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The views expressed in the Ausglass Magazine are not necessarily the views of the Ausglass National Executive or the Magazine Board.

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Acting President's Letter

Dear Members,

Greetings, from your temporary acting president. For now I have taken over the reins here in Canberra. We were all saddened to hear of the death of Elizabeth McClure's father on November 18th. Our thoughts are with Eliz and her family at this time. Elizabeth has flown home to be with her family till the New Year.

Organisation for the Conference and Workshops rolls on at an ever increasing pace - I hope this horse don't bolt with me - the reins seem slippery at times.

Seriously though, all events are shaping up well for a really exciting and stimulating time - a great start to '93.

Please note the deadline for full payment of all Conference and Workshop fees is th 16th December ie NOW!

Any queries or problems please don't hesitate to call our co-ordinator Miffy Farquharson or myself on (06) 249 5829 or FAX (06) 249 5722. All workshop enquiries should be directed to the workshop co-ordinator, Mikki Brown on the same number as above.

All our committee look forward to meeting you in Canberra, so get organised and see you there.

Regards

Kirstie Rea.

1993 AUSGLASS CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Day 1 Thursday 21 January

9am Morning tea and coffee available from the Left Blank Cafe, Canberra School of Art Cafe.

10-5.45pm REGISTRATION / Accommodation check in

10-12pm Hot Glass Demonstrations ongoing in Glass Workshop, CSA

12-2 Lunch - Left Blank Cafe

2-5 Hot Glass Demonstrations in Glass Workshop. Round Table open discussion on "Current issues in conservation of stained glass" with David Beavis (Aus). and "Furnace concerns: issues surrounding furnaces". open group discussion

6pm Opening International Directions in Glass Exhibition

Canberra School of Art Gallery

6.30pm Opening speech

7pm Public Lecture by Robert Bell (Aus)

Art Gallery of Western Australia International Directions in Glass

8pm Gallery closes

8.30 Welcome Buffet and Dance

Canberra School of Art Gallery Foyer.
Day 2  Friday 22 January

8.30  Late registration
      Breakfast - Left Blank Cafe

9am  Welcoming Address -
      Elizabeth McClure (president AUSGLASS)
      David Williams (Director, Canberra School of Art)
      Stephen Procter (Head of Glass, CSA)

9.30  Opening Address
      Geoffrey Edwards (Aust)
      Curator: National Gallery of Victoria

10.30  Morning Tea

Session 1

11am  Whose Compass?/Which Direction?
      Panel Response to the exhibition and issues surrounding
      'International Directions in Glass'
      Panel: Robert Bell, Glenn Cooke, Tony Hanning,
            Bronwyn Hughes, and Meza Rijsdijk

12pm  LUNCH - Left Blank cafe

Session 2

2pm  Noris Iannou (Aus)  Title to be confirmed.
3pm  Gillian Mann (Aus)  Title to be confirmed.
3.30  Marc Grunseit (Aus) - What is Australian Stained Glass?

4pm  Artists Talks
      Catherine Thomson (USA)
      Stephen Procter (Aust & GB)

4.30  Close

5.30  Opening Australian Students Exhibition
      Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Gorman House, Braddon.

7.30  Dinner

8.30  Opening AUSGLASS Members Show
      origins & originality
      Drill Hall Gallery, ANU

Day 3  Saturday 23 January

8am  Breakfast available Left Blank Cafe

Session 3

8.50  Introduction

9am  Origins and Originality
      Lecture by David McFadden from the Cooper Hewitt
      Museum, Smithsonian Institute  New York

9.45  Questions

10.00  Morning tea
Panel Response to Conference Theme & to issues raised by David McFadden. 
Panel: David McFadden, Cedar Prest, Geoffrey Edwards, Gerry King and Maureen Cahill

Questions
Lunch - Left Blank Cafe

Session 4

2pm Sue Rowley (Aus) - Throwing stones at glass houses - Craft Criticism looks at glass.

3pm Artists Talks
   Richard Royal (USA)
   Elizabeth Tapper (USA)
   Franz Xavier Hoeller (FRG)
   Maud Cotter (Ireland)

4pm Afternoon tea

Session 5

4.30pm Demonstrations
   Richard Royal (Aus) - Hot Glass
   Franz X Hoeller (Germany) - Cold Glass
   Catherine Thompson (USA) - Painting
   Elizabeth Tapper (USA) & Basil Hall (Aus) - Printmaking

6pm Close

Day 4 Sunday 24 January

Session 6

8.50 Introduction

9am Dale Chihuly (USA) Lecture
The Studio Glass Movement: Innovation or Tradition?

9.50 am Morning tea

10am David Wright (Aus) - Architectural Flat Glass Innovations
10.30 Giselle Courtney (Aus) - Title to be confirmed
11am Steven Paul Day (USA) - Marginal Glass

12pm Lunch

Session 7

2pm William Carlson (USA) - The Development of Glass Programmes

3pm Artists Talks
   David Reekie (UK)
   Hiroshi Yamano (Japan)
   Katsuya Oghita (Japan)
   Richard Whiteley (USA)
1993 AUSGLASS CONFERENCE PROGRAM

4.00pm  Afternoon Tea
4.30  Mystery session
6pm  Close of day
7pm  Grand Glass Auction & BUSH DANCE PARTY
Yarralumla Woolshed

Day 5  Monday 25 January
8am  Breakfast available Left Blank Cafe

Session 8
9am  Daniel Schwoerer & Lani McGregor (USA)  
- The Development of Bullseye Glass Company USA
9.45  Questions
10.00  Morning Tea
10.30am  John Croucher (NZ)  Title to be confirmed.
11.15  Questions
11.30  Grace Cochrane (Aus)  Title to be confirmed.
12.00  Questions
12.30  Conclusion; David McNeill, 
Head of Art Theory, Canberra School of Art.
1pm  Closing Lunch
2pm  AUSGLASS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Drawing by
Steven Paul Day
USA
INTRODUCING

SOME OF THE SPEAKERS
and
PANEL MEMBERS
for the
"ORIGINS
and
ORIGINALITY"
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

John Croucher.
I collided with the medium of glass in the mid 70's. Actually it was rather like boarding a train and settling back for a rather hectic journey. I worked in the beginning at flat glass and neon, before finally determining on furnace work as a focus. Because of New Zealand's isolation from the world glass scene in the 70's, much pioneering work was required to source raw materials, understand glass melting technology, refractories, and glass recipes, along with figuring out co-operative ways of surviving economically. All this was required before learning how to fashion hot glass. In fact my first attempts at glass melting and blowing were literally before I had laid eyes on it in the hot state. This has been, in hindsight, a most thorough way of learning about the many aspects of glass making. There's still a lot to learn.

Today there is a commitment to vessel making. I've lost interest in the Art/Craft debate, although I can see how it might fascinate academics and galleries. From a New Zealand perspective the world of glass is rapidly filling up with dancing dogs. I have a continual fascination with the chemistry of transparent and opal coloured glasses, and remain slightly astonished by the lack of experimental curiosity in the so-called "studio" glass movement in this area. Think of ceramics by comparison.
William Carlson
is currently lecturing at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the School of Art and Design. Bill is a prolific and well-known artist, having exhibited in well over 50 group, solo, and invitational exhibitions around the world. He has also curated exhibitions, the most recent being "3D-2D Regional Competition" at the South Bend Art Centre in 1990. In addition to all of this, Bill finds time to contribute to journals and give lectures and presentations worldwide. Bill will be speaking at the conference on "The Development of Glass Programmes", in Session 7, Day 4.

Dale Chihuly
is the founder of the Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle and one of only three American Artists ever to have held a solo show at the Louvre. He is considered as perhaps the greatest glass artist of the twentieth century and his work is collected by over 80 museums in America and abroad. Dale is giving a lecture in Session 6, Day 4 on "The Studio Glass Movement: Innovation or Tradition?"

Grace Cochrane
is a curator of Australian Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. She has been a member of both the Crafts Board and the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council as well as the Crafts Council of Tasmania and Australia. She spent six years researching and writing "The Crafts Movement in Australia: a history" with financial help from the Australia Council. Grace has a Masters Degree in Photography from the University of Tasmania. She was an extremely well received speaker at the 1991 Conference, and we are happy to include her in the coming program, since in the interim she has published her authoritative "encyclopaedia" of Australian Craft, which includes a great deal of important and significant information on the Australian Glass Studio Glass Movement. She will be speaking in Session 6, Day 5, on the topic "Destinations?"

Giselle Courtney
gained her Bachelor of Arts degree from Sydney College of the Arts in 1980. Since then she has been included in over 10 major solo and group exhibitions, including "A Body of Water", which toured Japan in 1991, and her solo exhibition in Indonesia in 1992. Giselle was a delegate at the 1988 Pilchuck Summer School, and is represented in the Makers Mark Gallery, Melbourne, to name just one. An inaugural member of the Glass Artists' Gallery, Giselle was co-director with Maureen Cahill until 1992. She is currently working full-time in her studio in Newtown, on work ranging from jewellery pieces to large sculpture. Giselle will be speaking on the topic "Adventures in Asia" in Session 6, Day 4.

Stephen Paul Day
Neil Roberts writes: Stephen Day was born in Iowa in 1954, I think. He has an MFA (Glass) from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. In New York, he teaches from time to time at the New York Experimental Glass Workshop. In Fraunau, Germany, he spends his summers as Artist-in-Residence at Bildwerk with Erwin Eisch. This (northern) autumn he worked as a Fellow at the CGCA in Wheaton Glass Village, New Jersey. He casts, and paints, and assembles, and sculpts about history and life's absurdities and joys. During this conference Stephen will be speaking on "Marginal Glass", in Session 6, Day 4.
Marc Grunseit

Marc Grunseit has had extensive involvement in art and creative crafts during his career. During 1982 Marc travelled extensively through Europe and the Middle East, studying ancient and modern glass in both hot and cold applications. He has many commissions, including a 270 sq ft reredos for the North Shore Synagogue, and a pair of windows for the Chapel by the Sea, Bondi. From 1989 to 1990 he was the President of Ausglass. Marc will be speaking on the topic "What is Australian Stained Glass?", in Session 2, Day 2.

Bronwyn Hughes

Bronwyn Hughes completed her Bachelor of Arts-Ceramic Design at (the then) Chisholm Institute of Technology in 1980. Immediately following, she was appointed as a tutor in the Department of Ceramic Design, and progressed to her current position as Senior Lecturer and Co-ordinator of Glass Studies at one of the most respected institutions in Australia, Monash University. Bronwyn has exhibited widely throughout Australia, and is represented at Albury Regional Arts Centre, among others. Bronwyn is presently the President of Ausglass Victoria and edits the Ausglass Magazine. She is currently conducting research into 20th Century Stained Glass for her M.A., at The University of Melbourne. Bronwyn will be a member of the panel discussing "Whose Compass?/ Which Direction?", in Session 1, Day 2.

Dr. Noris Ioannou

Dr. Noris Ioannou is a freelance writer and critic of historical and contemporary Australian crafts. Originally a secondary science teacher, Noris began freelance writing and research in the area of Australian material culture studies, historical and contemporary, in 1981. He has written and edited a number of books, including "Ceramics in South Australia 1836-1986" and "Craft in Society: an anthology of perspectives", as well as being a regular writer for various periodicals, and craft reviewer for the Adelaide newspaper, "The Advertiser". Noris will be speaking in Session 2, Day 2, on "An Antiopodean Perspective".

Lani McGregor

Lani McGregor was born in Hawaii and studied in Europe. She operated her own glass studio in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for 10 years prior to coming to Portland, Oregon, where for the last 7 years she has been director of sales and marketing at Bullseye Glass Company. Lani and Daniel Schwoerer will be talking at the conference about "The Development of Bullseye Glass Company, USA" in Session 8, Day 5.

Cedar Prest

Cedar Prest is a well-known Australian stained-glass artist based in Adelaide. Initially, Cedar trained overseas but now expresses a strong commitment to the development of an Australian expression and is very keen to utilise the resources of our country. She is currently working on several major commissions, including Sydney Airport and the second half of 48 windows in St. Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide. Cedar has spent over 4 months of 1992 in Fremantle, WA, where, together with Freedom Glass she has produced her own glass enabling her to pursue her interest in drawing on glass, particularly concentrating on color and texture. Cedar will be involved in the panel response to the conference theme, "Origins and Originality", in Session 3, Day 3.

Meza Rijsdijk

Meza Rijsdijk immigrated from the Netherlands to Australia in 1981, graduated from the Canberra School of Art in 1986, specialising in kilnformed glass and now currently works from her studio in Sydney producing both commercial and non-commercial work. Over the past years Meza has exhibited both nationally and internationally - 1992 Solo Exhibition at the Blaxland Gallery, Sydney and Crafts Triennial "Design Visions", Perth - and is represented in major collections including the Corning Museum, NY, and the Art Gallery of Western Australia. She has worked on many commissioned works varying from manufacturing to specification, to architectural feature pieces for the new Parliament House and the Parklane Hotel, Sydney. Meza will be involved in the panel discussion "Whose Compass?/ Which Direction?", in Session 1, Day 2.

Daniel Schwoerer

Daniel Schwoerer studied glass at the University of Wisconsin under Harvey Littleton and operated his own glassblowing studio for five years prior to starting Bullseye Glass

(from Glass Arts Society Journal, 1991, p.103)

Amongst all the usual concerns of making a living, I am currently interested in photo-sensitive glasses, and have undertaken the somewhat daunting task of putting together a book on glassmaking for the studio artist.

Sue Rowley
is Director of Visual Arts, School of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong where she teaches History of the Arts and Visual Arts Theory. She initially studied Sociology and Politics, graduating with a BA(Hons) (Monash) in 1971, and taught Sociology and Women's Studies until 1983. She completed her Bachelor of Creative Arts (Wollongong) in 1985, majoring in Art Theory and Textiles. Her artwork included textiles, mixed media and photography. At present she concentrates on research and writing, and her main areas of interest are craft theory and cultural history. Her writing on craft is published in a number of journals and anthologies, including Noris Ioannou, editor, Craft in Society (Fremantle Arts Press, Perth, 1992) and Bob Thompson, editor, Forceps of Language (Craft Realities, Sydney, 1992).

In July 1992 she convened Interventions - a Conference on Craft Theory and Exhibition. Her doctoral research is on gender and nationalism, a study of Australian bush mythology of the 1890's. With Susan Magarey and Susan Sheridan, she co-edited Debutante Nation - Feminism Rewrites the 1890's (Allen and Unwin, Sydney to be published early in 1993). She also writes on feminism and contemporary visual arts, and her essay "Going Public - Getting Personal" is included in Dissonance - Feminism and the Visual Arts (Catriona Moore, editor, Allen & Unwin, Sydney (in press)).

1993 Ausglass Conference

Closing Date
The closing date for Conference Registration is

16th December, 1992

Please get your forms AND money to us by that date or miss out on the conference of the decade.

If you think we can help in any way contact Elizabeth McClure or Miffy Farquharson on (06) 249 5829.

1993 Ausglass Conference Workshops

Don't forget that there are some great workshops on AFTER the Conference. There are still places left for participants in the Glass Cutting, Grinding and Engraving; and Glass Printmaking Workshops. ENROL NOW!

(06) 249 5829 for more information.

1993 Ausglass Conference TRADE DISPLAY

During the conference we plan to hold a Trade Display to enable delegates to peruse materials relevant to our craft.

If you wish to be involved, or know someone who wishes to be involved, RING ELIZABETH McClURE NOW on (06) 249 5829 for more information.
One artist's overseas experience is only indirectly relevant to the many other Australians also experiencing off-shore glass involvements. Never-the-less, in view of an exhibition review in the New York City-based magazine, 'Glass' No. 46, the queries of our 'Ausglass' magazine editor could be usefully responded to: that is, "how was the solo show (at Judy Youens Gallery, July 1991) organised? How was it received? Problems encountered? My reaction to the critique?" Put simply: what was the CONTENT and CONTEXT of this show?

For this exhibition I showed only ten works—seven freshly air-freighted from my Adelaide studio; three previously-shown works sent from my U.S.A. agent, Habatat Galleries, Detroit. Over 40 works have been exported to U.S.A. since 1989 (all uninsured, and with only one breakage). They will stay within my glass gallery network till sold or donated to museums. For me, the current Australian market hardly justifies their return. Gallery director contacts were made at the 1989 Chicago International New Art Forms Exposition (CINAFE) and during two other U.S.A. tours, resulting in twelve group shows and two solos (Houston and New York City) thus far.

Incidentally, the Houston, Texas show which Cecily Horton reviewed in 'Glass' No. 46 was exactly 21 years after my previous U.S.A. solo glass show and sale held on graduation from Massachusetts University.

Reena Kazman’s article in ‘Crafts Arts’ No. 25 magazine, ‘making Connections (Australian Glass Exhibits in the USA)’ provides a detailed, but not comprehensive, comment (and I quote) ‘the free-spending 1980’s evolving into the penny-pinching 1990’s’.

The C. Horton review, (very welcome but not solicited by myself or the gallery), presented a bouquet of both ‘orchids and ivy’—as all balanced, thoughtful reviews should. It contained one pithy ‘purple-prose’ description—'from the hallucinogenic to the indigestible'. I am hereby calling for tenders for a siren-sounding, flashing, purple neon sign of those six choice words, to be automatically activated upon entry into my studio stock room.

If one accepts the criticism in ‘Object’ Winter ‘92, page 35, by curator Peter Timms concerning ‘embarrassingly didactic craft with glass lettering’, referring to another glass artist, then such an apt neon sign would be without artistic redemption. However, such thrust and parry between artist and onlooker has always been essential to the ‘Art Game’ as I have practised it, since my first Performance Art piece of 1968.

Other acidic ‘gems’ thrust in my direction include media comments by two critics—\[\ldots\]\n
Other observers of our recently-evolved Studio Glass Movement reject the notion of a special context for ‘Glass art’—‘the medium is the message’ slogan—'that motivated much of the 60’s and 70’s studio glass content. For instance, at least two prominent Australian ‘sculpture’ or ‘fine art’ gallery directors would neither exhibit or promote an artist as a ‘Glass Artist’, nor subscribe to nor advertise in ‘Craft Arts’ magazine due to the perceived function and media-bound context. So how much does the politics of Art Practice drive that very real but oft-despised Art! Craft division?

It would seem impertinent to ask for my ten Texan-shown works to be reviewed in a non-media-specific art journal since they were shown in a specialist glass gallery and by an artist readily identified with studio glass practice. Thus the ‘context’ was axiomatic, yet the status quo can change. For instance, even such
a pillar of studio glass, Sweden’s Ann Wolff, in ‘Neues Glass’ magazine, 2/90, explains her surprise departure from the ghetto-mentality and exclusivity of glass circles in favour of a broader art practice—‘the suicide of a glasshouse’, (N.G. 3/90). Ann is certainly not alone in seeking a brand new audience.

Apart from those examples of clashes between divisions of the broad ‘Art Culture’, we have polarised personal preferences within the ‘Glass Art Culture’ itself. One workable definition for ART is: ‘any object that attracts at least two logically-sustainable yet irreconcilable aesthetic judgments’. Those two viewpoints could be correct manifestations of differing criteria, equally justifiable. To illustrate that key point I close with a personal reference. The recently published Kristallnacht book/competition attracted over 1000 entries, with two Australians in the 94 published glass works. In contrast was a U.S.A. museum glass curator’s decision concerning a suggested ‘gift from the artist’ work in glass. Specifically, my work, ‘War Zone’ received a Kristallnacht Silver Award, whilst my very similar work, ‘N-O-Zone’ was turned down as a gift to the museum. Would that apparent contradiction be over-simplified in equation form, thus: ‘same work plus different jurors equal opposite verdicts’. In principle, that example of the ‘Inclusion/Exclusion syndrome is as it should be, since even our highly focused ‘Glass Art Culture’ could not sustain unanimity of opinion and survive long-term. Does not controversy imply diversity; diversity assist resilience; resilience promote longevity; longevity is a factor of impact; impact equal historical significance??

There is no formula for creating ‘significant’ work of course and much well-publicised work will be judged not to have achieved ‘significance’ long-term. That accolade largely depends on the aesthetic values of future reviewers/collectors/peer groups, (i.e. their own context) coinciding (or not) with the ‘content’ under question.

Stephen Skillitzi

Those Ausglass members wishing to purchase the Kristallnacht Project book ARTISTS CONFRONTING THE INCONCEIVABLE for the discounted artists’ price of $US40.00 plus $5.00 Sea mail from USA (instead of $US100 per copy) could phone Stephen Skillitzi on (08) 298 4156.

P.S. The other Australian in Kristallnacht was Neil Roberts (Bronze Award).

The following review is printed in order to place Stephen’s quote from it in its context.

REVIEW: STEPHEN SKILLITZI
Judy Youens Gallery, Houston,TX.

This exhibition of his distinctive cast-glass sculptures was Australian Stephen Skillitzi’s first American solo show. Originally trained at the University of Massachusetts, Skillitzi returned to Australia in 1971 and became one of the pioneers of its hot studio-glass movement. Although he has exhibited widely abroad his work has not been seen in any breadth in this country until recently.

Over the years, Skillitzi has evolved a unique style, one that he explores in a variety of scales from the monumental to the domestic. Much of the grander work is the result of commissions but, even when modestly sized, as in this exhibition, the artist’s work is marked by a high degree of technical and formal ambition. In addition, Skillitzi reveals an omnivorous appetite in his choice of subject matter. Recent work explores not only ancient and primitive cultures, but also Shakespeare, current environmental concerns, the battle between the sexes, modern art movements, and the Persian Gulf War. As if to underscore the teeming thematic abundance, Skillitzi pulls out all the stops technically. He revels in pushing his materials to the limit. Most of the work consists of lost-wax kiln-cast glass, intricately modelled, which is often etched and then, inevitably it seems, further enriched by elaborately applied metallic electroplate elements. The results range from the hallucinogenic to the indigestible.

There is no denying that much of Skillitzi’s work in this exhibition is overly theatrical. The frontal, stagelike format and the vignette-like positioning of the figural elements dictate such a reading. At its best, as in Object of Veneration, the work possesses an operatic power in which the obsessive technical manipulation reinforces the formal composition and lends energy to the subject. At other times, however, the electroplating overwhelms the cast model and the result is confused, without conviction—much ado about not enough. One hopes that, in the future, Skillitzi will combine his wide-ranging eye and technical bravura with some judicious editing. The results would be worth seeing.

Sybren Valkema: Promoter of ‘Free Glass’

This article was first published in ‘Modern Glas’ 1991/3, the bulletin of the Association of Friends of Modern Glass in the Netherlands. Written by Henk Hollaar, it again reminds us how recently ‘Studio Glass’ developed, even in Europe. I thank ‘Modern Glass’ for permission to translate and edit the article for Ausglass readers.

Gerrie Hermans

In the summer of 1991, a retrospective exhibition of Sybren Valkema’s work opened in Leerdam in the Netherlands. Now aged 75, it was organised to commemorate his life time in glass, as artist, educator of artists and enthusiastic promoter of studio glass.

In 1943, at the age of 24, he became a drawing teacher at the School for Crafts and Arts, later the Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam. In the same year he met A.D. Copier who had founded the Glass School at the Leerdam Glass Factory. Copier wanted to extend the course with the addition of training in Glass Decoration and he asked Valkema to lecture in Aesthetics. Initially students executed Copier and Valkema designs but later developed their own images. It was at this school that Valkema became aware of the possibilities of hot glass. In 1953 the school closed and merged with the Leerdam Technical School but Valkema continued to work with the students to develop a furnace for educational purposes and over the years series of production and unique pieces were produced.

In 1969 Valkema organised the first European exhibition of ‘Free Glass’ (studio glass) in Leerdam. By now he was the Deputy Director of the Crafts and Arts School in Amsterdam, responsible for management, curriculum and the construction of a new building. He incorporated a courtyard within the new building which housed a workshop for bronze casting and glassmaking and gave sculptors and glass artists the opportunity to work together. Through the planning for the new building he met Gerrit Rietveld, its architect. It was renamed the Rietveld Academy after Rietveld's untimely death in 1964, while the building was still under construction.

In 1959 the Corning Exhibition was dominated by the work of factories; by 1979 nearly all the ‘New Glass’, in a Corning Exhibition which toured the world came out of small studios. The great change, started at the end of the fifties by Harvey Littleton and Dominick Labino, had spread around the world.

Leerdam Glass was represented in a touring exhibition of European designers in the United States in 1962. These designers were invited to participate in the World Congress of Craftsmen in 1964. Sybren Valkema and Willem Heesen attended one of the workshops where Harvey Littleton demonstrated with the Labino propane-fuelled furnace and electric lehr, installed in the grounds of Columbia University. Glass designers from all over the world were enthusiastic and many handled a blowing pipe for the first time. It was proven that one could work with hot glass in a small studio, just like a potter; it was also shown that glass - the oldest man-made material - could be used by the artist himself as a plastic material. Littleton suggested that Heesen and Valkema build a similar furnace and try it themselves: Valkema did just that in 1965 in Amsterdam.

Elsewhere in Europe the possibilities were largely ignored, except at the Royal College of Art in London where Sam Herman, an ex-Littleton student, built small furnaces with students from 1967. Although the Royal College had a glass department, the approach was entirely different; a professional glass maker executed the designs of the students.

Back in the Netherlands, Valkema was given tools by the Leerdam factory which was winding down its production. (Other tools were given to the Museum of Antiquity!) In 1969 the Glass Department at the Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam officially opened and immediately attracted students from all over the world. Glass was officially a part of Ceramics, as it was at the University of Wisconsin and the Royal College of Art, and only in the third year of the course could students elect to take glass as a minor subject. Only in the fourth year was it offered as a major study. The course was unique in Europe: other glass courses were directed to industry or design.

continued on page 28 ...
BEFORE CHRIST

2 Billion BC Obsidian formed in volcanoes
3000 BC Possible beginnings of human glasswork
2300 BC Earliest known glass-Mesopotamia
   Beads and amulets often from vitreous paste
1500 BC 500 year flowering of kiln-formed glass
   (wood-fired, eg. precious "stones")
1400 BC Lost wax glass casting, sand casting
   Gold & glass worked by same craftsmen
   Glass "ingots" traded throughout Middle East
   (continued until 18th century AD!)
1300 BC Mesopotamians use glass for mosaic
   Egyptians learn glass from Mesopotamians,
   develop sophisticated colour technology
1200 BC Hollow ware develops (often core-formed)
   Pressed and moulded glass in Egypt
1000 BC Transparent glass in Mesopotamia & Egypt
   (does not supersede, simply extends)
   Glass develops in China
600 BC Persian glass emerges
   (characterised by deep carving)
400 BC Egyptian glass flowers again
   Extended use of canework
250 BC Glass reaches a peak of diversity
   (over next 250 years-Cummings)
230 BC Chinese engraved glass figures
200 BC Alexandria remains prime centre
   for elite glass craft
100 BC Ingenious invention of blowpipe revolutionises glass
20 BC Gradual decline of quality kiln work
   & some architectural applications but explosive
development of blown decorative & domestic ware

-EARTH COOLING
-TROY
-STONEHENGE
-MYCENAEA
-TAMERLANE
-SACKS DAMASCUS
-AMENHOTEP IV
-SANSKRIT
-LITERATURE
-SHANG DYNASTY
-PHoenician
-ALPHABET
-GEOMETRY
-DEMOCRACY
-PARTHENON
-ARCHIMEDES
-COLOSSUS OF RHODES
-EGYPT TAKEN OVER
   BY GREEKS,
   THEN ROMANS
-ROME DOMINANT
-ALEXANDER THE GREAT
AFTER CHRIST

1 AD Syrians specialise in free blown work; -POMPEII
Alexandrians in moulded, cut, engraved, millefiori etc
  Glazed windows -ARCH OF TITUS

2 AD Enamelling (Syrian discovery) becomes highly sophisticated in Alexandria

8 AD Very specialised engraving develops -SCIENCE
100 Seine/Rhine becomes important glass region
    (spread by Romans using Syrian craftsmen) VANISHES

600 Window glass made by crown process (blowing & spinning)
    although Syrians using technique as early as 1 BC.

850 Almerian glass production -KNOWLEDGE PASSES BACK TO WEST

1080 Augsburg windows, Germany

1100 Daring use of stained glass permits -LONG WAR
    Gothic architectural revolution
    but vessel making stagnates BETWEEN FAITH & REASON BEGINS

1120 Glassmakers partly "nomadic"
    (following receding forests that fed furnaces)

1220 Venetian glassmakers guild formed (though origins earlier)
    Chartre cathedral -TARTARS WRECK HAVOC IN MUSLIM WORLD

1250 Arabs using Chinese lenses (often beryl)
    Stained glass windows in Nth Europe, glass mosaics in South
    La Sainte-Chapelle, Paris -FLYING BUTTRESSES

1291 Venetian glass moves to Murano -METAL TYPECASTING IN KOREA

1317 Venetian mirrors with tin & mercury coating (learned from Rhine)

1320 Silver stain -BLACK DEATH

1350 Flashed glass -PERSPECTIVE DRAWING

1380 Stained glass stippling -ARABIC NUMERALS

1500 Diamond cutting, diamond engraving
    Rhine centres develop sheet glass
    (largely cylinder method) -REFORMATION

1550 Venetian scientific glass (thermometers etc)
    Venetian decorative glass at its peak
    Sweden's first glassmakers (from Venice) -COPERNICUS
    -SCIENCE REBORN -GREAT COMET

 ausglass
17th, 18th & 19th CENTURIES

1600 Microscope, telescope
1615 English Royal Proclamation forbids wood fuel for glassmaking (disappearing forests)
1648 Ground glass joints (stoppers etc)
   French develop cheaper glass
1660 Flameworking blossoms
   Era of the chandelier begins
1676 Lead glass developed in England (Ravenscroft)
1687 Invention of cast plate in France,
   large quality mirrors now possible
1695 Louis XIV sets up Royal Glass Factory
   (now St Gobain)
1750 Darby's reverberatory furnace for glass
   (became more important for steel!)
1760 Benjamin Franklin's bi-focals
   Stiegel
1771 Hydrofluoric Acid; Kosta
1788 Waterford crystal
1800 Glass eyes
1820 Machine pressed glass in America
   Elaborate Bohemia glass in Europe
   Hand-blown glass in Australia
1840 Mirror silvering process patented
1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition
   (signals future glass age)
1870 Hand made incandescent globes
   Emile Galle
   Sand blasting patented in America by Tilghman
1878 Tiffany; Boda
1885 Industrial Revolution catches up with glass
   Heavy rollers used in sheet manufacture
   Hand blowing survives as decorative art
   Stained glass & vessel production in Australia
1896 Transparent walls

-RENAISSANCE
-GALILEO DIES
-NEWTON BORN
-THE PLAGUE
-STATISTICS INVADES MEDICINE
-EUROPEANS IN AMERICA
-LINNAEUS CATALOGUE OF PLANTS & ANIMALS
-INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
-EUROPEANS INVADE AUSTRALIA
-POPULATION EXPLOSION BEGINS ELECTRICITY
-CHOLERA IN INDIA
-CELL NUCLEUS DISCOVERED
-DARWIN, PASTEUR, MARX
-VAN GOGH
-MAXWELL, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
-TELEPHONE
-AUSTRALIAN RULES
-IMMUNISATION
-PHOTOGRAPHY
-DEPRESSION

ausglass 15
20th CENTURY

1902 Glass bricks
1903 Automatic bottle-blowing machines
   Stueben glass
1904 Commercial Neon
1908 Lalique
1912 Marinot; Orrefors
1914 Commercial Bora-silicate glass
   Australian Crystal Glass Co established in Sydney
1915 Glass blowers lathe
1920 Fusing alternative to leading (though technique itself not new)
   Fixed rollers, moving table stretches sheet glass
1925 Skyscrapers & glass age under way
   Zetland Glass Bottle Works opened in Melbourne
   Gate & Hald at Orrefors
1930 1st commercial production of glass fibres
   Air quenching patents make tempering commercially feasible
   Patterned textures on glass sheet blossoms
1935 Refinement of glass bricks
   Alan Sumner, Napier-Waller, Norman St Clair Carter
   develop Australian stained glass
1945 Czech glass expands on long tradition into sculpture: glass as a medium emerges
   Invisible windows
   Meistermann pioneers leaded glass revival in Germany
   William Gleeson pioneers experimental approach in Aust.
1950 Dalle de verre
   Glass curtain wailing
   Stephen Moore's stained glass in Australia
1959 Douglas Annand-Australian innovator
   Pilkington's Float revolutionises sheet manufacture
1962 Eisch, Littleton, Labino et al:
   Studio glass is born
1968 Kossatz, French, Wright, Prest, Zimmer in Australia
1975 Pilkington float plant opens at Dandenong;
   Glassblowing w'shop opens at Jam Factory, Adelaide

© Graham Stone 1992 Cold Glass Access Workshop
AUCTION

To establish the
VICKI TORR MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

It has been suggested to the executive of Ausglass to found the "Vicki Torr Memorial Scholarship", to honour Vicki Torr's contribution to Australian Contemporary Glass and to assist young Australian glass artists.

We want to give it a go!
The auction and the end of the conference is the ideal opportunity to establish the financial basis for such a task.

With the results of the auction in hand we will discuss its future at the Annual General Meeting, to assure the input of all members.

Please keep in mind the auction and its aim!
Make your best work available for the best purpose ever.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How can life be so cruel as to snatch untimely away an artist so cherished as Vicki Torr.

Old fashioned and sentimental statement it may be but who amongst us who knew Vicki can deny feeling a large empty space, a poignant loss, the shock of her death.

Vicki brought a breath of vitality and a clear note of honesty to her skill. Her deftness in glassworking is almost unparalleled in her chosen technique. Her fragile beauty sometimes breathtaking.

I am sure all who dealt with Vicki Torr at any level could not but be impressed by the disarming graciousness of her character. She will be sorely missed by many.

Jeff Hamilton
28 September 1992
MAKING FACES IN GLASS

Ever since I began working in glass I have been interested in depicting the human face and figure. This may well be the outcome of a passion I have for life drawing. For some years now I have been drawing the human figure from life for two hours each week and if time permitted I would like to do more. Some time ago I asked myself: “what can be done about depicting the human face and figure in glass apart from drawing and painting on the glass?” The answer I arrived at was relief moulding in glass, and after much experimenting I have devised a technique which works very successfully.

Once I had produced a few pieces of moulded glass I found that my technique raised a variety of questions about how glass relief “works” in the artistic setting. The most intriguing feature of the technique is that it is neither painting nor “sculpture in the round”. This it shares in common with all relief sculpture, and the artist must wrestle with tricky problems of how to show depth and perspective. In this respect I arrived at an instructive to look carefully at some famous works: for example, Ghiberti’s sculptured figures and scenes in the cast bronze door panels of the Florence Cathedral Baptistry, and the ancient Greek frieze of The Parthenon. The former is in high relief whilst the latter is in low relief. Glass, however, introduces yet another dimension by virtue of its transparency. Relief moulded glass which is strongly illuminated from behind will be beautifully luminous but will appear to lack form (or shape). To arrest the eye at the glass surface it seems necessary to make that surface slightly opaque, or perhaps translucent. This may involve texturing the surface, matting the surface with enamel, or using opalescent glass. I also found it possible to accentuate form by overworking glass surfaces with strips of texture and welded steel. There is probably a great variety of techniques which can be used to enhance the relief effect, but my present aim is not to dwell upon these. Rather it is to describe a practical technique of glass moulding for readers who may be interested. What now follows is a full description of my method.

All told, the objective is to make a relief model in clay and to duplicate it in glass. Once the clay model is made it must be cast in plaster as an intermediate step to glassworking. This means that you will retain a permanent record of the original model and ensures that there will be no limit to the number of identical glass pieces which can be produced. So firstly we turn our attention to the clay model.

The clay model (which doesn’t have to be kiln-fired) will nevertheless be limited in size by your kiln. Measure the size of your kiln internally (depth and width) and make sure the model is well within these dimensions. Construct the model on a piece of plate glass or formica a little larger in depth and width than your kiln. In height the model may rise to approximately one-third of its width or depth, whichever is smaller. Bear in mind that low relief is easier to mould in glass than high relief, and for a beginning exercise it might be best to keep the relief fairly low. As an example, consider a life-sized model of the human face viewed frontally. If the model measures 230 mm from top to bottom and 150 mm in width, the tip of the nose should not protrude more than 50 mm above the baseplate. It is most important that the angled surfaces of the model such as cheeks, chin and forehead should slope upward and not be undercut. Near vertical slopes are to be avoided if possible for ease both in plaster casting and glass moulding. Fine detail such as that between lips and around eyelids is not always easy to mould in glass and should be slightly accentuated in the clay model. Some detail such as hair, etc. can be worked as broad grooves by inscribing with metal tools. (All of my clay-working tools come from the kitchen cutlery drawers.)

Once the model is made it must be cast in plaster. Build a square reservoir around the model using strips of sheet metal approximately 100 mm high and bent at right angles in the middle to form corners. Arrange four right-angled pieces with ends overlapping by clamping overlapping sections with spring clips and caulking the lower edges with clay (fig. 1). Once this arrangement is in place and level it is time to mix the plaster. Calculate roughly the volume of wet plaster mix you will need to cover the model by at least 10 mm at the highest point. My rule of thumb method of mixing plaster is as follows: Fill a bucket with powder loosely from the bag, then add water such that the “wet” level is the same as the former “dry” level. Put your hands into the bucket, mixing and squeezing all lumps until the mixture is smooth. By that time all bubbles should have ceased. Work as swiftly as possible then pour gently over the model to the full depth required. The mixture should be wet rather than creamy or sluggish to pour. Next allow the plaster to harden and season for about twelve hours, remove the retaining metal, invert the slab, slide off or gently lever up the base plate, and peel out the clay model from the plaster cavity. You are now ready for the next step of casting.
Install the sheet metal retaining wall around the slab again, ready to fill the cavity left by the clay model and to create a new plaster slab over the entire surface approximately 25 mm thick. The retaining wall should be assembled to make a slab of such a size to fit neatly into the kiln for drying. Before you pour for the second time two important things must be done:

1) Smear the entire surface of the model cavity and the slab with vaseline to make a water barrier and enable release. Be meticulous! Use a vaseline soaked rag to cover every square millimetre evenly and smoothly.

2) Lay a sheet of wire reinforcing mesh in the mould such that it stands off the surface by about 15 mm.

Pour the plaster, allow a few hours to set, remove the sheet metal retaining wall, then scrape the top surface with a metal straightedge to smooth and level the slab. Allow twelve hours to season. Stand the combined slabs on edge and gently prise them apart by inserting knives between them around the edges. If your model is not too steeply sloped and if vaseline has been well applied the slabs should separate with little trouble.

Now that you have a reinforced plaster slab with a relief cast replica of your original model, you are equipped with a die for pressing a glass mould. Complete the following procedure:

1) Dry the new slab in the kiln at 80-100 °C for a few hours with the kiln door partially open.
2) Seal the surface with plaster sealing paint.
3) Apply a coat of high gloss lacquer.
4) Grease the dry glossy surface by dusting and polishing with Locksmith's graphite powder until the surface feels slippery.

The next step involves the use of a die box, a moulding box, and a press (figs. 2,3).

My wooden die box is made of a square of particle board with a heavy timber frame around the outside. The frame which forms the side of the box is approximately 100 mm in height. The plaster die fits neatly inside it cushioned on a layer of vinyl linoleum. The die is locked in place by set screws to prevent it falling out when the box is inverted. The moulding box is made of four strips of steel 100 mm wide, 5 mm thick welded at the ends to form an open square. A steel plate with four "retaining corners" fits snugly over the open square and forms a lid which will not slide off. The moulding box is placed on top of the plaster die and must be slightly smaller in size than the die slab, allowing, say, 10 mm around all edges. Note that the metal moulding box must be placed in the kiln after the mould is pressed, so dimensions of moulding box, die, and die box must therefore be planned accordingly.

Of all items of equipment needed, the press is probably the most difficult to make or acquire. Mine is a screw press which I built myself (fig. 3). Basically it presses a thick square of steel reinforced particle board into the metal moulding box to compress the contents of the box. It clears the inside of the moulding box by 5 mm all around. Pulling with a force of 42 kg (half my body weight) on the end of the 40 cm long handle (one foot braced against the frame) creates a calculated force of approximately 8 tonne, exerting a
pressure of approximately 5 kg/cm$^2$ on the moulding powder. (This assumes efficiency of approximately 50%.) The screw press works brilliantly but an alternative design which consists of a welded channel iron frame and hydraulic car jack is suggested as simpler to construct (fig. 7). I haven't tried this but it should work and be reasonably cheap to build. The jack can be bought as an auto accessory.

![Fig. 3 Screw press used for pressing the mould and raising the die box.](image)

Now for a description of how to press the mould:

1) Install the wooden die box containing the plaster die in the press (fig. 4). Make sure the surface is well lubricated with graphite powder.

2) Place the moulding box on the die and prepare to fill it with moulding powder.

(At this point an important explanation is required, so we pause briefly in the description of procedure. There are two powders I use for pressing moulds and it is important that they have the following properties:

(i) Powder must compact very solidly when compressed (i.e. make a good sand castle).

(ii) Powder must not change chemically when heated or generate gas as whiting does.

(iii) Powder must contain no water.

(iv) Powder must be cheap and easily available.

(v) Powder must be re-usable several times if not indefinitely.

I have found that the two powders which fulfil the above requirements admirably are vermiculite (finely granulated), and zinc oxide. Both materials have their advantages and disadvantages and I shall describe how to use them both, but on balance my first choice is vermiculite.)

![Fig. 4 Pressing the mould. Press is screwed down and ram compresses zinc oxide powder against the die surface.](image)

2a) Pressing vermiculite: Fill the moulding box to the brim with vermiculite granules. As vermiculite is very light and compresses to at least two-thirds its loose volume it is helpful to place a temporary "extension frame" on top of the moulding box to retain overfill. Bring down the press and compress the vermiculite to the full level of the moulding box. Another method of pressing is to press repeatedly, refilling the moulding box after each press. If you choose this method be sure to score the powder face heavily to allow keying between successive layers. Otherwise layer separation might become a problem at a later stage.

2b) Pressing zinc oxide: Put on your filter mask. Take a piece of soft pre-fired "Fibrefrax" paper 2 mm thick and gently tear a portion off it, say half the size of your hand. Gently split the paper through the middle if you can, making two pieces about 1 mm thick. Lay these pieces on the surface of the plaster die gently pressing them down to conform with the shape of the die. Overlap pieces to cover the entire area of the die which is to be duplicated in glass. When you have completely covered the surface with Fibrefrax paper leaving no chinks carefully fill the moulding box with zinc oxide. Be careful not to disturb the Fibrefrax paper! When the box is full to the brim and level bring down the press as heavily as possible. Raise the press, score the pressed surface of the oxide to achieve keying, add more oxide then press again repeating a third time if necessary until the box is pressed full and level to the top.

(A further brief comment comparing the two moulding materials might be helpful at this point. In general, vermiculite is a better kiln material than zinc oxide because of its lightness and ease of heating. It may tend to crumble in certain places however, so...
care is essential when handling moulds. Deep moulds may need edge reinforcement using strips of pre-fired Fibrefrax paper. These should be placed on the die before filling with vermiculite. After firing, most of the vermiculite can be removed from moulded glass by wire-brushing, but sand blasting will probably be necessary. A pleasant “orange-peel” texture will be imprinted on the glass. Zinc oxide lined with Fibrefrax paper makes a strong and reliable mould. Some detail might be lost due to the sponginess of the paper, but the finished glass surface will be very clean requiring minimal sandblasting. Vermiculite tends to break down in particle size with repeated use and eventually must be consigned to garden orchard. Zinc oxide can be used indefinitely however. Because of its highly compressible properties zinc oxide will stick tenaciously to the soles of your shoes. You will be unpopular if you tramp it into the house.

3) Raise the press and lay three pieces of metal gauze on the surface of the compressed powder. (I use stainless steel gauze but bronze flywire also works well.) Place the lid on top of the moulding box, place a square of particle board on top of the lid and bolt it down to the wooden die box underneath clamping the filled moulding box firmly inside.

4) Now invert the entire assembly, replace it in the press, and unbolt it. Using the press in reverse with lifting cleats attached, lift the wooden die box and die (now upside down) off the moulding box (fig. 5). There must be absolutely no lateral movement during this process. Even slight lateral movement of die box or moulding box will ruin the mould. The moulding box should contain a perfect imprint of the die. Now try touching the surface of the compressed material in a non-critical area. You should feel a firm yet spongy texture which will perfectly accommodate movement in cooling glass.

5) Lift the moulding box gently onto a bench. The mould must now be perforated. Perforation allows air escape from the cavity as the glass heats and slumps. During slumping air is forced through holes in the mould and out through the wire gauze underneath. Take a 1 mm steel welding rod approximately 300 mm long with end filed off square and blunt. In all the low spots of the mould, firmly poke the rod through until you feel it touch the wire gauze underneath. Withdraw the rod with a slight twisting motion (fig. 6). Holes should be poked not only in low spots but should be evenly spaced (say 50 mm apart) in flat areas, and also placed on the sides of steeply sloping surfaces. Whilst I usually prefer to perforate moulds to guarantee air escape, in some cases of very delicate vermiculite moulds I have achieved successful slumping without any perforation at all. Vermiculite, even when heavily compressed, remains porous to some degree, allowing air escape.

6) Now it is finally time to lay the glass over the mould cavity and place the moulding box in the kiln. You may choose to use 6 mm plate glass, or two thicknesses of 3 mm art glass. If art glass is used the following important steps must be taken:

(i) Spray the upward facing sides of both pieces with hot saturated borax solution. Dry with a blow dryer and check glass to see that tiny borax crystals are evenly distributed over surfaces. Place the glass pieces together, one on top of another with both borax covered surfaces facing up. This will prevent devitrification which can cause disintegration between the two layers.

(ii) If two layers of glass are used, make sure both layers are cut from the same sheet to ensure compatibility. Flat fused glasses can tolerate moderate levels of stress caused by incompatibility, but convoluted fused glasses seem not to withstand even the mildest of stress. Because the full moulding box is heavy you may need a special device to get it into the kiln. I use a light two wheeled trolley (wheels flanged, about 30 mm

![Fig. 5](image_url) Lifting off the die box. Press is raised with die box fastened to the ram by lifting cleats.

![Fig. 6](image_url) Perforating the mould. Typical hole positions are as shown. 1 mm rod must be slightly twisted during insertion and removal.
diameter) which runs on steel rails. Once the box is in place and propped up on four kiln blocks I withdraw the rails, then the trolley.

7) Fire the kiln to fusing temperature. Allow time for the glass to slump into the lowest cavities of the mould. This is difficult to judge. Experience is the best teacher. Record all times and temperatures of firing. Anneal for three or four times the normal period bearing in mind that the glass is cooling from one surface only and there may be some thick spots. Allow cooling to handling temperature.

8) Remove the moulding box from the kiln and lift off the glass. Brush residual moulding material from the glass surface. In the case of zinc oxide moulds, don your mask again and strip residual paper from the mould salvaging larger pieces. Finally, sweep the mould with a soft paint brush to remove all Fibrefrax paper. (This may be sieved to make a coarse shelf dressing, or used in kiln casting investment mixes. Don’t waste it! It is very expensive.)

There is almost no limit to the complexity of shapes which may be moulded by this method. I find it to be greatly superior to the use of expensive thermal concrete and plaster moulds which tend to break, or to cool unevenly and crack the glass, or to severely limit glass movement upon cooling. What may cause doubt in the minds of some glass workers is the apparent fragility of the moulds formed by this method. It must be stressed however that some degree of fragility is actually an advantage as it allows glass to contract and move upon cooling. Those who have some experience in glass slumping will know that hot slumping glass settles very slowly and gently into moulds and rarely disturbs even the most delicate of structures. Rigid, rock-hard moulds are therefore not needed and are actually undesirable in the moulding process.

I trust that my description is sufficiently full and clear to allow you to try the process for yourself, and I hope it works for you as well as it does for me. Happy moulding!

Fig. 7 An alternative device to the screw press, using a channel-iron frame and car jack. The die box must be fixed to the frame and frame inverted before mould is lowered.

Footnote: Wear your mask!

Kiln workers frequently come into contact with dusty materials. Although I have mentioned that a filter mask should be worn when handling pre-fired Fibrefrax paper, the same advice applies to vermiculite - especially after firing. Although dusts may only be classified as “nuisance dusts” they are potentially harmful. Often they are too fine to see unless very dense in the air. A good quality mask fitted with disposable cartridges is your best defence against inhaling dusts.

Ian W. Johnston

Ian Johnston is a minister of the Uniting Church and a part time worker in glass. He enjoys writing about his interests and his last article in Ausglass Magazine was Theology for Glassworkers, Spring - Summer 1991-92.
The Central Highlands area of Victoria is noted for the beauty of its countryside, its healthy spa water and the range and quality of its craftspeople...

Alison McMillan's 'Forestgate Studio' was established in 1981, and is situated in a quiet rural setting close to the State Forest at Trentham, approximately 100 km north west of Melbourne.

The studio consists of one large open area 8m x 14m which has provision in the footings of its' concrete floor to cope with internal divisions of the space should that become necessary in the future. Large windows provide plenty of natural light. A slow combustion stove heats the space but, without adequate insulation at the moment, it has difficulty coping with Trentham's harsh winter climate.

The studio specialises in Stained Glass and is essentially a one-person operation, which means that the output is not high but quality control can be strictly maintained.

Most advertising to date has been by word-of-mouth or by clients viewing work in exhibitions. This provides a small but steady stream of mainly domestic commissions of a highly personalised nature for clients in the Eastern States. Some church work has also come to the studio in this manner.

Alison has worked collaboratively on larger ecclesiastic commissions: in 1988 and 1989 with Klaus Zimmer's Australia Studios and more recently with the Glenn Mack Studio of Glenlyon.

From time to time, workshops in Glass Painting and Kiln Worked Glass are held at the studio. Alison also has teaching commitments at Monash University as a tutor in Glass Studies.

Alison McMillan 'Forestgate Studio'
R.M.B 497
Trentham Vic. 3458
Phone: (054) 241 531 Open by appointment

The Glenn Mack Studio has been operating for almost 20 years as a glass studio committed to producing fine architectural commissions for both ecclesiastic and domestic situations. Recently an annexe studio was opened near Brisbane to service an expanding clientele in the region. The largest commission to date has been 40 square metres of contemporary glass for a harbourside residence in Vaucluse, Sydney.

More recently the studio has concentrated on stained glass for churches, accepting the challenge of creating contemporary glass works which are not simply decorative but offer a symbolic meaning to the viewer and satisfy rigorous professional standards. We take our reference from the wider artistic community as well as the church community, keeping in mind the prospect of our glass remaining extant for hundreds of years. We therefore aim to produce contemporary artworks which avoid being superficially fashionable or 'faddish'.

The core of artists and craftspeople associated with the studio is:
Alison McMillan: Tutor in Glass Studies, Monash University, Victoria. Member of the British Society of Master Glass Painters
Maurice Derricks: Former tutor at Chisholm Institute of Technology, Victoria
Susan Johnston: Graphic artist and stained glass fabricator
Stewart Henderson: Technician
Glenn Mack: Glass designer and fabricator

In the last seven or eight years the studio has seen a growing demand for restoration work in church stained glass. The action of acid-rain and deteriorating lead and putty has led to the windows in older churches requiring maintenance and preservation. Often the deterioration passes unnoticed because of the height of many windows and the difficulty of assessing the condition of the lead, glass and installation against the glare of light. Early detection of deterioration can save costly major restoration and we offer to examine and report on window conditions for a moderate fee.

Our experience in the preservation and restoration field has enabled the studio to develop cost-effective measures to preserve our stained glass heritage. One of the most common requests is to protect valuable, at-risk stained glass with clear, unbreakable polycarbonate sheeting. This prevents vandal damage, protects the window from corrosive air-borne elements and weather and makes cleaning the exterior very easy.

Glenn Mack Studio
P.O. Box 312
Daylesford Vic. 3460
Phone; (053) 487 502 Open by appointment
Sometimes one just has to let Opportunity in when she knocks!

This was exactly how I felt in September, 1990 when I returned to the home of my friend Carmel in Fremantle, W.A. after an interesting and artistically fruitful hire-car trip to the South-West and West Coast.

'It's all arranged', she announced, 'just go and finalise the details with the gallery directors'. My friend was referring to the possibility of my holding a solo exhibition of stained glass at Fremantle's A-Shed Gallery. Unbeknown to me, she had been very busy in my absence, acting as an enthusiastic public relations agent, and now it was up to me.

The A-Shed Gallery is an unusual multi-arts venue which occupies a massive former warehouse, right on the waterfront at Victoria Quay. It exhibits a wide range of contemporary Western Australian fine arts and crafts together with some specialist work from interstate and overseas. However, until I entered the scene, it had never exhibited stained glass. In fact, very few galleries are willing to mount complete exhibitions of stained glass. After negotiations with gallery directors George and Valerie Le Febre, a date was set, and a year's work towards the exhibition had begun. Both the gallery and I had quite a challenge in store.

Walking around Fremantle's historic town centre and harbour area, one feels at ease with the human scale of the architecture. There still seems to be a village atmosphere, with sidewalk cafes, beer gardens, lovely old stone buildings, the busy and colourful 'Freo Markets and, of course, the boats. Colour, Climate, Character: I didn't have to look far for the subject matter of many of the stained glass panels in the exhibition. Inspiration for the rest came from a feeling of embracing Australia, triggered by travelling slowly across the continent. The three day trip across the Nullarbor is one of the world's last great train journeys, and a worthwhile experience for every Australian.

I have crossed the Nullarbor now by road, rail and air. I was Alice, heading westwards through my glass, hence the title for the exhibition: Alice in Westerland. All the work for the exhibition was made during 1991 and was inspired by my 1990 trip to the west. The two-dimensional work consisted predominantly of colourful, abstract glass collages with painted and stained, highly symbolic, figurative details. Metallic lustres were used in places to enhance or vary the effect of reflected light. In addition and in contrast to these stained glass panels, were series of constructed, clear and opal glass bowls and vases, which were either based on, or included conical forms. Most of the three-dimensional work featured calligraphic deep sandblasting. In all, twenty-six framed stained glass panels and nine sculptural pieces were exhibited.

My studio is situated in a quiet valley close to the forest at Trentham, in the Central Highlands 100 km north-west of Melbourne. In this peaceful environment, the process of design and construction took place. A key element in all the stained glass panels was the use of masterfully coloured, mouthblown glass by Julio Santos of Newcastle, NSW. Pieces of Julio's glass were cut and fused together to form interesting shapes and colour combinations. These fused pieces were composed to form an abstract framework, around which the narrative and further design details developed. Subject matter could be divided roughly into four categories: Fremantle life and history; W.W., flora and fauna; general Australian themes; and human emotional struggles.

Worktime for the exhibition had to be constructed around my teaching commitments in the Ceramics Department at Monash University in Melbourne. By the end of October, 1991, after working long hours alone in the studio where the temperature variation has been recorded from -7 to 47 degrees celsius, my goal was at last in sight. With the deadline looming, it was wonderful to have the encouragement and assistance of local colleagues and friends, who offered the use of equipment and help with the final processes of puttying, cleaning and packing. The last day was an around-the-clock shift!

The glass was finished, photographed, securely crated and loaded into the back of my station wagon at Trentham by 5.30 pm on 21 November. Was it possible to get the wagon onto the Motorail in Melbourne by 6.30 pm? Unfortunately not. I had cut things too fine and the next train from Melbourne would not get me to Perth in time for the gallery to set-up the exhibition to open as planned on 29 November 1991. My only hope was to drive my precious load overnight to Adelaide and meet the Trans-Australian there. It was with an immense sense of relief that I eventually settled into my seat to watch the South Australian
Travelling through Glass across Australia

wheatlands gliding past the train window in the warm November dusk, secure in the knowledge that a year's work in glass was definitely on its way to the west.

The setting up of the exhibition can take two or three days, depending on particular requirements. Stained glass is difficult to exhibit because it requires good back-lighting. Natural light is ideal, but few galleries have enough window space to display many panels. Supplementary lighting is required and particular attention paid to the way panels are hung in relation to the light source. A-Shed secured the services of lighting consultant Alan Stuart for the purpose, and gallery director, George Le Febre remarked that the whole exercise had been a valuable learning experience from which future glass exhibitions at the A-Shed could only benefit.

The exhibition was officially opened by local glass artist, Judy Kotai, and seen by 2300 visitors during the following three weeks. The work sold well, with a number of pieces going to interstate and overseas collectors. Meanwhile, I was able to spend most of that three weeks travelling again in the beautiful South-West, visiting the studios of fellow glass artists, horse riding through tall Karri and Jarrah forests, walking in huge limestone caves and relaxing on the most idyllic beach at Green's Pool in the William Bay National Park.

The change of pace was a welcome relief and I remembered something my friend Carmel had told me the previous year: 'You have to understand that W.A. stands for Wait Awhile.... things just take a little longer here.' I'm glad that in 1990 I hadn't adapted quickly enough to have asked Opportunity to 'Wait Awhile' or I wouldn't be telling this tale. However, I will concede that if I had to prepare an exhibition of this size again, I would give myself more lead time.

POSTSCRIPT: Other artists wishing to exhibit glass at A-Shed should not hesitate to contact Vac or George on (09) 430 4733 or write c/o P.O. Box 1203 Fremantle W.A.

Early November would perhaps be a good time to exhibit, as this coincides with the Fremantle Festival and near-perfect weather.

Extra costs to bear in mind with an exhibition such as, particularly if it is crossing the continent, this are insurance (approx. 4% of the wholesale value) and freight. If you are prepared to travel by train to accompany your 'vehicle-as-crate-for-your-work', or if you can arrange for someone else to do so as your agent, this is probably the most economical way of freighting the work and provides you with transport during your stay. So, GET CRACKING (well, not literally)! You owe yourself a holiday in the West, and you owe the West a chance to see and purchase your glass!

Ailson McMillan

Buderim Glassworks

Buderim Glassworks is a multi-purpose studio with 'Hot Glass', 'Warm Glass' and 'Cold Glass' facilities available for hire. The studio was opened on 14 April, 1992 by the Hon. Wayne Goss, M.L.A. Premier of Queensland. It is located in the Buderim Festival Centre, formerly the Buderim Ginger Factory which is situated on the escarpment at Buderim, giving spectacular views of the Sunshine Coast. Within the complex controlled by Buderim Glassworks is also a Craft Centre. 'Anticks Pewter' design and manufacture, run by husband and wife team Tina and Nick Wolverson; two pottery sections, one specialising in fascinating tree form sculptural pieces, run by Cheryl Dee-Frater trading as 'Fascinations' are some of the first tenants.

Studio construction began in early January 1992 by Mitchell Foley, Glenn C. Warwick and Chuck Simpson. There was no shortage of volunteers including Arnie Peter Fuchs, Salvador Mata Luque and Dennis Nielsen.

It was decided that we would bring in a specialist for the design and construction of the glass furnace. Mark Eckstrand of Seattle, Washington was chosen and flown in for approximately three weeks. With his help two 90kg, invested pot furnaces were constructed using Moral Cool Cast and K26 kiln bricks.

Four glory holes were designed and built, two at 25cm diameter, one 38cm and, last but not least, one at 61cm diameter (Nick named 'POW'). Using LPG, forced air and Giberson's burner heads they run at a steady 1250 °C. The furnaces are powered by LPG and forced air using Eclipse MVTA burners, controlled by Eurotherm programmable controllers. Three new lehrs were constructed to give us a total of five. Using Shimaden programmable controllers we are able to maintain accurate annealing facilities.

Two blowing floors are available, with six sessions a day being available for hire. Session times are 7am - 12 noon; 12.30pm - 6.30pm; a short evening session, 7pm - 10pm (on request). Prices are available on application and pipes and puntries are available. Cold and hot marvers are available along with other ancillary equipment including fuming cabinet, torches and air at benches. Polishing and grinding equipment is also available ranging from upright linerisher, grinding wheels (stone and metal), felt and rubber polishing wheels, diamond cut-off saw, and more.

Approximately $170 000 has been spent so far on plans and equipment which includes a public viewing area which protrudes into the blowing floors giving the public a feeling of participation. A retail gallery for the exclusive use of the resident and casual glassblowers and a well-equipped office provides marketing and business support facilities.

The short and long term plan is to provide Australian Glassblowers with a fabulous high quality studio that is available for hire located on the spectacular Sunshine Coast- a stone's throw from the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef. It is the aim of the studio to take a collection of Buderim Glassworks produce to the International arena in 1993 through a gallery in Hong Kong already showing keen interest in Australian Glass.

We also encourage collaborative work amongst the artists. Already we have seen some brilliant results, for example, the first Environmental Awards for the City of Prahran, Victoria, the result of a collaborative project between Chuck Simpson (glassblower), Tina Wolverson (pewter design and manufacture), Salvador Mata Luque (architect) and Mitch Foley (glass artist). These awards represent a taste of things to come.

My main aim is to enlighten the public as to how glass is blown and how pieces are priced for retailing. To date the response to our narrated demonstrations has been fantastic and is achieving my goal. After witnessing our demonstrations the usual comments are, 'We now realise how much work and skill is put into the creation of hand blown glass' and 'I have been to other glass blowing studios, in Venice (etc. etc.) but this is the best display of glass blowing I have ever seen'. This educative process is definitely producing results which are reflected in retail sales.

We have recently introduced a new concept called 'Make Your Own Piece'. The client first chooses the piece he/she wishes to make then, using simple moulds, we show the client, step by step, how the piece is made. They choose their colours, then an assistant is assigned to them for the duration of the making of the piece. The client returns the following day to collect their annealed piece. We also provide packaging and postal services for travellers who are unable to return the following day. The 'Make Your Own' concept has been enthusiastically received by the public.

The facilities are currently being used by Mitchell Foley, Chuck and Lesley Simpson, Tina Cooper and Mark Galton- 'Martini Glass', John O'Donaghue, Alex Roskvist, Arnie Glass, Patrick de Sumo, Ian Johnston, Salvador Mata Luque and Philip Robson.

Glenn C. Warwick
August 1992

Further enquiries should be directed to:
Buderim Glassworks (Australia) Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 622
Buderim Queensland 4556
Telephone (074) 455 994
Fax (074) 456 045
I am addicted to bookshops!

I can smell them blocks away! Even in new cities, the redolent mixture of printers ink, bookbinder's glue and shiny papers draws me in the right direction.

When the additional fragrances of old leathers, must and silverfish is added I am overwhelmed with desire for a further foray into my favourite haunt, the second-hand bookshop.

Needless to say, this addiction applies equally to the books within its doors and the possibility of finding another gem, particularly if there is the slightest possibility of finding a long out-of-print (or even a longed for) glass book.

For many years I have fossicked around town and country bookshops and gradually amassed a number of loved volumes.

Inner city Melbourne has Angus and Robertson, in particular, the Bookworld store. The range of books is almost overwhelming and it is hard to elbow your way through the glossy cookery, travel and gardening books to the art section, up the back. Plenty of glossies here too, with potted versions of Monet, Vincent and Tom Roberts. Occasionally though, there is a real Gem, such as The History of Glass by Dan Klein and Ward Lloyd or the less glamorous, Glass by Frederick Cooke in the Twentieth Century Design series. Not all the books which catch the eye are directly concerned with glass, like The Romance of Architecture, by Roloff Beny, they may offer insights into aspects of design, texture, proportion and scale which indirectly affect one's glass practice.

The National Trust Bookshop in Melbourne has unfortunately closed, leaving a large gap in the upper range of books on heritage matters, architecture and the applied arts. Mary Jean Madigan's Steuben Glass: An American Tradition in Crystal was a lucky find during the 'last-days -50%- off -sale'. The Trust continues to sell its own publications and Victorian Churches, edited by Miles Lewis is one which is likely to become a standard text for those of us interested in the heritage of church architecture.

A favourite amongst the second-hand bookshops is the Carlton Secondhand Bookshop in Swanston Street, near the University of Melbourne. One has to force one's way through the stacks which crowd every corner, and crane one's neck to see all the offerings. It is worth the crick in the neck to come away with a catalogue of International Directions in Glass Art (1982), or the Spring 1982 issue of Art Network, long since departed the journal scene, or John Berger's Ways of Seeing reprinted for the umpteenth time since 1972. Amongst many books purchased here over years are two particular favourites. The first is Stained Glass Work: A Textbook for Students and Workers in Glass by C.W, Whall, published in 1905. This small volume is full of succinct facts and precise illustrations outlining the correct methods for cutting, leading, soldering, painting of windows. It is also much more. Whall discusses problems with colour and light, thought, imagination and allegory and 'architectural fitness'. He even includes 'Hints for the Curriculum of a Technical School for Stained-Glass' and a series of plates concludes the book. It was worth paying $12 just to see the advertisements for muffle kilns, vitreous enamels and glass which fill the last pages. The second book is Stained Glass Tours in Germany, Austria and the Rhine Lands by Charles Hitchcock Sherrill with 20 Illustrations and Maps. It appears to be one of a series published during the 1920's and I suspect that many of the windows described no longer exist. Sherrill covers an area from Lubeck in the north to Brugg in the south and goes as far as Berlin to the east. As well as descriptions he gives opinions on the siting and condition of the windows.

The Smith Street Bookshop, Collingwood has also provided me with hours of browsing. My copy of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections by Manion, Vines and de Hamel was one bargain which I discovered amongst its well ordered shelves. The particular relationship between text, image and decoration which characterises the illuminated manuscript is equally appropriate for the student of stained glass. I am keeping an eye out for its earlier companion, Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts in Australian Collections.

For several years now I have received the monthly catalogue from Clouston and Hall, Booksellers of Canberra. This family company specialises in academic remainders on all sorts of subjects including a wide range of art and architecture volumes. By avid perusal of the catalogue when it arrives I have been
able to find books no longer available in local bookshops. Of course the thrill of rummaging through musty shelves is denied me, but picking up a carefully packed, bulky parcel from the P.O. each month has its rewards too. Not only do you get a pile of new reading matter but it always comes wrapped in the Canberra Times and I can catch up with the Raiders scores or the latest Gallery reviews. Books to arrive in my library via this route include An Introduction to English Glassware to 1900 by Charles Truman; Lalique: Jewellery and Glassware by Tony L. Mortimer; Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures edited by Erwin Panofsky and Morris and Company in Cambridge, a catalogue by Duncan Robinson and Stephen Wildman which accompanied an exhibition organised by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Such a diversity of reading matter means that every month brings a new feast to feed my addiction!

Many of you will have heard of The Book Exchange, Jim Iraqui's marvellous specialist bookshop in West Market Street, Corning, New York. I bought one tiny volume, Painting and Firing Stained Glass, by E.W. Twining, which offers an extremely succinct insight into traditional English glass painting as practised earlier this century. It even has a recipe for silver stain and explicit details on the processes of making and applying it successfully. Periodically a catalogue arrives from this wonderful store which lists oodles of books, nearly all of them on Glass! (Jim does stock a few on ceramics too.) This must be the most comprehensive catalogue around and includes many out-of-print books and others which are unobtainable in Australia. It also includes current and remaindered catalogues and Jim is always pleased to receive information (and catalogues) of Australian shows. This must be the ultimate bookshop for the glass artist, collector and teacher. The real problem is deciding between all the goodies on offer and, more importantly, how to find the money to pay for them.

Every city and country town has its bookshop, library, reading circle or book exchange but books on glass are rarely among their best sellers and consequently become hard to find. Despite years of fossicking, I still keep looking for books on odd aspects of glass which add to my knowledge and which complement the standard and favoured texts. I now need to Get Serious and delve into the Antiquarian and Rare Book market: maybe then my bibliomania be properly assuaged.

Bronwyn Hughes

Valkema had learned to handle glass but did not master the profession to the same degree as a glassmaker who works with it every day. He employed a master from Leerdam, Leendert van der Linden, for three to six evenings per year to answer specific questions of students and to teach them to solve technical problems with hot glass.

The early small furnaces have been developed and become bigger and better over the years. As well as becoming more professional and more economic to run, they have become more complex and expensive and safety has become an issue. Artists now hire furnace time instead of installing their own. Students all over Europe can now learn to work with hot glass: in Denmark with Finn Lynggaard, in Finland with Heiki Kallia, as well as many possibilities in England.

The question can be asked as to whether the contemporary interest in glass combined with other materials is caused by the fact that many students from different disciplines, like ceramics and sculpture, also gained access to hot glass. Valkema sees many more causes. The public is used to glass as a material for utensils but, as a medium for sculpture it is still not recognised by many critics, causing some artists working in glass to prefer the term ‘sculptor’. One never hears about ‘wood art’ or ‘metal art’; one does hear about ‘glass art’.

Since 1985 Valkema has a small furnace in his backyard. He likes to work with a master blower, not only Leendert van der Linden but also Lewis Sclafani at the Pilchuck School near Seattle. With this form of cooperative production he achieves great heights.

Gerie Hermans
Gerie Hermans is a Dutch-born glass artist residing in Melbourne. She works in hot and warm glass on both sculptural and production works.

Beryl will be back!!

Due to lack of space in this issue Dear Beryl is having a break....... She'll be back along with the crossword in the next issue. Sorry for any inconvenience to those desperately seeking her wisdom!
AUSGLASS CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION CLOSES 16TH DECEMBER 1992

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