

Michael Petry:  
*A Twist in Time*, installations and interventions  
Pallant House Gallery, 4 July, 2015 - 1 March 2016



## Michael Petry: A Twist in Time

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester

4 July 2015 – 1 March 2016

*A Twist in Time* is a new installation in the Queen Anne townhouse by the American contemporary multi-media artist Michael Petry (b.1960), featuring glass sculptures created in direct response to the forms of the grand staircase. Students and staff at Plymouth College of Art, as a professional development project, fabricated the spirals. Petry's *Bad Restoration* mirrors are made by a new glass technique of his own devising, and relate to the house's historic mirrors while echoing the Oscar Wilde's story 'The Picture of Dorian Gray'. Utilising traditional glass-making techniques Petry's large installation creates a dialogue with the Gallery's historic glass collections, exploring questions of gender, craftsmanship and decoration. He will also install *Ghosts* of the stair piece throughout the house, clear versions that blend into the background only to jump out at the visitor's eye.

Petry is interested in creation myths from across the globe and he will present several works that address Greek mythology. His *Libation to Dionysus* takes the form of a huge 24k glazed porcelain bowl filled with red wine, which glows when in direct sunlight and acts like a mirror when it is not. It is similar to a libation bowl he has made for the *Frontiers Reimagined* exhibition as part of this year's Venice Biennale. All of Petry's porcelain works are made to his design in the Chinese city Jingdezhen where pottery has been made for almost 2000 years.

His full sized bronze arrow *Libation to Eros* will also be shown along with many smaller glass and metal pieces from his *Lovers* series. These works explore the space between fine art and craft and are made under Petry's supervision by glass workers in the UK and in Murano (Venice). Petry has been at the forefront of the art world discussion about outsourcing, and work being made for artist by artisans, through his Thames & Hudson book, *The Art of Not Making*.

[www.pallant.org.uk](http://www.pallant.org.uk)

[www.michaelpetry.net](http://www.michaelpetry.net)

# A Twist in Time









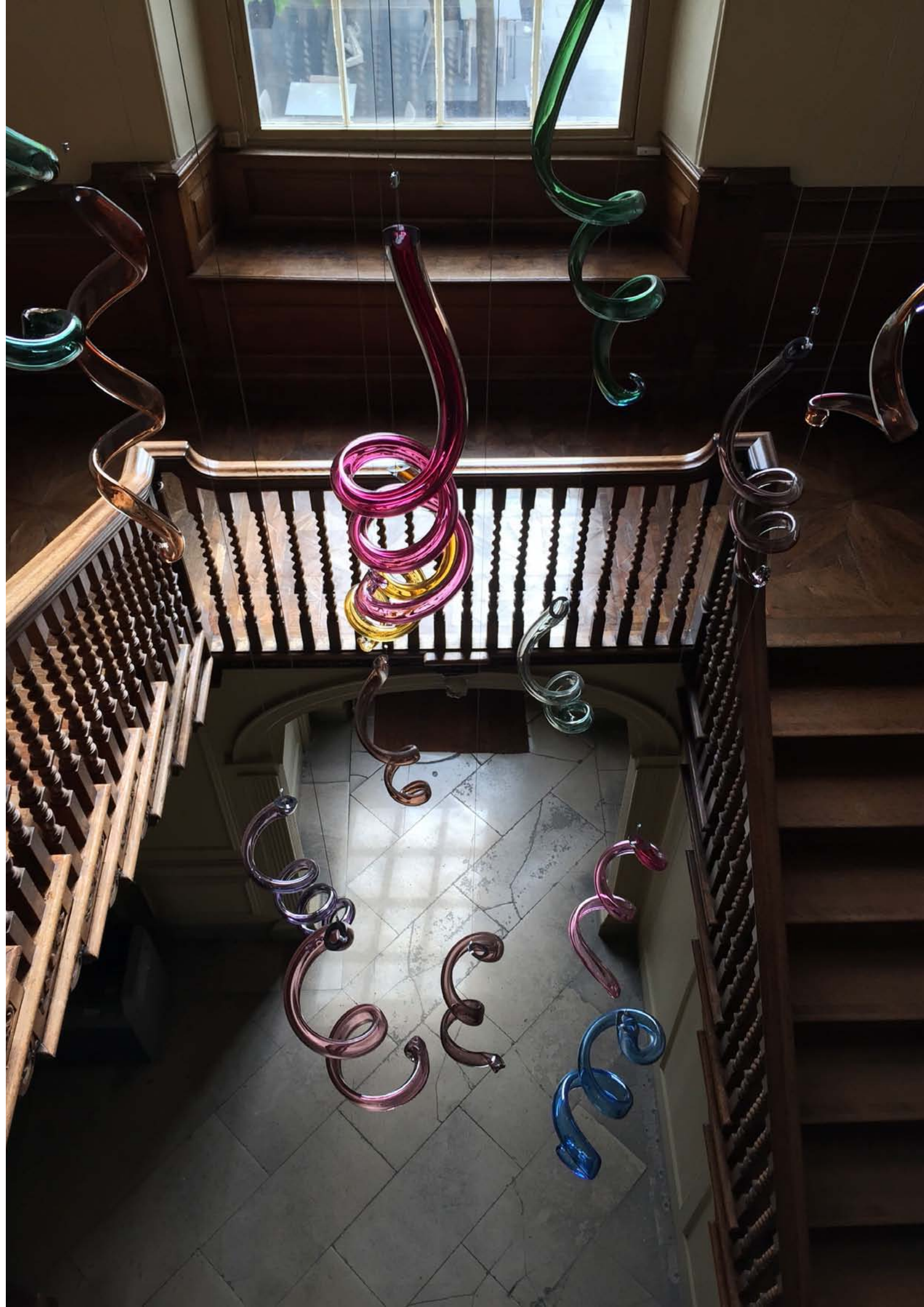


















### *A Twist in Time*

The breeze just outside the window, the light reflecting on the face of a golden mirror; the sound of a creaking wooden stair; the possibility, the notion, the belief you just saw the shadow of a ghost. And if you did see a spectre, who was it, and why are they haunting the grand stairs.

Art is always a bit like that ghost, it exists in the mind of the viewer as much as in the physical matter that makes up the objects we gaze upon. Who made it, and the stories behind it, are just as mysterious to many.

At Pallant House I am that ghost, or at least my work is. It is there on the stair, it is there on the wall, there in the case and always trying to catch your eye, yet it does not reach out to embrace you or caress your face. Perhaps it tries to engage you in a conversation but the words are lost, the sound is muffled and perhaps we speak a different language.

*A Twist in Time* hangs from the centre of the stairs, colourful glass spirals that reflect the wooden staves that hold up the hand rail, that your hand might even now be touching. Touch me, it whispers, but you dare not, you might break me, you might be caught with your hand furtively outreached, you might be seen, just like a ghost. The light passes through the spirals like it passes through a ghost, it is coloured and discoloured by that interaction, winding slowly down the stairs or climbing up them with a deeper breath.

*Bad Restorations* hang quietly in the hall, they too attract the light, for they are mirrors, the mirrors of Dorian Gray, the man who sold his soul to never grow old, but his portrait did. Like his own ghost, when he looked into a mirror he saw his own bad restoration, and the mirror shattered in horror. Dorian kept these mirrors from human sight, but now they hang, quietly reflecting you, the viewer, and possibly a sighting of his ghost. The gold glints, the silver reflects and the frames show the passage of much time, and we too look to mirrors to restore our image. But it is also always a bad restoration, for mirrors only show us the reverse of ourselves, never what others really see.

And there are *Ghosts*, clear glass versions of the stair, they appear where they want, in a corner, in a vitrine, casually upon a table in the sun, and then they seem to disappear, they mix in, the blend into the beautiful background of the house. Are they remnants of the making process, the giving birth to the art, or are they the lost brothers and sister of them, those that broke in the making, that shattered when they accidentally hit the floor, those that met an untimely artistic death? No one ever really knows what a ghost is, or what art it is, but how we love the mystery.

Michael Petry  
2015

# Bad Restoration



















# Libation to Eros







The Lovers





















# The Bed Chamber















The Fireplace









Upstairs table







# Libation to Dionysus









