

Four Decades of Glass:
Graduates From The Royal College Of Art
1967–2007



Dan Klein Associates
Specialists in contemporary glass

at

ADRIAN SASSOON

Four Decades of Glass: Graduates From The Royal College Of Art 1967–2007

Dan Klein Associates at Adrian Sassoon presents
Four Decades of Glass: Graduates From The Royal College of Art, 1967–2007

COLLECT
8 –12 February 2007
Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Thursday, 8 February: 11.00am – 5.45pm
Friday, 9 February: 11.00am – 5.45pm
Saturday, 10 February: 11.00am – 5.45pm
Sunday, 11 February: 11.00am – 5.45pm
Monday, 12 February: 11.00am – 4.00pm

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Introduction

The exhibition Four Decades of Glass at the Royal College of Art marks 40 years since Lord Queensberry, then head of the Ceramics & Glass department, asked Sam Herman to introduce a 'new wave' glass programme into the curriculum at the Royal College of Art. His doing so heralded major changes in glass education throughout the British Isles. "For many colleges in the 1970s this meant a rather crude tank furnace and a tea-chest of cullet." The RCA precedent attracted colleges up and down the country to follow suit and by the mid-1980s there were thirteen undergraduate courses in Great Britain. To start with facilities were set up so that students could experiment with glass blowing. Results were nothing if not surprising and demonstrated new freedom in glass creation. For a decade free-form vessels and small sculptural objects, expressive in their way but technically naïve, were seriously considered by degree examiners and subsequently offered for sale in a handful of pioneering galleries.

In the intervening years the need to establish better facilities and widen technical scope has been met. There is now a wide range of options and a mature pursuit of excellence within British glass programmes. Four generations of teachers and post graduate students have set very different standards. There are hundreds of glass artists working and exhibiting in Britain, a number of whom started out with other ambitions but discovered glass. Many of today's British glass graduates both from the Royal College of Art and elsewhere rank among the best glass artists in the world and the response of the buying public to their work has been enthusiastic. The art form has evolved considerably and branched out in many different directions. Glass artists have brought remarkable technical innovation and artistic imagination to contemporary glass creation.

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Introduction

The exhibition at COLLECT showcases the work of thirteen well known glass artists, all of whom studied at the RCA and have gone on to enjoy successful careers as artists in glass both in Great Britain and internationally. Pauline Solven who graduated in 1968 was among the first crop of 'new wave' graduate students to choose a life as an artist in glass, a totally new concept at the time. Laura Birdsall is the youngest artist in the group and only graduated in 2006 by which time there was nothing unfamiliar about aspiring to be a glass artist.

The thirteen artists in 'Four Decades Of Glass: Graduates From The Royal College Of Art, 1967–2007' are: Margaret Alston (graduated 1985), Galia Amsel (graduated 1991), Laura Birdsall (graduated 2006), Clare Henshaw (graduated 1990), Angela Jarman (graduated 2001), Carl Nordbruch (graduated 2000), Steven Newell (graduated 1974), Clifford Rainey (graduated 1973), Gerhard Ribka (graduated 1988), Bruno Romanelli (graduated 1995), Pauline Solven (graduated 1968), Sylvie Vandenhoecke (graduated 2001) & Rachael Woodman (graduated 1984).

Dan Klein
London, 2007

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Margaret Alston

Margaret Alston was among the first to begin experimenting with the *pâte de verre* process in Great Britain in 1980. "Ideas and technique are both important in my work. Technique can suggest the overall effect of a piece, but the form and decorative imagery may be inspired by such diverse sources as textiles, architecture, calligraphy or patterns in nature. Age and antiquity are key references. The qualities and the association of aged and worked objects, where man-made, such as ancient jewelry and architecture, or natural such as fossils, semi-precious stones, alabaster or even sand, convey feelings which are fundamental elements in my work".

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Margaret Alston



Blue / green *pâte de verre* bowl, 2006

13.5cm x 8cm

£1,750

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Margaret Alston



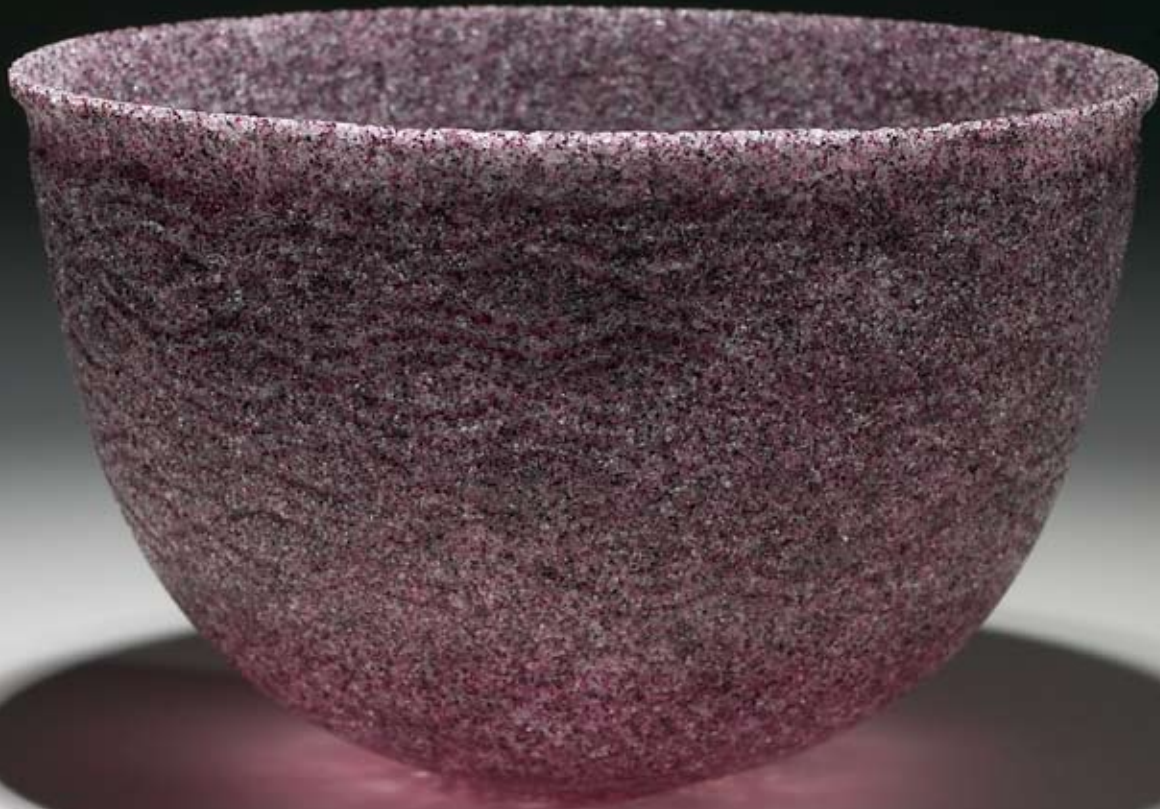
Blue / black *pâte de verre* bowl, 2006
13.5cm x 7cm
£1,635

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Margaret Alston



Red speckled *pâte de verre* bowl with incised pattern, 2006

14.5cm x 9cm

Sold

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Galia Amsel

Galia Amsel now lives and works in New Zealand. Her work is about movement, rhythm and tension. Open ring shapes, either standing on end or lying flat, have a kind of magnetic force: broken circles whose open ends pull towards each other. The circle has magical powers which Galia Amsel seeks to reveal. She finds strength in geometry of all sorts. Pieces can be round, rectangular, square or undulating. Whatever their shape she finds points of balance and angular relationships that are exciting. Cast glass can be transparent or opaque or both at once and over the years she has learnt how to use these qualities to find inner spaces or what she refers to as “revelations”. There is a respect for ritual and for things that are made for a purpose. “I like things that work – machinery, bridges, things that fit together and move, work together”.

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Galia Amsel



'Sirocco 6' 2007

Cast amber, pale yellow and clear Bullseye glass polished with hand smoothed finish

48cm x 15cm x 89cm high

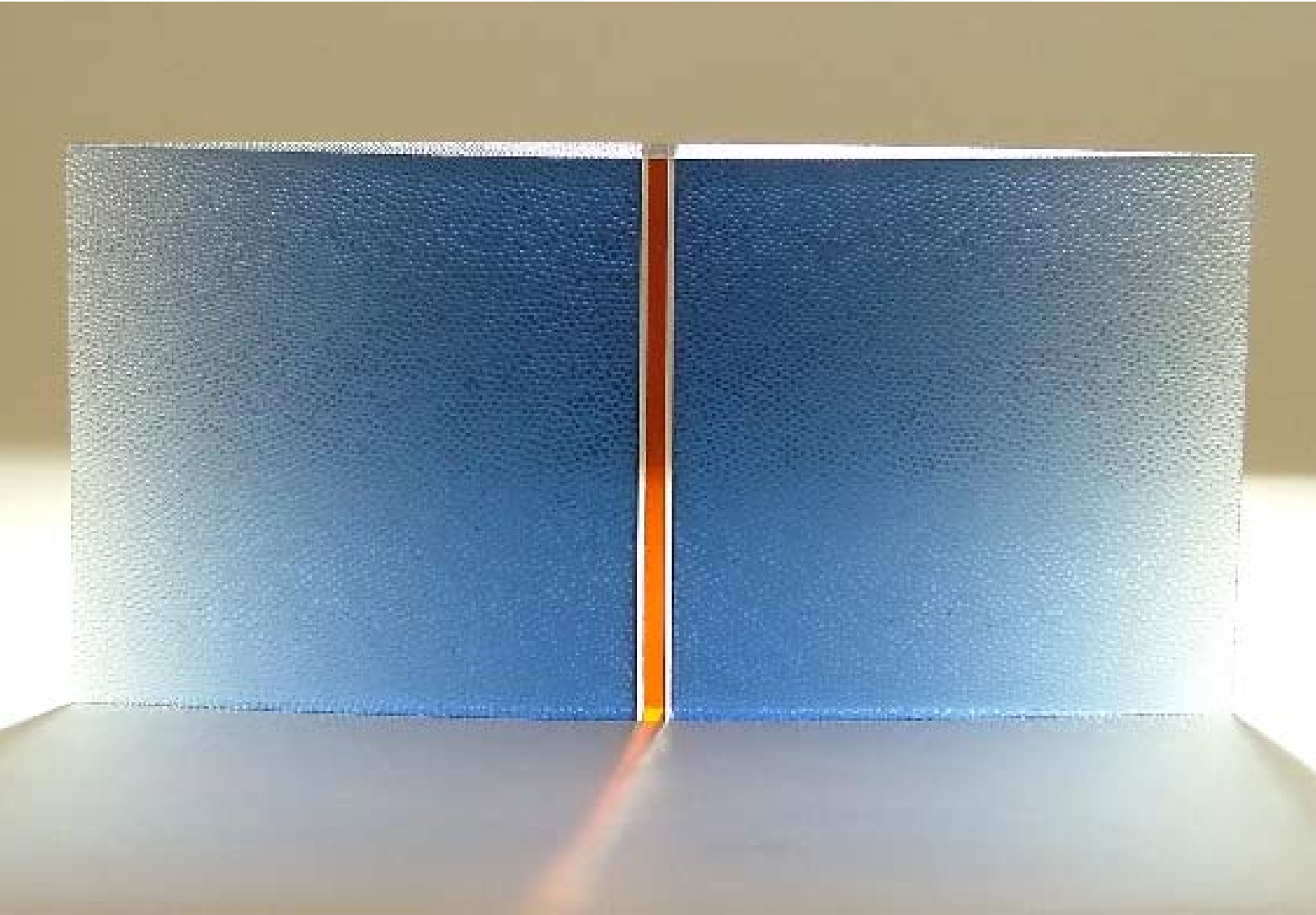
Sold

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Galia Amsel



'View 11' 2007

Cast steel blue, clear and amber glass sandblasted texture, polished

58.5cm x 4.5cm x 29cm

£4,400

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Galia Amsel



'Revelation II' 2006
Cast and slumped red, steel blue and clear Bullseye Glass
24cm x 3cm x 50cm high
£2,000

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Laura Birdsall

Laura Birdsall is the most recent RCA graduate. "I am interested in a child's ability to see a whole universe in something very small. It is this sense of wonder, invention, the unexpected that I want to convey. The interior spaces of my work suggest a microscopic world or dimly illuminated caves. They are imagined spaces inhabited by strange and curious organisms. One world living inside another. They are a fantastic voyage through awe-inspiring landscapes and miniature worlds".

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Laura Birdsall



'Interior Landscapes' 2006

Blown, cut, overlay clear / coloured glass 3 piece sculptural form

Tallest 28cm

£1,120 per piece

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Laura Birdsall



'Flat Funnel' 2006
Blown, cut, overlay clear / coloured glass
40cm x 24cm x 36cm high
£820

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Clare Henshaw

Clare Henshaw: "My pieces are free blown vessel forms which are outside and inside cased with colour. Using the 'graal' technique I cut through layers of colour to reveal inside colours. Patterns are generated which become integral with the form as the piece is blown into its final shape. The extraordinary light phenomenon in the north of Sweden, pristine nature and long Arctic winters, has shaped my visual sense. The pared down quality of Scandinavian design and rural culture is also an important influence in my work. The work is quiet; about light and colour".

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Clare Henshaw



'Sentient' 2006
Two-part part white overlay, blown glass vessels
Tallest 64cm
£2,565 per piece

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Clare Henshaw



'January Cumbrian Sky' 2006
Overlay, blown glass vessel
28cm x 26cm high
£2,450

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Clare Henshaw



'In the Dark Woods'

Two-part overlay, mat black on transparent bronze / grey

Tallest 64cm

£2,565 each piece

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Angela Jarman

Angela Jarman specialises in lost wax casting techniques using ideas relating to the natural world and her interest in biology. Whilst at the Royal College of Art in 2000 she became aware of the link between developments in science and how it was being applied to nature in genetic modification, cloning and mutation. Her work continues to reflect thoughts about the more sinister side of these new cell techniques. By using only clear glass and neutral colours she emphasises form, texture and structure. "I am trying to create pieces which have a sense of beauty, but which also have a quality which makes them slightly strange and disturbing, [with] a lurking sense of unease."

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Angela Jarman



'Blossom' 2006

Clear, cast glass, upright domed form with cast aluminium flowering stopper

16cm x 35cm high

Sold

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Angela Jarman



'Wreath' 2007

A wall-mounted, opaque black, lost wax cast circular disk with a hole in the centre. The surface is textured with fine projections that have been polished on the tips. It is hung on a metal bracket which slots into the back
Ø 6cm, 30cm width
£2,800

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Angela Jarman



'Discus' 2007

A wall-mounted, opaque black, lost wax cast circular disk. The surface is textured with radiating suckers. It has a matt finish overall, except for the rims of the suckers, which have been polished. It is hung on a metal bracket which slots into the back

Ø 8cm, 29cm width

£2,565

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Steven Newell

Steven Newell came to Britain from the United States in 1972 to do an MA in glass at the RCA and has lived here ever since. He has his own studio in North London where production ware, restaurant ware and architectural glass are made along with one-off pieces. Being a virtuoso glass blower he blows his own forms, then sandblasts and etches his very personal iconography on to them. His figures, partly dreamlike, partly mythical, sometimes characters of today, seem to float in space. "His subjects may be saints or saxophonists, senators or surfers. His eye roves over the human condition in a spirit of amused compassion".

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Steven Newell



'Dreaming Of Peace On The Way Home' 2006
Inside cased, blown, sandblasted large glass, wall hanging plate with gilded gold leaf
Circumference 55cm
£4,950

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Steven Newell



'The Madonna & Child With Guardians Of The World' 2006
Inside cased, blown, sandblasted, slumped, large glass plate with gilded gold leaf
Circumference 65cm
£4,950

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Steven Newell

Image currently unavailable

"Via con il vento" 2006
Inside cased, blown and sand blasted on both sides
Ø24cm, 23cm high
£4,950

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Carl Nordbruch

Carl Nordbruch works from his own studio on the Isle of Wight. He combines virtuoso glass-blowing skills with a talent for creating dynamic sculptural form and uses technique as a means of translating abstract ideas into visual reality. Bold primary colours define the sensuous contours of his work. He says "I wanted to... start making work where the pieces were firmly rooted in ideas rather than function and where the craftsmanship was still a strong element, but no longer the backbone".

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Carl Nordbruch



'Tunnel Vision I' 2006

Circular, multiple piece, overlay black / blue blown glass sculpture

40cm x 16cm

Sold

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Carl Nordbruch



'Tunnel Vision II' 2006

Circular, multiple piece, overlay blue / black free blown sculpture

25cm x 25cm

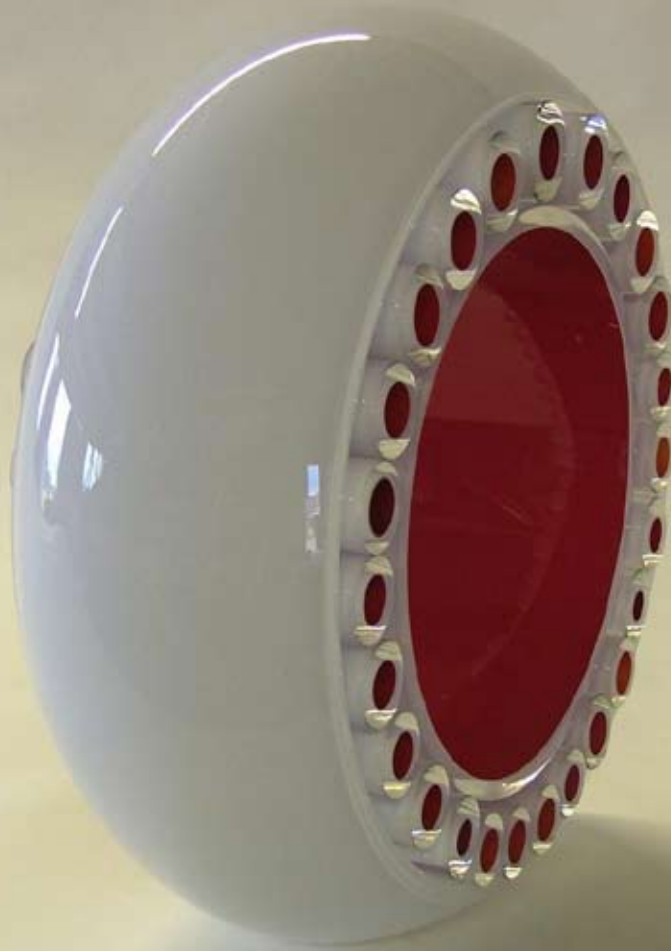
Sold

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Carl Nordbruch



'Tunnel Vision III' 2006
Circular, multiple piece, overlay red / white free blown sculpture
Sold

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Clifford Rainey

Clifford Rainey was appointed Visiting Professor of Fine Art in 1991 and subsequently made Chair of the Glass programme at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California. He has lived and worked in California ever since. His cast glass and multi-media figurative sculptures are charged with emotion. He is forceful and unafraid of stark reality when confronting the issues raised by his chosen subjects, which range from Saint Sebastian to the ravages of breast cancer. Sometimes vertical forms, either a bottle form or that of an ancient Greek column, assume human significance in his work, always with the intention of highlighting some aspect of the human condition.

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Clifford Rainey



'Broken Icon #1' 2006
Cast glass and mixed media
27.5cm x 55 x 82.5cm high
£24,500

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Gerhard Ribka

Gerhard Ribka lives and works in Germany and is a lecturer at the State College for Glass and Jewelry in Neu Gablonz. He works both on paper and using lost wax and kiln casting techniques. "When I look at my work I am surprised how gentle and playful it is. I enjoy the physical contact with wax and the very direct way a figure evolves. Sculpting a figure seems so much more straightforward than drawing it. I work from images from an inner source, dreams and daydreams. I supplement this 'source' by reading poetry or fairy tales. I also work from 'found' images, film stills, old photographs, folk or prehistoric art. My work is personal but not so much autobiographical. Rather I use bits and pieces of experienced situations, feelings, etc. and put them together in a new way."

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Gerhard Ribka



'The Skins' 2006
Kiln-cast glass, brass, oil paint
14cm x 10cm x 24cm high
£3,000

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Gerhard Ribka



'A Sad Life' 2006
Kiln-cast glass, brass, oil paint
24cm x 11cm x 9cm x 24cm high
£3,000

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Gerhard Ribka



'Not Alone' 2006

Kiln-cast glass, mould material, lead, oil paint

11cm x 10cm x 20cm high

£2,625

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Bruno Romanelli

Bruno Romanelli works in clear lost wax kiln formed glass to make sculpture based on the male body. His sculpture investigates the way in which we perceive ourselves. Body parts, the small of the back, an arm, a leg, a head full face or in profile, are sensitively drawn in glass and frozen within sensuously shaped forms, sometimes curved and undulating, sometimes hard-edged and rigid. Some of his imagery is self portraiture. "My work explores themes of memory, identity, masculinity, time and human condition, exploiting the transparency of the glass in conjunction with negative space to create form and visual aesthetic, whilst demonstrating a mastery of the kiln-forming techniques that I enjoy in the creation of each piece".

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Bruno Romanelli



'Reflect V' 2006
Lost wax cast, polished and silvered glass
10cm x 35cm x 35cm high
Sold

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Bruno Romanelli



'Half of Nothing' 2006
Lost wax cast and polished glass
10cm x 28cm x 28cm high
Sold

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Bruno Romanelli



'Half Truths & Recollections' 2006
Lost wax cast and polished glass
13cm x 12cm x 51cm high
£4,500

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Pauline Solven

Pauline Solven lives and works in Newent Gloucestershire where together with her husband she also runs the Cowdy Gallery, specialising in contemporary glass. She says “after blowing glass for over thirty-five years, I now work solely with the kiln, currently creating small fused panels. This allows me to express my ideas in a new way and with a fresh palette of colours. Inspiration comes from various sources including the visual arts, architecture, and nature. I often focus on close-ups of randomly arranged workaday artefacts in dramatic light. The panels, part of a whole, are semi-abstract, linked by ambiguous elements of mystery and surprise, movement and rhythm”.

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Pauline Solven



'Buoyant Green' 2006
Fused glass, wall hung panel
46cm x 15.5cm high
£1,750

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Pauline Solven



'Buoyant Blue'
Fused glass, wall hung panel
46cm x 15.5cm high
£1,750

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Pauline Solven



'Buoyant Orange'
Fused glass, wall hung panel
46cm x 15.5cm high
£1,750

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Sylvie Vandenhoucke

Sylvie Vandenhoucke who is Belgian is now a senior lecturer in the Glass Department at the University of Sunderland. She works in *pâte de verre* sometimes in conjunction with other materials. Her work has been described as “gentle sensitive abstract poetry without words, but with repetitive forms, which are different from each other in a minimal way”. Sylvie Vandenhoucke reacts to the changing nature of our world, the way in which a passing cloud transforms luminosity and mood and how we perceive the fluid world around us. She is fascinated by the “there and not there” of glass and has commented “I am far from making impact pieces that are beheld with one glance. I want something to grow on the viewer, so that the work realises itself slowly, not all at once.” She wants her experiments with *pâte de verre* to produce new tactile as well as new visual sensations, capable of “entirely new forms and meanings”.

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Sylvie Vandenhoucke



'One Early Morning'
Pâte de verre, burnt orange wall piece
27cm x 27cm x 0.8cm
£2,250

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Sylvie Vandenhoucke



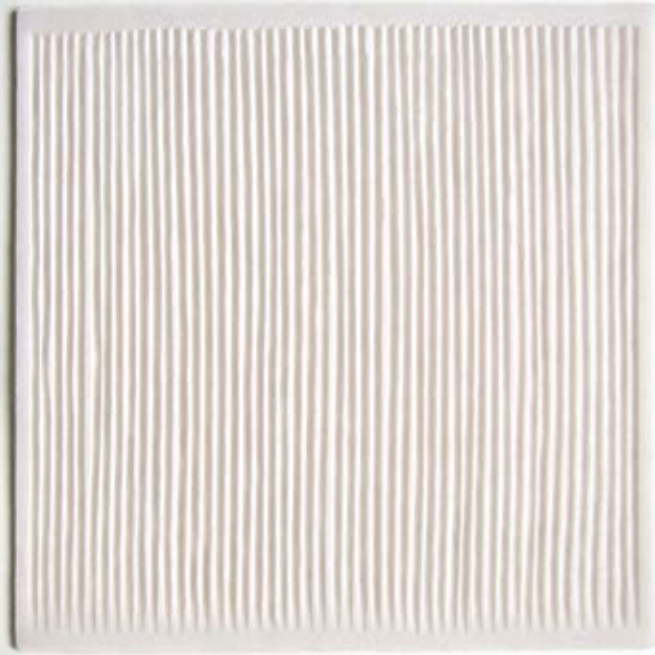
'Red River' 2006
Pâte de verre, burnt orange wall piece
27cm x 27cm x 0.8cm
£2,250

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Sylvie Vandenhoucke



'aeroplano' 2006
Pâte de verre, white wall piece
30cm x 30cm x 0.5cm
£2,500

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Rachael Woodman

Rachael Woodman lives and works near Bath and has been exhibiting nationally and internationally ever since she graduated from the Royal College of Art. Writing about her work recently Jennifer Opie said “The instant appeal of glass will always be in the visceral response that this most versatile and beautiful material naturally draws from the viewer and Rachael Woodman is supremely skilful at manipulating this. But with her sense of form, her pleasure in colour and her disciplined control of detail, in her hands glass takes on an even richer life. In understanding the step-by-step progression of her ideas and her always present single-mindedness we see it becoming something very much more – a very personal art that can speak to us all”.

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Rachael Woodman



'Stronghold' 2006

Grey vessel with twelve bubbles, blown, sand-blasted & acid-polished glass

Ø29cm, 12cm high

£4,600

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Rachael Woodman



'The Darkness Tries to Hide' 2006

Shallow tray with thirteen bubbles, blown, cut & acid-polished glass

Ø32.5cm, 6.5cm high

£4,950

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