



## **The making of the Bontemps' carafe**



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<http://www.mingei-project.eu/>

# Contributors

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# The Glass Master

Jean-Pierre Mateus

*"we can't tame this craft"*



## **Jean-Pierre Mateus' biography, from Portugal to CERFAV**

This narrative follows the biography of the glass master Jean-Pierre Mateus from his father's story in Portugal to the actual life of Jean-Pierre at the CERFAV. The story begins with a Murano glass blower working in a glass factory in Alcobaça who rented a room at Jean-Pierre's grandfather's place. Then, we follow Jean-Pierre's father who learned glass blowing from this Italian glass master and decided to move to Belgium to create a craft glass workshop. We then follow Jean-Pierre's life in glassblowing from his apprenticeship with his father to the creation of his own workshop in the south-west of France to his career as a teacher at the CERFAV. Following this European subjective glass journey, we will speak about craft knowledge transmission in Europe, the role of family in craft practices, the different categories of glass activities (from manufactures, to workshop to school), and the organisation of glass educative institution.

This narrative will help to understand, as Jean-Pierre said, how "we can't tame this craft".

### **A Murano glassblower in a Portuguese glass manufacture: craft knowledge transmission within the household**

The story of the Mateus family within glass craft started in the 1940s in the city of Alcobaça in Portugal, when Jean-Pierre's grandfather welcomed a Murano glass-master into his house. At that time, in Alcobaça there was a glass factory specialized in the production of Murano-style chandeliers. This Venetian glassblower came to this city to train the Portuguese glassmakers in the Murano glass know-how, in the context of subcontracting the Murano glass process around Europe to be able to achieve their glass production and the reproduction of specific Murano glass objects. While this Murano glass-master was renting a room in Jean-Pierre's grandfather's house, Jean-Pierre's father used to go with him to the glass factory, because it was on the same route as school (5 km from the house). And one day, when he was 10, because Jean-Pierre's father's school clothes were wet and he was afraid to be yelled at by his professor, he decided to dry his clothes in the glass factory. But when he entered the glass workshop, he remained hypnotized by the glass work and instead of drying his clothes in 5 minutes, he stayed all day in the glass workshop and didn't go to school. The teacher told Jean-Pierre's grandfather that his father didn't come to school, and so he asked his son to stop school and to start working. The Murano master decided to take care of Jean-Pierre's father and to become his master in glass training.

### **From Portugal to the North of France and Belgium: a family inside glassblowing**

Jean-Pierre's father stayed 18 years working and learning with his master in the Alcobaça chandelier factory. But when he was 28 years old, with a wife and two kids, he decided to leave Portugal to have a better life. He travelled a lot and worked in several glass factories before stopping in the north of France, close to the border with Belgium, to open his own glass workshop as a craftsman, bringing his family with him. Jean-Pierre was thus born in France, unlike his older brother and sister. Jean-Pierre's father was the director of the Boussu glass factory in Belgium. And every Saturday, when Jean-Pierre's father taught glass techniques to other Belgium glassblowers, the 4-year-old Jean-Pierre accompanied him. That is how he started glass craft. Jean-Pierre's older brother was his father's assistant, working also in Boussu, and his sister married another

assistant of his father. Jean-Pierre's father worked in several glass workshops throughout his career: in Portugal, France, Belgium, Italy, England, Spain, the Netherlands. And each glass workshop he was working in was like a school to him where he always discovered a new way to work with glass. Each glass workshop developed its own glass techniques, and his father gained very strong skills in his European glass journey. When Jean-Pierre was 18, his father decided to go back to Portugal to start a new glass business. Jean-Pierre remembered the fight between his father and his master inside the Portuguese glass workshop where the old Murano master didn't understand the rich know-how of his students developed through his journey in different European glass places, which were not the same as he taught him years before. His father is 83 years old today, he still makes glassblowing in his glass workshop in Portugal and teaches other glassmakers his techniques he learned during his 58 years spent in glass craft.

### **Jean-Pierre Mateus journey within glass craft**

The Belgium glassblower who Jean-Pierre met with his father when he was 4, liked to give him a blow-pipe and to teach him how to blow. But it was when he was 6 that his father started to teach him glass techniques properly in showing him how to gather glass from the furnace. Jean-Pierre remembered the small platform his father built for him in front of the furnace to be able to gather the glass. And slowly, within his father glass workshop, he started to have a small bench and small glass tools and started to create glass objects. As he calls himself, he was the petit bousilleur in his father glass workshop (the bousillage is a practice used in glass factory that consists of diverting a tiny part of the materials from the workshop and shape them with workplace materials as appropriate without the constraint of the mass production. The bousillage is often the place where innovation and creativity took place).

When Jean-Pierre was 18 and his father went back to Portugal, Jean-Pierre's brother-in-law (who was his father's apprentice) and Jean-Pierre's sister decided to open a glass workshop in the Landes (a region in the south-west of France). They asked Jean-Pierre to join them in this new business. At that time, because Jean-Pierre's brother-in-law was the assistant of Jean-Pierre's father, he was not able himself to create glass objects alone, whereas Jean-Pierre, even if he was younger, was more skilled to produce glass things alone due to his practice of bousillage. He followed them during one and a half year in this glass workshop, before returning to the north of France for his military service.

When he was 20, he decided to open his own glass workshop in the Lot (another region in the south-west of France), between Rocamadour and the Gouffre de Padirac. He bought a house and a workshop, and constructed all the furnaces himself to be able to produce his own glass. He then decided to specialize in stretch glass, a technique to realize glass animals in one minute, and cased glass, a technique which consists in the dipping of a primary glass object (gather) into a tank of colored glass in order to superimpose a layer of contrasting color. At this point, Jean-Pierre started to have his first own apprentice and to transmit his knowledge. During the time he had his glass workshop, he trained 21 apprentices and received 10 to 15 interns each year worldwide. Changes in his personal life brought Jean-Pierre to sell his business and go back to work in a craft glass factory in Biot, near Nice. He spent a few years there, and eventually he became a teacher at the CERFAV (the European Research and Teaching Center for Glass Craft) at Vannes-le-Châtel near Nancy in the Northeast of France.

## **From glass practice to glass teaching: the CERFAV**

To Jean-Pierre, the difference between his apprentices in his own workshop and his students at the CERFAV is a matter of time. He spends more time teaching at the CERFAV than he was teaching his apprentices in his workshop. As a professor of glassblowing, he wants his students to be able to reproduce a gesture and to understand the different techniques available to create an object. For Jean-Pierre, it is important that the glass students understand that different techniques produce the same result, but through the way they approach it, it becomes different. So he wants his students to ask: which is the method we have to use? Why do we use this method and not another one? He wants them to understand that everything in glassblowing is a question of time in relation with the skill that the craftsman is able to manage when he wants to create a glass object. His pedagogy tries to let the student understand this relation between the time and skill as a way to realize that with one technique there are thousands of possibilities to work with glass and to create different glass objects. Therefore, his role as a teacher is to find a way to let the students adapt the gestures he teaches to their individual skills.



## About Mingei

Mingei offers a method to digitally document, semantically represent, and actively support the preservation of Heritage Crafts (HCs). In this way, Mingei aspires to capture a comprehensive picture of the wide spectrum of tangible and intangible knowledge encompassed by this form of Cultural Heritage (CH).

A multidisciplinary approach is followed to digitally represent material heritage, human motion and action, socio-historic context, as well as experience and knowledge on craft practice and apprenticeship.

Towards the implementation of this vision, Mingei offers a craft representation protocol for the systematic acquisition of digital assets, the representation of knowledge, and the authoring of craft representations. The protocol is accompanied by tools for its implementation and guidelines for the simplification of the process and for the optimal of resources.

Intuitiveness of description and simplicity of use aim the capacity building of creative communities and cultural heritage institutions. Mingei is available as an online platform which comprises a resource for the (a) creation of benefit for cultural institutions, content owners, and researchers, (b) support of craft training and education, and (c) promotion of thematic tourism relevant to HCs, as a way towards sustainable preservation of this form of CH.

The efficacy of this approach is demonstrated in three pilots whose diversity spans multiple craft dimensions, namely silk textile manufacturing, making of glass objects, and mastic cultivation.

The preservation common cultural elements and individual identities stemming provides a wider appreciation and a better understanding of cultural continuity and cultural pluralism in Europe. The main societal impact thus stems from *“collectively preserving our Heritage, by protecting culture and promoting cultural pluralism, [which] leads to more resilient and peaceful societies”* [\*\*\*“The role of culture for resilience, peace and security”, UNESCO 2017.\*\*\*](#)



HE OPENS THE DOOR OF THE FURNACE. BEFORE PUTTING THE BLOWPIPE INTO THE FIRE, HE CHECKS IF IT IS CLOGGED.



HE PUTS THE BLOWPIPE WITH THE GLASS INTO THE FURNACE.



HE HOLDS THE BLOWPIPE STRAIGHT WHILE THE GLASS IS HEATING UP.

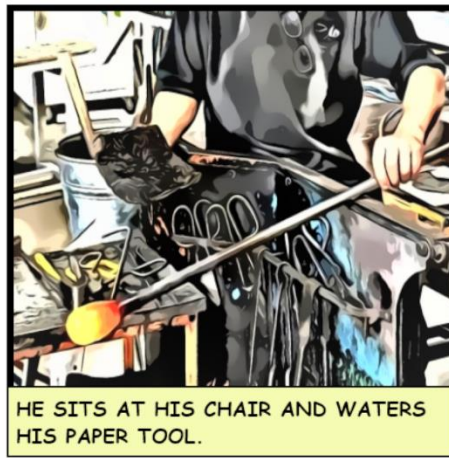


HE ROTATES THE BLOWPIPE, CREATING A ROUND SHAPE TO THE GLASS.



HE CLOSSES THE FURNACE AND THEN REMOVES THE BLOWPIPE.





HE STANDS UP AND BLOWS INTO THE PIPE FOR 10 TO 15 SECONDS. AT THE SAME TIME HE ROLLS THE PIPE.

HE ROLLS BACK AND FORTH THE BLOWPIPE WHILE STANDING.

IT'S TIME FOR A SECOND TIME IN THE FURNACE. AFTER THAT, HE ROLLS THE BLOWPIPE AND WHIPES THE GLASS WITH THE WET PAPER TOOL. ONCE AGAIN, HE BLOWS THROUGH THE BLOWPIPE AND THEN HE STRETCHES...



HE USES A METAL CARVED MOLD IN ORDER THE SHAPE AND TEXTURE OF THE GLASS TO MATCH ITS DESIGN.



HE IS WIPING THE GLASS WITH THE WET PAPER AS HE IS ROLLING THE PIPE. AT THE SAME TIME, HIS ASSISTANT BLOWS THROUGH THE PIPE AND INFLATES THE BUBBLE OF GLASS.



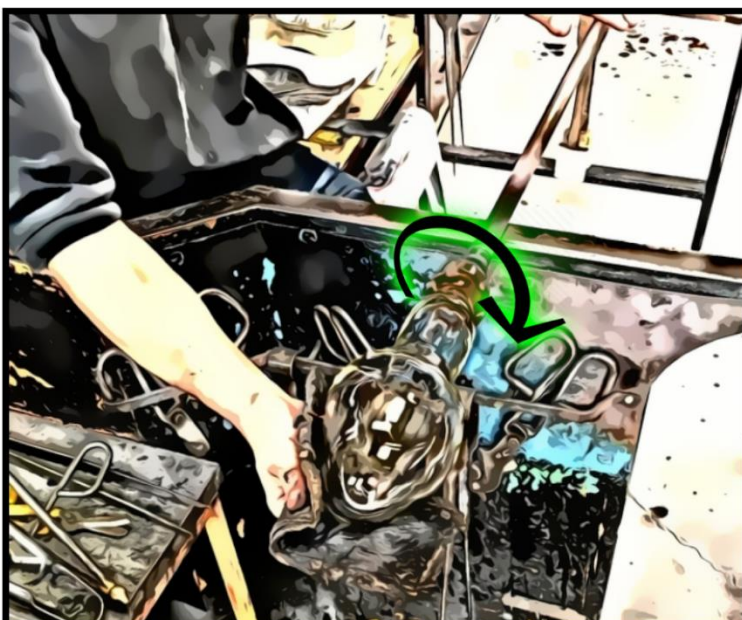
HE USES METAL JACKS TO SHAPE THE GLASS.



AFTER RE-HEATING THE GLASS, HE BLOWS THROUGH THE PIPE FOR A COUPLE OF TIMES.



HE CHECKS IF THE GLASS HAS THE APPROPRIATE SIZE ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHAPE.



HE BALANCES AND WIPES THE GLASS WITH THE WET PAPER WHILE HE IS ROLLING THE BLOWPIPE.



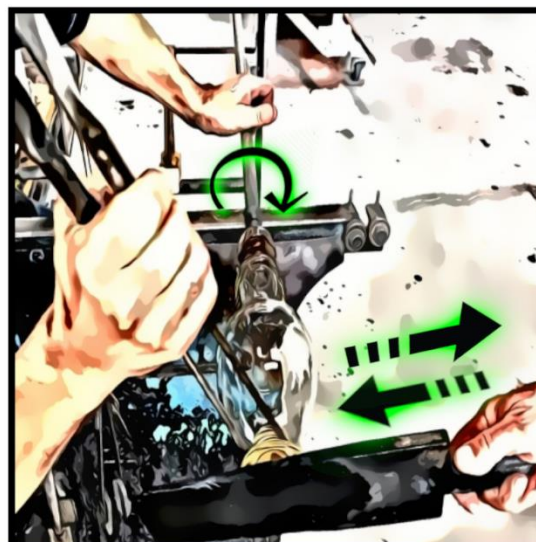
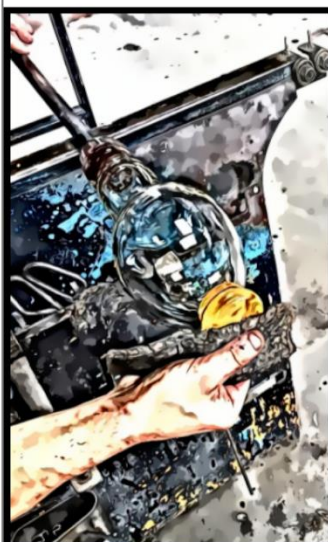
IT'S TIME FOR THE GLASS MASTER TO CREATE THE CARAFE BASE...  
THE ASSISTANT TAKES OUT OF THE FURNACE A NEW MOLTEN BLOB OF  
GLASS AND HE IS CHECKING THE EXACT POSITION THAT SHOULD BE PLACED.



HE PLACES THE MOLTEN GLASS ON THE INFLATED  
GLASS AND CUTS IT WITH METAL SHEARS.



HE PUSHES THE MOLTEN GLASS ON THE INFLATED GLASS  
USING THE WIDE SIDE OF THE JACKS.



HE WIPES THE GLASS WITH THE WET PAPER. AFTER THAT, HE USES A METAL  
PALLET IN ORDER TO FLATTEN THE BASE OF THE CARAFE.





THE ASSISTANT BRINGS MORE MOLTEN GLASS FOR THE BASE OF THE CARAFE AND PLACES IT ON THE TOP OF THE PREVIOUS SHAPED GLASS.



HE SITS AT HIS CHAIR. WHILE HE IS ROLLING THE BLOWPIPE BACK AND FORTH, HE IS TRIMMING THE GLASS DESTINED FOR THE FOOT OF THE CARAFE, BY USING THE PALLET ONCE AGAIN. THEN, HE IS USING A METAL CLAPPER IN ORDER TO SQUEEZE THE BLOB OF GLASS AND FORM THE FOOT.



HE WIPES THE FOOT BASE USING THE WET PAPER TOOL.



HE CHECKS THAT THE FOOT BASE HAS THE CORRECT SIZE ACCORDING TO HIS TOOL.



ON THE TOP OF A METAL MARVER, THE ASSISTANT ROLLS AND INCLINES A NEW SOFTENED GLASS THAT JUST CAME OUT OF THE FURNACE.



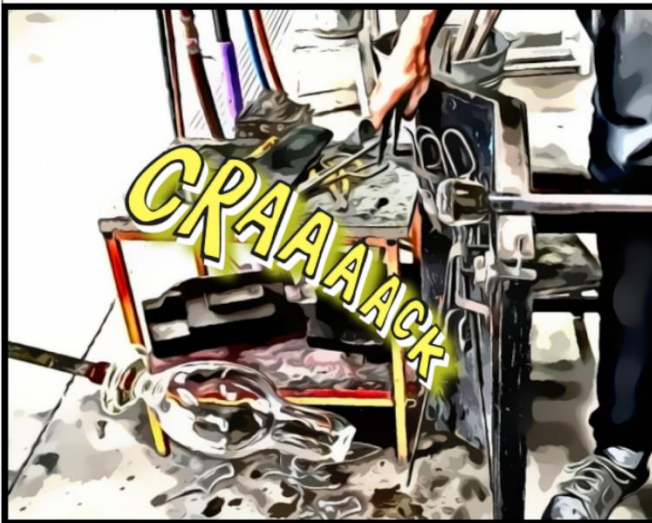
THE ASSISTANT PLACES THE HOT ANGLED GLASS ON THE FOOT OF THE CARAFE IN ORDER TO CREATE A CASP.



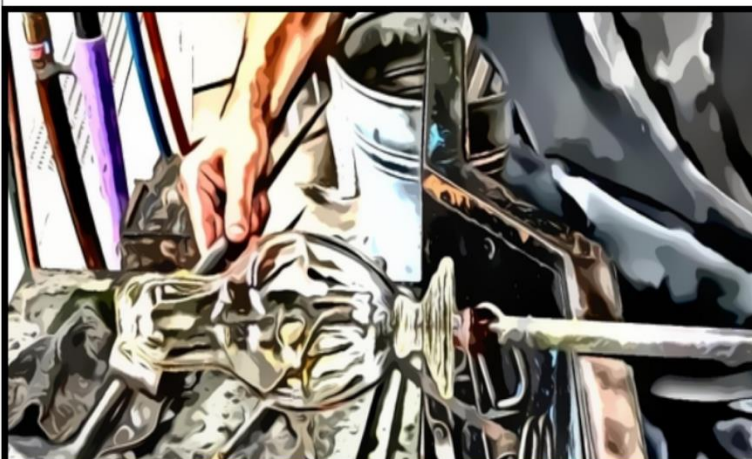
THE HOT ANGLED GLASS CREATES THE CASP ON THE FOOT, AS HE IS ROLLING THE BLOWPIPE.



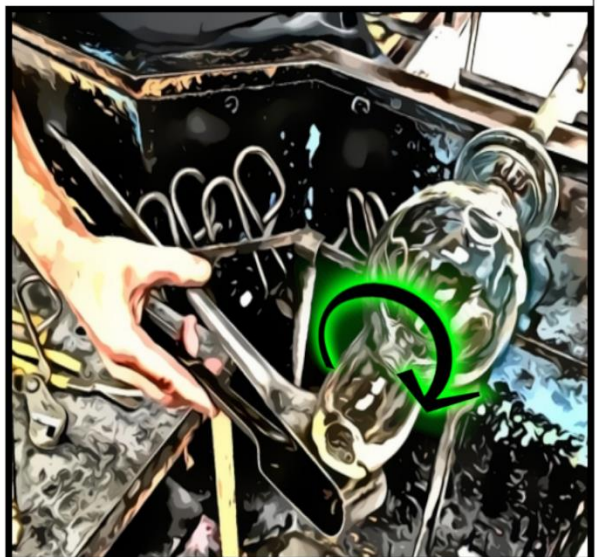
HE USES THE JACKS TO CUT THE TOP OF THE CARAFE.



IT'S TIME TO REHEAT THE GLASS... HE PUTS THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE IN THE GLORY HOLE.



HE SMOOTHS THE LIP AT THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE USING THE WIDE SIDE OF THE JACKS.





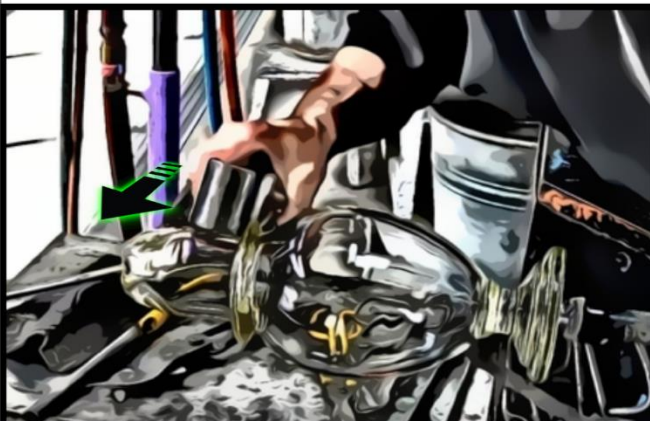
ONCE AGAIN, THE ASSISTANT SHAPES A HOT MOLTEN GLASS BY ROLLING IT ON THE MARVER AND CUTTING ITS EDGE.



THE ASSISTANT PLACES THE MOLTEN GLASS AROUND THE OPEN MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE IN ORDER TO CREATE DETAILS.



HE SHAPES THE DETAILS USING THE JACKS.



HE SMOOTHS AND SHAPES THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE USING THE WIDE SIDE OF THE JACKS.



HE PUTS THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE IN THE GLORY HOLE.



HE BLOWS THROUGH A SHAPING TOOL IN ORDER TO WIDEN THE MOUTHPIECE OF THE CARAFE.



HE USES THE JACKS TO FIX SOME DETAILS ON THE MOUTHPIECE.



HE PUTS THE MOUTHPIECE IN THE GLORY HOLE FOR THE SECOND TIME.



THE LIP OF THE MOUTHPIECE HAS SOFTENED BY THE FIRE SO HE IS USING THE SMALL JACKS TO SHAPE IT.



HE CUTS THE EDGE OF THE LIP USING THE METAL SHEARS.



HE WARMS THE MOUTHPIECE IN ORDER TO MAKE IT SOFT AGAIN AND FURTHER SHAPE IT.



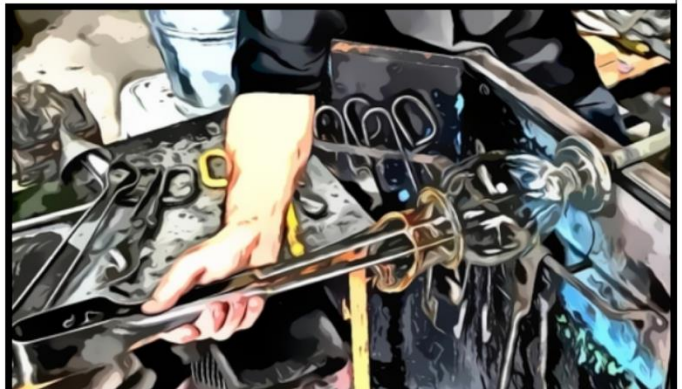
USING AN IRON BAR, HE SHAPES THE LIP OF THE MOUTHPIECE BY LIFTING IT UPWARDS.



HE USES THE JACKS TO WIDEN THE MOUTHPIECE BY OPENING THEM.



HE ROLLS THE IRON BAR ON THE LIP OF THE MOUTHPIECE SO AS TO SMOOTH IT.



HE USES THE JACKS IN ORDER TO WIDEN THE MOUTHPIECE EVEN MORE.



HE TRIMS THE NECK OF THE CARAFE WITH THE METAL BATTLEDORE.



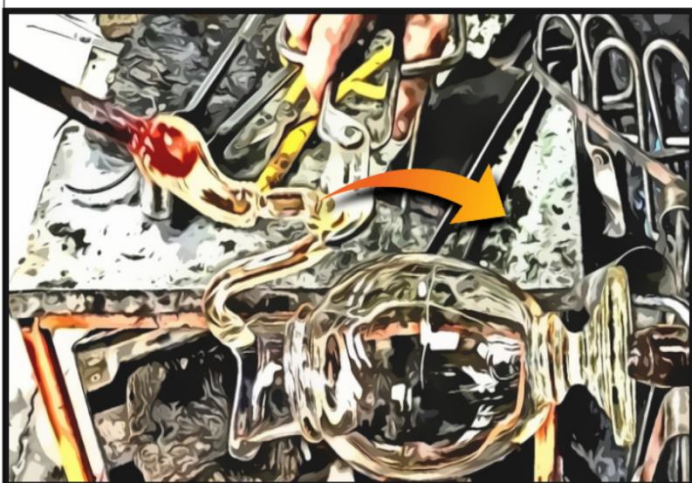
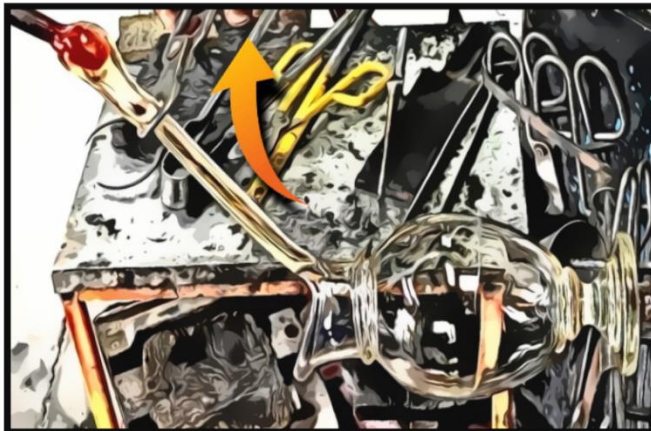
USING THE SMALL JACKS, HE SHAPES THE LIP IN MORE DETAIL. THEN, HE BURNS IT AGAIN.



HE DRAWS THE SPECIFIC POINT ON THE CARAFE THAT THE HANDLE SHOULD BE POSITIONED.



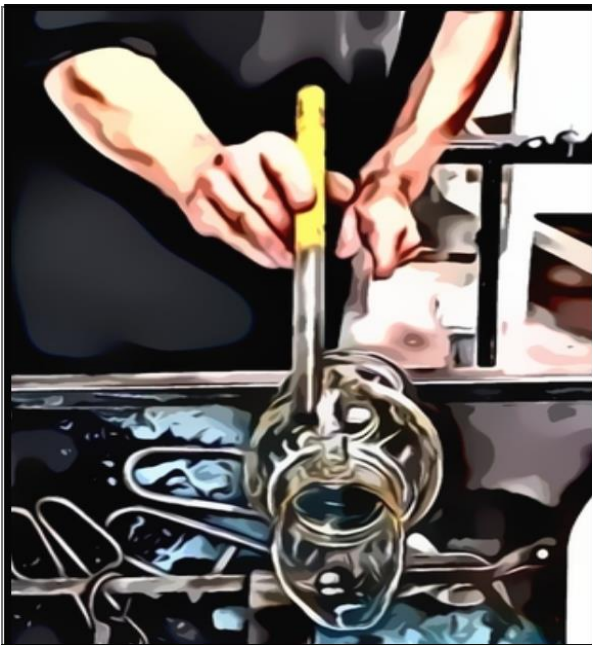
THE ASSISTANT PLACE THE MOLTEN GLASS ON THE TOP OF THE CARAFE NECK TOWARDS THE DRAWN POINT.



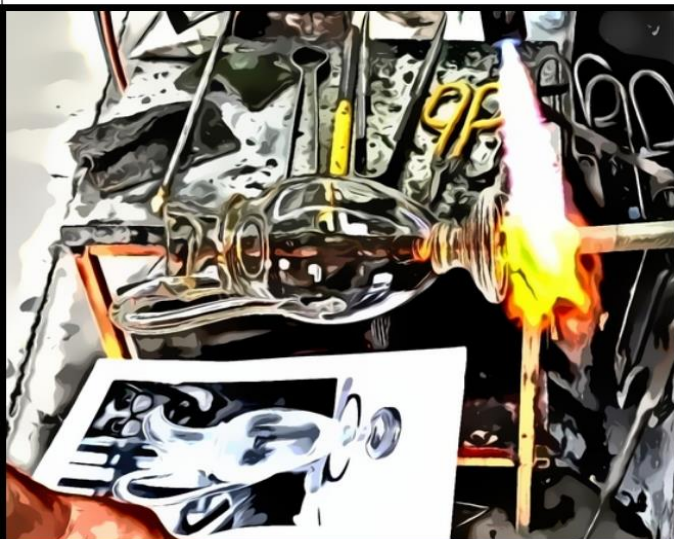
HE CUTS THE MOLTEN GLASS USING THE METAL SHEARS. THE HANDLE OF THE CARAFE HAS BEEN CREATED.

IN ORDER TO SHAPE THE HANDLE, HE USES AN IRON BAR AND ROLLS IT FROM THE TOP OF THE HANDLE TO ITS BOTTOM.

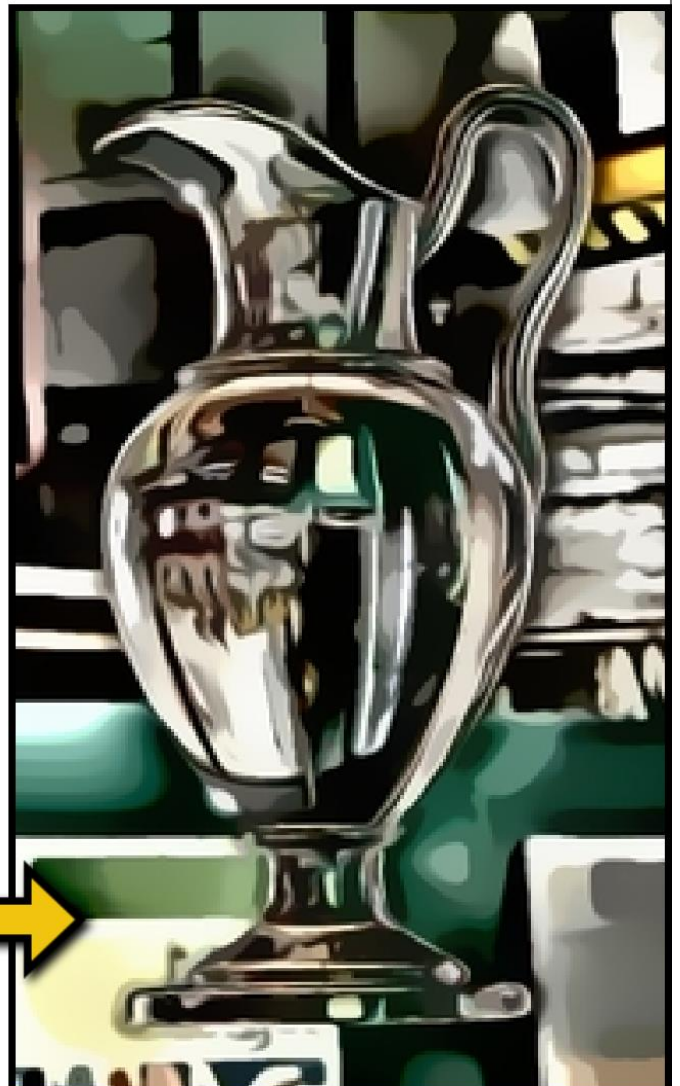




USING THE IRON BAR, HE FIXES THE LAST DETAILS ON THE HANDLE. AFTERWARDS, HE PUTS THE CARAFE IN THE GLORY HOLE.



BASED ON THE FINAL SHAPE OF THE CARAFE, HE IMPROVES THE CARAFE BY BURNING IT AND FIX THE LAST DETAILS.



LAST TIME IN THE OVEN..









THE FINAL RESULT.



## Online Resources

- Mingei Online Platform: [Glass making schema](#)
- Mingei Online Platform: [Carafe making process](#)
- Mingei Project Webpage: <http://www.mingei-project.eu/>

## Mingei Consortium

Participant No.	Participant organisation name	Country	Logo
1 (Coordinator)	Foundation For Research And Technology Hellas (FORTH)	GREECE	
2	Association pour la Recherche et le Développement des Méthodes et Processus Industriels (ARMINES)	FRANCE	
3	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto di Scienza e Tecnologie dell'Informazione "A. Faedo" (CNR)	ITALY	
4	MIRALab SARL (MIRALab)	SWITZERLAND	
5	WAAG society (WAAG)	NETHERLANDS	
6	Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation (PIOP)	GREECE	
7	Imaginary SRL (IMA)	ITALY	
8	Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM)	FRANCE	
9	Haus der Seidenkultur (HdS)	GERMANY	