

MEMENTO MORI

RODRIGUES GONÇALVES



MEMENTO MORI

The image of the skull appears throughout art history but also transcends this context, operating as a potent and universal reminder of the inevitability of death, and functioning within different traditions as an emblem of human ego, original sin, or violent rebellion. In *MEMENTO MORI* (2021–26), Rodrigues Gonçalves presents myriad variations on an inescapable theme.

Formed through heat, fracture, and controlled intervention, each work in this glass sculpture series captures a moment at which the material is pushed beyond equilibrium. At temperatures exceeding 1,000°C, molten glass is plunged into cold water, generating internal stress, distortion, and latent instability. Each object resolves itself as a skull, juxtaposing a smooth, closed surface with chromatic variation and structural tension.

In *MEMENTO MORI*, heat and cold act as opposing forces, generating resolved but unrepeatably outcomes. Form is neither preserved nor lost in manufacture but is instead fixed in the instant of a single, irreversible event. Each skull is titled after an influential figure or moment in history, situating it within an extended continuum of ambition, consequence, and time. The objects function as records of violent material encounter and immediately recognizable symbols of human frailty.

The most recent entries in the series were produced alongside master glassblowers at the UK National Glass Centre ahead of its July 2026 closure. The series thus also records endangered craft techniques and infrastructure, meditating on transformation and permanence beyond the object itself. It is presented here in its entirety for the first time, bringing together previously unseen works.

Michael Wilson
Senior Writer, Gagosian
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I will do it or die
2024
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
22K gold, and cast glass





I will do it or die

2024
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
22K gold, and cast glass



You are just a man

2024
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Sterling silver and cast glass



Time is money

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
22K gold, and cast glass



I will not die sober

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



There is no tomorrow!

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Don't bite more than you can chew

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



I will be back

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



*There is something more important than logic,
imagination*

2023
30 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Every child is an artist

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



I am your father

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Say your name

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



More than machinery we need humanity

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



*In case I don't see ya, good morning, good evening,
And good night!*

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



*We must accept finite disappointment but never lose
infinite hope*

2021-22
30 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



All I am offering is the truth

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Its not over until I win

2021-22
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Everyone's a whore, Grace. We just sell different parts of ourselves

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Sterling silver and cast glass



Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
cast glass



Vergoofin der flicke stoobin mit der bork-bork yubetcha!

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



If you are going through hell, keep going

2023
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Bazinga

2021-22
15 x 30 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Very nice

2023
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



*You either die a hero, or live long enough to see
yourself become the villain*

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



You just gotta keep livin'

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



I always tell the truth even when i lie

2021-22
30 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



That's what she said

2021-22
30 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Who is the chick? - which one?

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Blobby, blobby, blobby

2022
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass



Apply to name

2026
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass

Apply to name a skull, its title as a gesture toward eternity.





Apply to name

2026
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass

Apply to name a skull, its title as a gesture toward eternity.





Apply to name

2026
20 x 15 x 11.5 cm
Cast glass

Apply to name a skull, its title as a gesture toward eternity.





Focus

2020-2021
58 x 30 x 20cm
Glass, steel, aluminium, and brass



Cat Skeleton

2021-24
58 x 30 x 20cm
Polished cast bronze





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3

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