

Art: Design: Culture

Glass

The Wilson Glass
Art Quarterly

The Future of Glass:
A Roundtable

Markku Salo:
The Explorer

Free Glass from
the Rietveld

GlassStress:
A Landmark Exhibition

Yoichi
Ohira



US \$7 | CANADA \$7.95



NUMBER 116 : FALL 2009



Joanna H. Manousis,
Self-Contained Spray, 2007.
Blown and kiln-cast glass,
hand-painted enamel.
H 15 3/4, W 6, D 6 in.

COMPETITION

British Artist Wins First-Ever Frabel Award

Encapsulated in the familiar form of a spray bottle for cleaning glass—the sort that might hold Windex, for example—is a woman's face. Stretched and distorted as if refracted by glass to match the contours of the perfectly rendered bottle, the woman looks as if she is being pulled upside down through the nozzle tip and will be propelled out into the world along with the cleaning solution. With her wide-eyed, vacant gaze, she stares through the glass with an expression that could be seen as discomfort, boredom, or deep distrust.

The piece, created by artist Joanna Manousis and entitled *Self-Contained Spray* (2007), has been named winner of the first annual Hans Godo Frabel Award. It includes blown glass, cast glass, and hand-painted enamel. In a prepared statement, the artist says that the work intends to personify "the idealized portrayal of the 1950s domestic housewife ... A 'perfect' woman encapsulated within the chamber of a detergent spray can." But for those involved in the awards process, the piece represents something more important. Magnum Mangkang, glass sculptor and a member of the nomination committee, says that mixed media is where glass seems to be headed. "It makes a piece of work complete."

The newly established Frabel awards are different than other awards in that the winners are chosen in an online voting process. While the nominees are handpicked by Mangkang and Hans Godo Frabel himself, the winners are determined by public voting. It includes two categories for submission: the Hans Godo Frabel Award for established glass artists, and the Frabel Novice Award for newcomers to the field.

Frabel created the award after retiring from teaching classes in his studio, hoping to find a way to give back to the glass community. There is no submission fee, and entrants can submit up to three works for consideration. Entries are submitted electronically in the form of photographs—a unique and challenging circumstance for the glass veterans on the nomination committee.

"It's very difficult to judge a glass piece based on a 2-D photo," says Mangkang. "Some excellent work may have lost because it wasn't represented very well with the photos that were submitted."

From among three pieces in each category, Manousis was selected for a \$2,000 cash prize as winner of the Hans Godo Frabel Award, and Maureen McRorie for a \$1,000 prize as winner of the Frabel Novice Award, with a flameworked, sculpted, fused, and stained-glass piece called *The Reef*.

"We were looking for artists who really have a voice of their own," says Mangkang. "I think that's what we found."

For more information: www.myglassart.org.

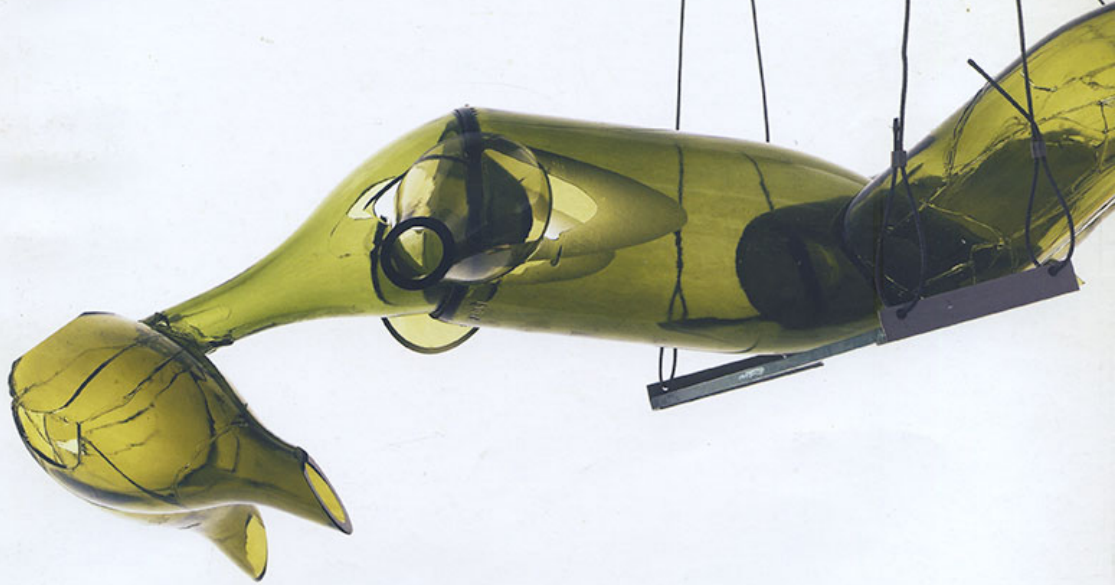
—BRETT NUCKLES

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The UrbanGlass
Art Quarterly

Eric Fischl Explores
Transparency
A Lens on History
in Seattle
Judith Schaechter
Goes 3-D
Ann Wolff's Masked
Personae
Emma Woffenden



US \$9 | CANADA \$9.95



NUMBER 137 : WINTER 2014-15

REVIEWS



LEFT: *Fertile Ground II*, 2014. Acrylic, steel, taxidermy peacock, flame-worked glass. H 106, W 65, D 65 in.

ABOVE: *The Dominant Sophia*, 2014. Cast crystal, 24-karat-gold mirror, steel. H 65, W 65, D 4 in.

Joanna Manousis

"The Dominant Sophia: Desire in Glass"
The Robert Lehman Gallery at
UrbanGlass
Brooklyn, New York
June 11–July 26, 2014

The installation *The Dominant Sophia* by Joanna Manousis consists of three object groups, triangulated to generate narratives in their midst. The largest assembly features a mounted male peacock perched on a tree. A domed, dodecagonal greenhouse that could pass for a display cage encloses it. The ostentatious bird serves as a pedestal for a display of glass objects embedded in the feathers of its chest and neck; they resemble growths of succulents made with flame-worked glass. They shimmer brilliantly and transform into jewels under the spotlights.

The peacock's beak points toward a smaller competitor perched atop another assembly. A stuffed magpie surmounts a glass copy of a tightly sealed pickle jar and bends down to spy on a silvery object immersed in solid glass under the lid. Small air bubbles trapped in the glass produce the illusion of clear liquid inside the jar. The object, a hollow glass bubble in the shape of a magpie, is mirrored with silver nitrate. This glass bird looks up at its feathered counterpart from its submersed captivity.

In their absorption in each other, the birds ignore an expanding star shape near them on the wall. The star shape consists of a circular deployment of glass objects in two rings around a small centerpiece. The arrangement recalls the radiating format of stained-glass rose windows on Gothic church facades. Yet unlike medieval windows, which let through colored daylight, the circular arrangement in Manousis's wall piece reflects the ambient light, giving it a gold tint. Its components seem to contain intricately textured gold objects.

Glass participates as a strategic agent in the construction of the narratives in this installation. In his book *Les TRANSformateurs*, Duchamp, Jean-François Lyotard describes, in a discussion of Marcel Duchamp's *Étant Donnés*, how glass can operate as a passive machine that reverses the direction of sight through reflection. Glass imitates the properties of the calm surface of water, without recourse to a separate energy source or motivation beyond its nature. Silvering enhances a function already extant.

Glass is also a desire machine because its transparency allows privileged passage to vision, separating it from the other senses. The gap mobilizes desire toward overcoming fragmentation. The display strategies of museums, jewelry stores, and candy jars effectively exploit glass as a desire machine. This property proved fatal to young Narcissus,

who fell in paralyzing love with his own reflection in a pond and eventually starved and drowned.

The Dominant Sophia provokes considerations of this kind. The glass panes of the nurturing greenhouse/cage enclose the bird in a trap of multifaceted reflections. The glass decorations on the peacock supplement its already flamboyant plumage and, through the effort, reveal an enduring sense of inadequacy. But transparency allows for its gaze to escape its confines toward objects beyond its reach: to the assemblage surmounted by the magpie. A long-tailed, black-and-white bird, the magpie can recognize itself in a mirror. Both the birds in this assemblage appear fascinated by each other, in an aviary version of Narcissus' tale. The peacock's Victorian spectacle and the magpie's self-obsession reveal the desire to compensate for a perceived lack: the former with ornaments and the latter with an idealized image.

Between them, *Indra's Web* stares like a composite eye. Each element in the wall arrangement contains hollow spaces molded from wheat grains, carefully piled in patterned configurations and mirrored with gold nitrate. The "oculus" multiplies and reflects in miniature the entire installation, complete with its viewers, against the facets of its golden background. Incorruptible gold, the chosen color of heavenly backdrops, suggests the eternal spiritual bliss in orthodox religious icons. With ironic coincidence, accumulating gold also signifies the desire for security through material riches. Wheat and gold combine the notions of earthly labor to raise food and sustain life with the leisurely expenditure of excess wealth on luxury. In this intersection, we reach the crux of the exhibition.

The exhibit delivers to us the labor behind the consummate skill with which the objects are crafted, gifts we grab with the immediacy of the gaze. The eye is privileged in a way the hand is not. The hand, shaped for the manipulation of matter, reduces distance and dissolves the self in labor. The eye, built to perceive at a distance, presumes a center from which the self stakes claims of ownership. We shift between these poles as we forget the self and dissolve it, and then remember and recover it. It all happens in *Indra's Web*, in which we are all reflected, infinitesimal and equidistant.

GERAR EDIZEL is a professor of art history at Alfred University and was a colleague of Joanna Manousis in the School of Art and Design at Alfred.

