



PAOLO MARTINUZZI

An exemplary adventure.
Art Brut in Murano in the 1970s

Caterina Tognon Contemporary Art
San Marco 2158, 30124 Venice
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Opening Saturday, March 28, 6-8 pm
Part of: *Venice Gallery Weekend 2026*

February 3, 2026 – April 25, 2026
Tuesday – Saturday | 10 am – 7 pm

Paolo Martinuzzi (Venice IT, 1933 – Venice IT, 2015) was the first artist in Murano to work with glass for specific expressive and artistic purposes, the Italian precursor of the Studio Glass movement. Self-taught in Venice in the early 1960s, Martinuzzi opened the first artist's studio in Murano entirely dedicated to glass artworks, marking a clear break with the Murano artisan tradition. His works emerge from an independent research, free from academic models, and they place glass at the center of a visual language so essential that it appears restless and profoundly contemporary.

In 1976, openly challenging the predominantly decorative approach of glass production in Italy, the artist chose to relocate his practice to Soest, Germany, where he pursued increasingly free and experimental research. His sculptures are distinguished by their dialoguing use of materials such as iron and wood, often recycled and manually transformed by him. He manages to create a formal and symbolic tension with the transparency and fragility of glass.

A distinctive element of Martinuzzi's work is its strong graphic component: deep incisions which are obsessively repeated, clean lines crisscross the glass surface, introducing a sense of restlessness and expressive urgency that brings his work closer to the realms of Art Brut. A type of art understood as a primary gesture, without any mediation, generated by instinctive impulses, by an authentic need to communicate through visual expressions.

Just as in Art Brut, Martinuzzi's work is pure and simple creative action, reinvented at every stage, far removed from the conventions of "official" art. In this arduous process, glass loses its decorative aspect to become a place of tension, memory, and new visions, the living body of the work.