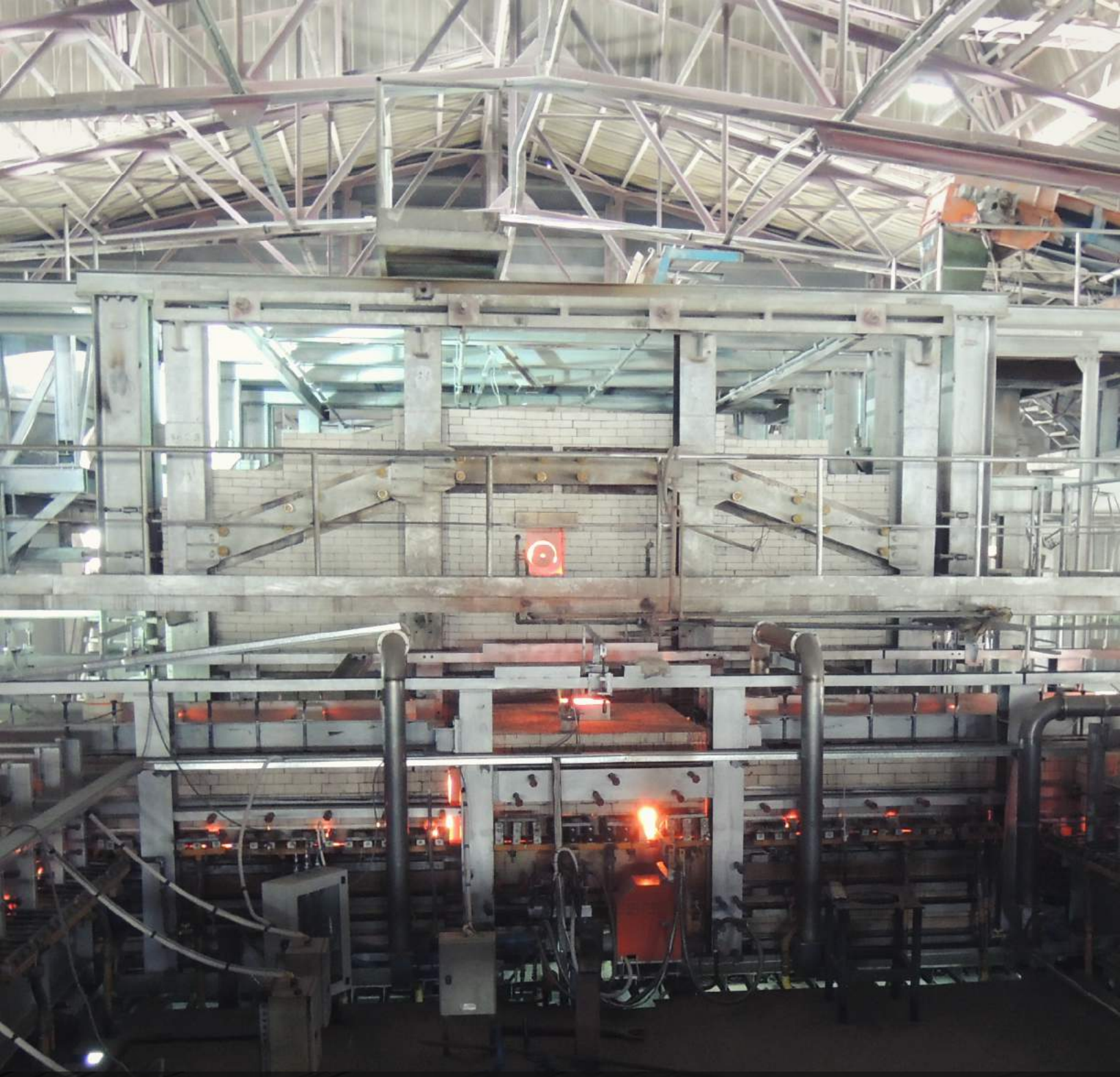
IYOG 22

One month on from the announcement of The International Year of Glass 2022...

On May 18th, the UN declared 2022 to be the International Year of Glass (IYOG), sparking a chain of excitement throughout the art, social and industrial worlds. Now that the fanfare has quietened a little, we wanted to pause for a moment and take stock of what this means and what is being done to turn this initial enthusiasm into productive outcomes. How might this global spotlight impact the glass industry, the wider community and the planet, and what can we expect to see in the coming eighteen months?

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF GLASS?

In 2018, led by The International Commission on Glass with the Community of Glass Associations and ICOM-Glass, more than 1500 academic institutions, associations, teachers, museums and industry representatives from nearly 80 countries and 5 continents came together in one voice to call for glass to be celebrated across all the fields it touches.



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The result of this collaborative effort is a dedicated year of recognition in 2022, with a diverse array of international and local events planned to showcase the important place glass holds in our lives - whether we realise it or not. If you are interested in glass sculptures, use glass tableware, keep up with the very latest glass-enabled technologies, have had a vaccine injection from a pharmaceutical glass vial, work in industrial glass manufacturing or have links through something else entirely, there is something for you in the coming year. Interested parties will find a host of seminars, conferences, museum exhibitions and bespoke publications ready to inspire a *new* look at this *ancient* material.

BASED ON PAST UN 'INTERNATIONAL YEARS' WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE?

In 1959 the UN declared the first 'International Year', launching a project aimed at highlighting some of the crucial issues impacting both people and the planet at the time. These have continued ever since, with International Years dedicated to concerns as varied as World Refugees (1959), Education (1990), Light and Light-based Technologies (2015), Crystallography (2014) and many more. Each past project set out clear targets, outlining the central philosophies and goals that it hoped to achieve, and invariably these declarations have inspired peer-led gatherings, new and broad education strategies, initiative funding and future planning to accelerate the meeting of those targets. The International Year of Glass will build on this established platform and we can expect to see technology, industry and artistic communities come together in the process.

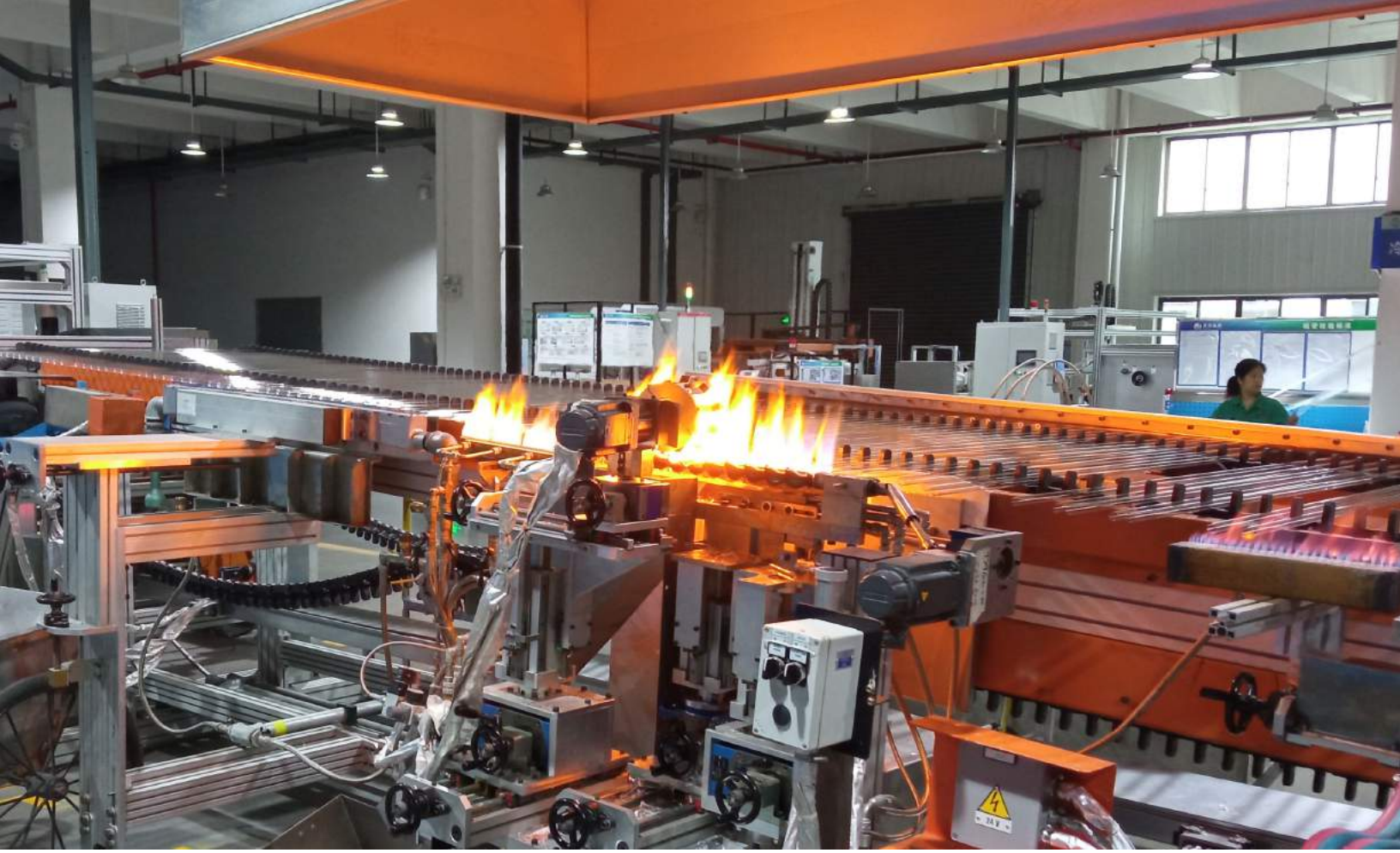
WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR 2022?

Glass is one of the most adaptable, trans-formative and sustainable materials ever created and the IYOG 2022 activities will look to tell the story of its fascinating history, which is so intertwined with our own. Moreover, the events of next year will serve to highlight the advantages and competitive edge that glass holds over other materials, not least the role it is set to play in future technological design and in underpinning sustainability initiatives such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. More on this in the following pages.

In the EU, 74% of container glass, the first glass sector in tonnage, is recycled which saves approximately 9 million tonnes of CO2 every year. (Glass Alliance Europe)

Green Credentials

Sustainability has been placed squarely at the front and centre of the IYOG 2022 project and as part of the UN's push towards its Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to the fact that it is made almost entirely from natural materials and is infinitely recyclable, glass also plays a key part in residential energy efficiency and renewable energy development and much is being done to combat the large energy and raw material resource demands for glass manufacturing. The IYOG will seek to highlight the positives and to encourage action on reducing the carbon footprint of glass production. The glass industry will have the opportunity to show how much it has achieved already and to outline plans to go further in contributing to global climate change targets.



THE GLASS INDUSTRY - HISTORY AND INNOVATION - BACK TO THE FUTURE

Glass has been with us for eons; the first evidence of glass-making dates back to around 3,600 BC in Mesopotamia, although some have suggested that it may go even further back in Egypt. Throughout history, glass has featured in the growth and development of society and industry - in the Renaissance, with Venice's dominance and colourful Murano glass, in the groundbreaking production of the sheet glass used in London's Crystal Palace and more recently in enabling a flourishing renewable energy movement - glass has a colourful past.

Its future is set to be even more extraordinary and the IYOG has come at the perfect time to showcase the exciting trends set to arrive soon. Some of the most exciting, boundary-pushing technologies relying on glass innovation include:

- Pharmaceutical glass, medical devices, optics, augmented / virtual reality / smart glasses
- Non-reflecting properties - essential for clean energy generation
- Bespoke smart coatings in buildings and construction - smart mirrors and photosensitive, switchable, flexible, transparent and well insulated glazing
- Developing substrates with functional integrations for electronics, particularly those with touch screens, fibre optics and OLEDs in iphones, laptops and in-car displays to name a few

Projects like the International Year of Glass enable progression in achieving world economic recovery and 'building back better' from the Coronavirus disease. Whether it's glass that has been to the moon and back or something as seemingly mundane as window panes, a beautiful drinking goblet or your smartphone screen, the magical substance that is glass has had a powerful presence in the lives of most people on earth for thousands of years. What wonders lie ahead for this most useful, but also beautiful, material? ■