

BIMINI WERKSTATTEN

BIMINI WORKSHOPS 1923-1938 VIENNA, AUSTRIA



Bimini Workshops began in Vienna, Austria in 1923, founded by Fritz Lampl, a writer and aspiring publisher. While in Berlin he was introduced to the work of glass artist Marianne von Allesch which inspired him to return home to create his own glass studio. He promptly hired an industrial glass-blower to teach him and his brother-in-law, architect and designer Joseph Berger, the trade techniques of lampworked glass.

Lampl with his two brother-in-laws set up Bimini Workshops (a reference to a fantasy poem by Heinrich Heine based on the island of Indian legend) employing artists and designers from Austria and Germany to create many glass forms including vases, goblets and most commonly figurative works of animals and people.

The technique employed is known as lamp-worked or flame-worked glass. The name refers to the original oil lamps used when the process was first developed. In 1923 as well as today, artists use controlled gas flames. The designs are created using pre-formed hollow and solid glass rods of color. They are then manipulated over the flame by means of tools and mouthblowing techniques. Because the glass is worked at the flame there are no breaking points or pontil marks on the bottom of the pieces. Instead, there are sometimes slightly visible "scars" present where the remaining glass was "cracked off".

Between 1936-38, Lampl was forced out of Austria due to Nazi occupation during World War II. At this time he set up "Orplid" in London creating glass buttons and jewelry most commonly based on ancient coins and cameos for fashion designers. Production ceased in 1955 upon his death in London.

Bimini glass can be recognized today by its typically delicate and thinly blown forms. Animals and figures incorporated into sculptures coupled with skillful patterning executed through the use of color are popular. Figures tend to be abstractions of true form containing little or no anatomical detail, but cleverly animated, expressing gentle sweeping motions and gestures. Actual identification is difficult due to the use of glued labels with trademark, model number and/or artist's name that were placed on the glass at the time of production and frequently removed upon purchase.



ref. [Bimini](#), Waltraud Neuwirth, 1992.