: Stanislas Colodiet, Director of CIRVA / Claire FitzGerald, Chief Curator, Musée Ariana / Joris Thomas, Head of Design Development, MAMC+

Exhibition conceived and produced by: Musée d’art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole, in partnership with CIRVA

Public opening Thursday 23 April 2026 at 6.00 pm

Press contact

Laurence Ganter, Head of Communications
T +41 22 418 54 55
laurence.ganter@geneve.ch

Exhibition Co-curator, Musée Ariana

Claire FitzGerald, Chief Curator
T +41 22 418 54 85
claire.fitzgerald@geneve.ch

Un musée
Ville de Genève

www.musee-ariana.ch



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