

PRESS RELEASE

NOT VITAL

“700 Snowballs”

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700 Snowballs is an installation consisting of 700 individually blown glass balls that bear a striking resemblance to snowballs suspended in air. The snowballs rest directly on the floor, evenly and randomly spread. As each snowball was hand-blown by Vetreria Pino Signoretto in Murano, no two are identical – just as natural elements are never exactly repeated.

The installation creates a place of meditation, evoking the metamorphic, transformative and cyclical processes of nature. The luminous and reflective qualities of glass simultaneously reflect both the dense and yet ephemeral nature of snow. This mirrors the tension between the organic form and the inorganic material, between the durability of the artwork and the fragility of the elements it evokes.

700 Snowballs becomes an environment, a tranquil place of awe and contemplation. Inspired throughout his career by a childhood spent in the Swiss Alps, Vital has explored the contradictions of the harsh climate and vast landscapes that he knows so intimately. Indeed, the iconography of snow and its context has recurred throughout Vital's *oeuvre* – he has for instance used plaster to mould mountains that appear to be covered in snow, and has fabricated sleds from marble.

In *700 Snowballs*, Vital succinctly and poetically presents the duality of water's form when it freezes. The work explores the ever-rich potential of Venice glass-blowing tradition, despite our being in an era of industrial mass-production and cultural globalization. It represents an unprecedented technical feat, and a fine example of the fruits that can be borne of an intimate and intellectually stimulating collaboration between a highly established artist, and the most skilled of Murano craftsmen.

Previously shown in Zurich in 2002, in Chasa Jaura, Valchava, Grisons in 2003, at the Bündner Kunstmuseum, Chur in 2004 and most recently on the Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore during the Venice Biennale 2013, the installation – comprising all 700 snowballs – is being shown in its entirety for the first time.

Text by Alma Zevi

The gallery in St. Moritz is open during the high season from Monday to Saturday, 2 PM to 7 PM.