



Lecture Series, Light and Glass Annual Meeting Wednesday, 10th June 2026, beginning at 9:30 a.m.
At the Glienicke Villa, Gentlemen's Wing, Königsstr. 36, 14109 Berlin (between Potsdam and Berlin)

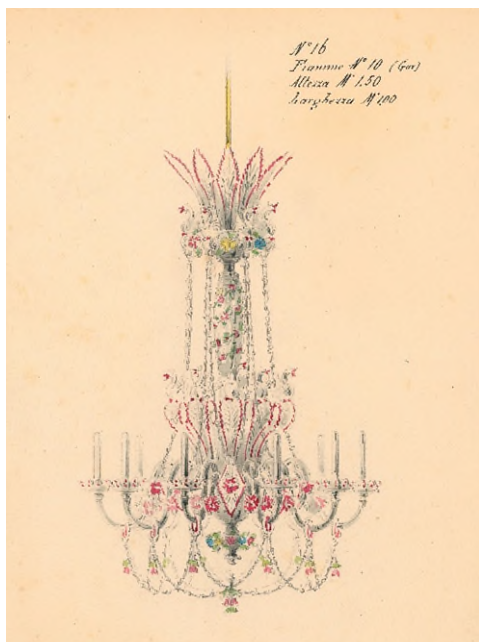
Kristīne Budže: The late 18th century glass chandeliers from the House of the Black Heads in Riga



The Society of the Black Heads was an association of unmarried foreign merchants in Riga, founded in the medieval period and was active until the Second World War. The Black Heads had their own house in the center of Riga which was built in the medieval period.

It is known that the association gradually replaced brass chandeliers in its house during the second half of the 18th century, obtaining 16 new glass chandeliers by the end of the century. These glass chandeliers were used until the Second World War, when the house was destroyed, but some remains of the glass chandeliers have survived and are now in the collection of the Riga History and Navigation Museum (Rīgas vēstures un kuģniecības muzejs).

Photo: The Celebration Hall of the Blackheads House, which displays nine glass chandeliers from the late 18th century. This photograph, taken in the 1930s, belongs to the collection of the Riga History and Navigation Museum (inv. nr. VRVM 37154).



Federica Guainai: Birth, history and evolution of the Venetian chandelier. 1859 - 1914

The lecture will outline the main aspects of the research project, carried out within the Glass Study Centre of the Institute of Art History of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in collaboration with Dr Alice Fuin. The time period of the first stage of the research focuses on the years of the rebirth of Murano glassmaking at the end of 19th century up to Art Nouveau, future investigations will extend the study throughout the entire 20th century.

At the moment, the study progress has defined the key stylistic characteristics of Venetian chandeliers, identifying the main manufacturers and retailers of lighting objects in Murano and Venice. The project aims at delivering a comprehensive essay on the subject and a general overview of the most representative chandeliers still present in the city of Venice, in palaces, Museums and churches. To this purpose, an intense mapping campaign has also been conducted, matching archival sources and photos of historical models with the existing

literature on the subject. The glass archives preserved at the Glass Study Centre represent the starting point of this thorough analysis, particularly the Centre’s graphic, photographic and administrative documentation of the major Murano glassworks. The Muranese company Barovier & Toso, as the major supporter of this research program, has put its archival collections at disposal, allowing us to investigate rare sources which testify its long-lasting contribution in the artistic lighting sector.

Photo: Venetian glass chandelier, Production catalogue Fratelli Toso Murano, pencil and watercolour on paper, 1885. Courtesy of Centro Studi del Vetro, Istituto di Storia dell’Arte, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice.

Amy Hughes: “Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Seeing Glass, Light and Lighting in a New Light, Case Studies from Czechia and the U.S.”



Media coverage about the current commercial status of glass, light and lighting present a striking paradox: on one hand, renowned interior designers and influencers presently laud glass objects and lighting as one of the “newest, hottest trends” in international markets, while on the other hand, news outlets paint a dire outlook for the glassmaking industry due to several factors, including rising costs of fuel and labor shortages. In my work consulting, curating, teaching and researching, I encounter various facets of this paradox: artists, companies and restorers who make and bring to life exquisite and breathtaking works in glass; a sizeable (and largely untapped) student, public and donor base hungry for more information and access; and an industry facing

real struggles. The talk takes as a starting point the question of how those who love this material and know its significance as “furniture [–or even sculpture–] in the air” to art, design and lighting history, impart this knowledge and advocate for glass, light and lighting in these challenging times? This paper examines several examples of innovative and thoughtful projects/initiatives in the U.S. and Czechia that involve positioning glass, light and/or lighting in new ways and engage with new audiences. It is my hope that these examples might spark discussion within our organization as to if/how we might wish to leverage our collective knowledge in new ways that could simultaneously inspire and attract new audiences to our Society and support the industry and its vital networks.

Photo credit: Patterned, pressed glass and metal table lamps, 1960s, Kamenicky Senov, Czechia. Restored and photographed by Kdysi svítidla, 2025.



Birgit Kropmanns: A Triumphant Return of Prussian Splendour in the Alexandrine Apartment – Werner und Neffen and Karl August Mencke at Ludwigslust Palace

With the re-opening of the West Wing on May 30, 2026, more than 50 historic chandeliers returned to the rooms of Ludwigslust Palace – the result of fifteen years of expert art-historical planning and outstanding restoration work. This lecture focuses on the centrepiece of this collection: the chandeliers from the apartments furnished in 1822 for Hereditary Grand Duchess Alexandrine of Prussia and Paul Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which, as preserved original furnishings, rank among the outstanding examples of Prussian craftsmanship in Mecklenburg. Special attention is given to two previously unidentified models from the Berlin bronze foundry Werner und Neffen – unmistakably influenced by Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s design language – as well as the innovative wood-bronze chandeliers from Carl August Mencke’s workshop, which combine courtly elegance with the inventive spirit of early industrialization.

Photo: Ludwigslust Palace, Alexandrinen-Appartement R. 221 Feather chandelier“, Werner und Neffen, Berlin 1822



Sophie Lechner: The restoration of a chandelier from the Merseburger Spiegelkabinett

The chandelier with glass pendants from Merseburg Castle dates from the mid to late 18th century and is now part of the collection of the Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts) in Berlin, alongside the Hall of Mirrors. Over the course of its eventful history, it has undergone significant alterations and was in a poor condition. The chandelier is currently undergoing extensive restoration. The following lecture will present the inventory, condition and current status of the restoration work.

Photo: The chandelier on display in the museum alongside the Merseburg Hall of Mirrors. Photograph from the 1930s.



Toussaint Leliveld: Pair of two-branched Louis XIV Candelabra

Central to this contribution is a case study of a pair of antique Louis XIV girandoles. It focuses on their cultural-historical context, style, dating, technical construction, and restoration. These tiered ‘wedding cake’ candelabra are conceived according to the latest design principles of the period and are distinguished by the use of rock crystal alongside glass beads.



Toni Lorenz: Understanding Complex Lighting Fixtures: systematic thinking, curiosity, and planning as keys to the restoration of multi-part chandeliers

The lecture presents two exemplary objects: a chandelier from the UNESCO World Heritage Site Linderhof Palace and a richly decorated chandelier with porcelain flowers from Branitz Palace. Their origins, designs and materials could hardly be more different. Yet the systematic documentation and treatment of both objects follow the same basic principles.

The presentation shows how clearly structured visual plans for recording quantities, assemblies and variants not only create order, but also support design-related decisions in a transparent way. These planning tools form the basis for reliable restoration concepts and enable efficient and com-

prehensible work on complex objects. In addition, the specific restoration measures carried out on both chandeliers are presented.

The lecture is intended as an invitation to approach complex lighting fixtures with confidence and curiosity and to understand them for what they are: readable systems that uniquely combine craftsmanship, careful planning and the joy of design.



**Jan Mende: Affordable Splendour -
Classical chandeliers from the Berlin-based Mencke
Wooden Bronze Factory**

Around 1811, Carl August Mencke (1776–1841) founded a workshop for decorative and lighting objects together with a business partner. These were made from a special, malleable wood-based compound that was air-dried and then gilded. The price of these products was comparatively low. A chandelier made from this material cost only a fraction of the price of a fire-gilded bronze chandelier. For ceiling lights, Mencke initially focused on a basic urn-shaped model, which was offered in various versions. In doing so, his company competed

with the Danhauser furniture factory in Vienna, which produced very similar chandeliers from wood pulp, albeit in greater quantities and with greater variety.

Around 1830, Mencke began producing large chandeliers, which were now made from wooden slats and metal fittings. He had three exclusive basic models at his disposal, based on designs by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. These chandelier models became veritable bestsellers and can still be found in large numbers today in museums, palaces and the art trade.

The lecture provides a comprehensive overview of the various models and model variants by Mencke, as well as by Danhauser, and addresses the issue of imitation materials as understood at the time.

Photo: Mencke-chandelier in the Salon of the Museum Knoblauchhaus, Design Karl Friedrich Schinkel, ca. 1835, Photo: Jan Mende



**Frank Möller: The European trade relations of the Berlin
bronze foundry Werner & Mieth**

The bronze foundry Werner & Mieth, founded in Berlin in 1792, sought to attract a foreign clientele from an early stage. As early as 1797, there are reports of a large consignment of ‘glass crowns’ being sent to Copenhagen, ordered by the banker Constantin Brun. Paradoxically, with the occupation of Prussia by French troops, the market shifted increasingly towards France, where the products caused ‘a sensation’, as Christian Gottlieb Werner wrote to the Prussian king in 1809. By the time Schinkel began working as a designer for the bronze foundry – now operating under the name Werner & Neffen – in 1819, customers in England had also taken notice of the products.

The lecture will shed light on these international trade relations and present some of the previously unknown goods manufactured for export.

Photo: 24-candle chandelier, Werner & Mieth, Berlin ca. 1810. Provenance: Chateau de Pontchartrin



Peter Rath: The first electric crystal chandeliers in the world, 1882 for the Imperial Palace in Vienna

Emperor Franz Josef had banned the use of gas in the Hofburg and had way-laid the team from the Edison Company – including Werner Siemens and Nikola Tesla, who were on their way to Budapest – to commission the first electric chandeliers for his ballrooms, these to be built by Lobmeyr. Ludwig Lobmeyr, who did not operate any workshops himself, commissioned the Elias Palme factory in Kamenický Šenov (Steinschönau) to produce this first major chandelier order, which featured over 500 Edison incandescent bulbs. Later, in 1886, he commissioned the chandeliers for the New Town Hall, this time featuring the ingenious E-27 screw sockets. Mr. Rath later became a co-founder of the Eliáška Projekt in 2023, which endeavours to preserve the old Palme factory. (Please see short lectures)

Photo: Alante Valtaite-Gagac

Fatemah Yavari (Andrea Funck, ABK Stuttgart und Carina Seidel, Klassik Stiftung Weimar):



Ethics or Aesthetics? Decision-making in the conservation of fragmentary classical chandeliers

A fragment of a surviving Neoclassical chandelier from 1797, formerly in the Blue Salon of the Roman House in Weimar, forms the starting point of this study. The chandelier, manufactured at the Saxon Electoral Mirror Manufactory, is now in the possession of the Weimar Classicism Foundation. Originally consisting of four tiers of rings tapering upwards and fitted with colourless and blue glass in gilded metal settings, it is one of the few surviving pieces of furnishings from the Roman House. Due to the fact that research into the manufactory has so far been insufficient,

the object is of both art-historical and material-technical significance.

The central question is whether, in the case of fragmentarily preserved chandeliers, an aesthetic reconstruction of a presumed ideal state is preferable to the conservation-oriented preservation and presentation of the surviving state. The results show that the fragmentary state of preservation provides essential information on materiality, manufacture, and the history of use and technology, and requires a conscious balancing of aesthetic impact and ethical responsibility. In this way, the work contributes to the discussion on how to deal with complex historical lighting objects in conservation and restoration practice.

Short lectures:

Andrea Carl: Chandeliers from the Reichsbahn bunker in Kassel

Jutta Page: Introduction of Chandelier Exhibition in the U.S.A.

Tereza Švachová + Petra Matelá: Current status of the Eliáška Projekt

Jaroslav Švacha: Technical Challenges of a Modern Chandelier

Verena Wasmuth: Introduction to the collection of Luminaria, SPSG