

## Design/Arts/Culture

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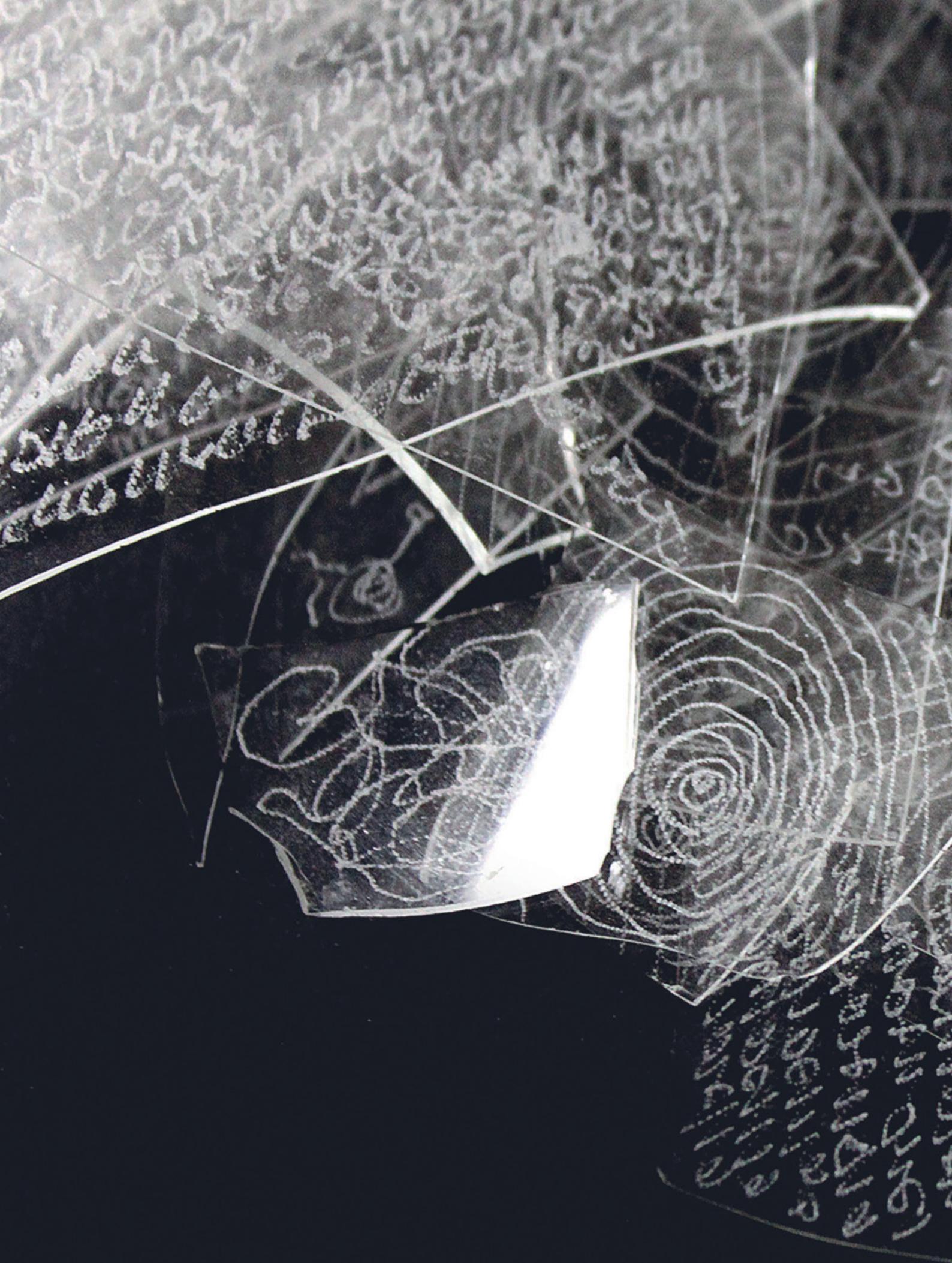
**Fragments and light, two perspectives of contemporary glass engraving**

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# FRAGMENTS AND LIGHT, TWO PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY GLASS ENGRAVING

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The breaking of the vitreous material and the use of shards as signs of artistic expression is a daring act in the art of glass. Fascinated by the spectacle offered by the variety of shapes obtained by hitting and splitting glass blocks and by the miracle of optical transformations generated by the transparency of the material, Dan Popovici tried to identify some of the imaginary dimensions of the shard as a sign in the visual arts, opening a wide range of connections and suggesting multiple levels of investigation in order to structure the artistic message.

The choice of flints as a reference field for creation in the art of glass opens a wide

range of connections and suggests multiple levels of investigation and experiment in order to structure a message in the language of contemporary visual arts. To the historical connotations are added the projections of the imaginary. Leveraging the dowry of the flints significance, the artist has experimented in the last ten years, by breaking, splitting, carving, sanding, incising or engraving different types of glass, rediscovering from modern perspective the fascination produced by prehistoric stone techniques.

All these landmarks contributed to the mental structuring of a universe of scientific and imaginary representations in

the field of carved and polished stones, theoretical support assumed as a reference field in attempts to evoke flint in the art of glass.

The shards of glass, beyond their visual age, create a fascinating game of brilliance, which can be capitalized in the context of visual arts.

In a series of artistic and technological experiments carried out in the last ten years, he used blocks of molten material resulting from the demolition of old kilns, the solidified paste being similar to obsidian due to the impurities it contained and the alternation of transparent areas with others keeping traces of color.

Breaking the translucent blocks, the artist had the feeling of reliving some experiences from the prehistoric period of the carved stone.

While hitting the edges of the glass block produced thin splinters, the centrally transmitted shocks produced deep cracks due to the inhomogeneity of the material.

Splitting the glass after these cracks always created other unexpected shapes ... at the end of this game of breaking the glass being difficult to choose between the countless shiny shards, some of which were reminiscent of historical flint in time, others seemed replicas of modern art. Reconstructing the historical itinerary of the perpetuation in glass art of stone processing techniques, after the carving-cutting exercises, Dan Popovici tried to define the volume of shapes having as example the performances of the polished stone era, and the glass engraving techniques, which continued the art of stone engravers, they allowed the incision of a series of signs that, compositionally, could suggest fragments of some partially lost messages. Some of the pieces resulting from these artistic exercises, which suggested either the multitude of shards around the carver, or the result of archaeological research, or collections of flints exhibited in archeological museums were assembled in compositions presented both in personal or collective exhibitions from Romania and abroad.

As a teacher Dan Popovici managed to change the stylistic directions of the contemporary glass art and glass engraving in Romania, influencing many generations of young artists. One of them is Ioana Stelea which, inspired by her teacher, came close to glass engraving and devel-

oped an original style of work and new methods to use engraving in contemporary ways. In her work mrs. Stelea managed to give a new perspective to this old and precious technique, by taking it from its traditional status and including it in new artistic approaches. By getting involved in the research project PN II IDEI Time Maps - Real Communities, Virtual Worlds, Experienced Past and conducting numerous experiments with ancient engraving technologies, marked the direction of the artist's personal artistic practice to archaic ways of working, starting with 2012. All of this practice demonstrates that the use of old techniques can coexist with current trends in contemporary art, not interfering and not influencing the approach and personal style, but on the contrary, helping to understand and improve the quality of engraving. Experimental research in the field of glass engraving and glyptic art, the reconstruction of archaic instruments, as well as several studies on ancient engraved glass pieces have had a strong impact on personal artistic practices, reflected by continuing in various projects the directions previously pursued.



Figure 1: Arche 1



Figure 2: Book of signs



Figure 3: Bodymaps



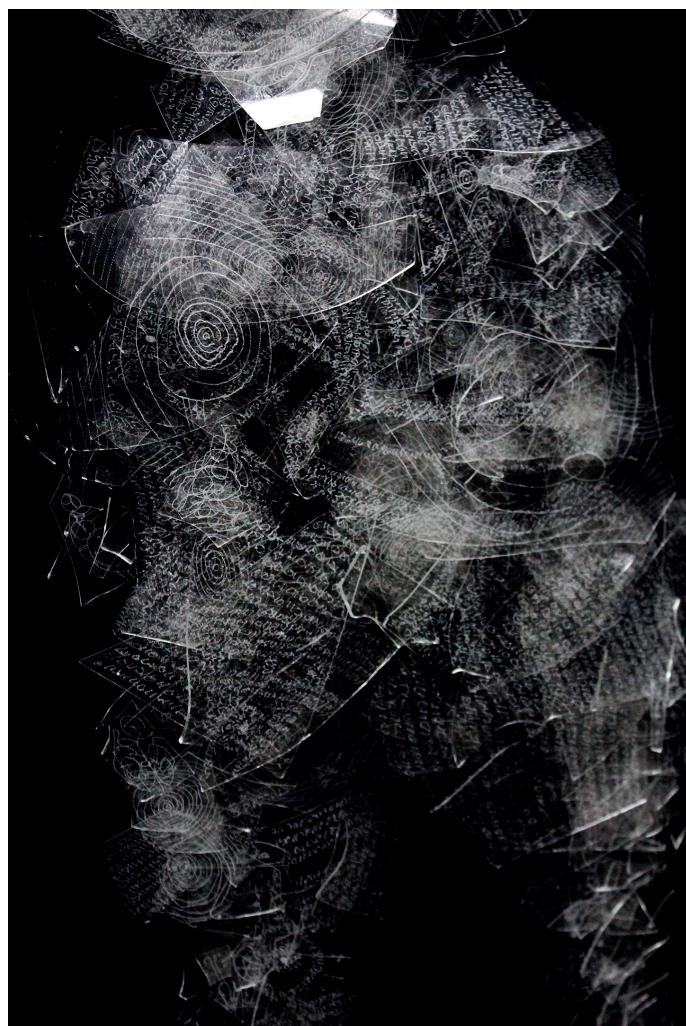
Figure4: Duality



Figure 5: Duality detail 1

Figure 6: Duality detail 2

Figure 7: Footprint



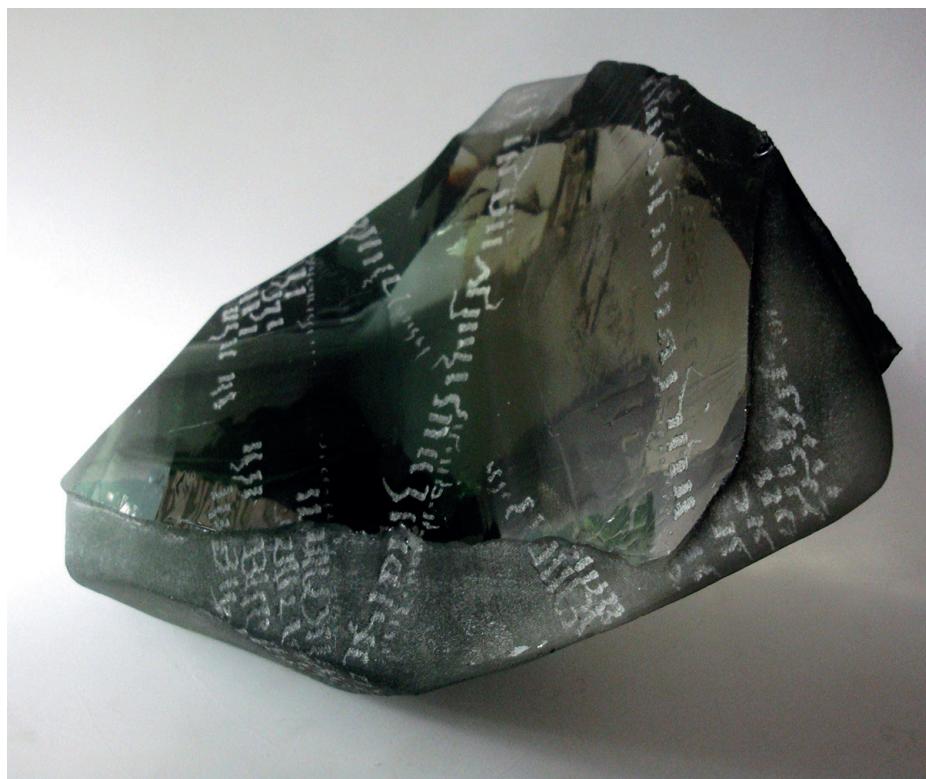


Figure 8: Silex 1

Figure 9: Silex 2





Figure 9: Silex 3

Figure 10: Silex 4



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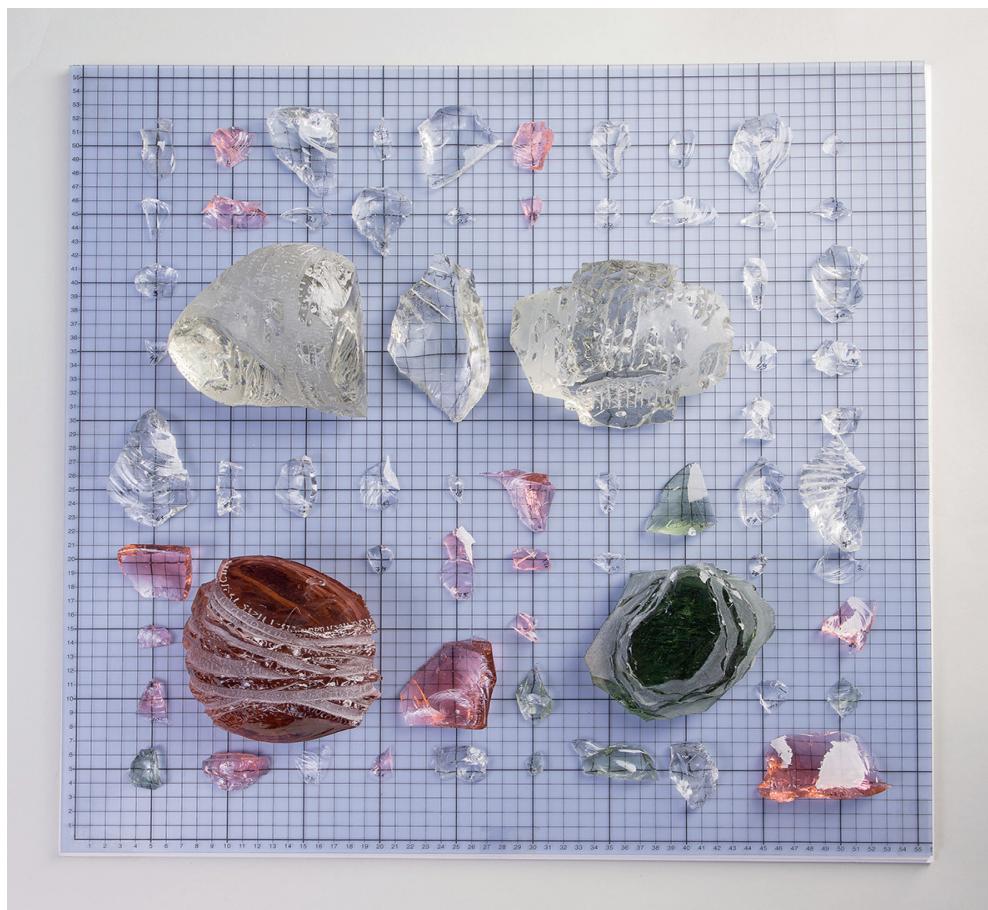


Figure 11: Shards

Figure 12: Flinters





## DAN POPOVICI PhD

Dan Popovici (1951, Romania) studied Glass Art in the Institute of Fine Arts "Nicolae Grigorescu" in Bucharest between 1970 – 1975. After the graduation he worked as a designer in Glass Factory Tg. Jiu, keeping also a very big interest in the artistic research of glass. Since 1979 he began teaching in the National University of Arts in Bucharest where he managed to influence the directions of glass art in Romania for many generations. He is a member of Artists Union since 1982. His work has been exhibited internationally in important galleries and museums and he participated at important exhibitions and symposiums such as: Coburg, "Glass Kunst" Kassel, Munich, Erfurt / Germany, "International Glass Exhibition", Kanazawa / Japan, "Zentralschweizer Glass-preis" Luzern / Switzerland, Montreal / Canada, "International Exhibition of Ceramics and Glass", Eskişehir / Turkey, "International Biennale of Glass", Sofia / Bulgaria, International Biennial of ceramics and glass, Haacht, Belgium.



### IOANA STELEA PHD

Visual artist, born in 1988, Râmnicu Vâlcea, is a graduate of the National University of Arts in Bucharest, Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design, glass specialty (2012). Since 2012, Ioana is an assistant professor at the institution she graduated from. The exhibition activity is very rich, participating in numerous prestigious exhibitions, conferences and symposia in Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, Latvia and India. His works can be found in important public and private collections in the country and abroad.

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