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The UN declared 2022 the International Year of Glass: we offer a deep dive into the astonishing work of the Blaschkas, 19th-century Bohemian craftsmen who filled the world's museums and universities with exquisitely crafted glass models of plants and marine invertebrates. Continuing the theme of undersea creatures, Maurizio Bettini's discussion of the enigma of the Sirens (as both mermaids and bird-women) is illustrated with the stunning work of Renaissance painter Pinturicchio. Antonio Marras writes about the dazzling creations of Roberto Capucci, themselves fitting for mermaids. Starchitect Oscar Tusquets Blanca presents Barcelona's Umbracle, an intriguing cast-iron conservatory breathing shade and breeze, paying homage to his inspired Catalan predecessor. A wry round-up discusses the sky-high recent prices for copies of the Mona Lisa. East meets West in articles on the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara and the epic work of Tuscan artist Galileo Chini on the decor for Bangkok's Throne Hall in 1908 Siam.

