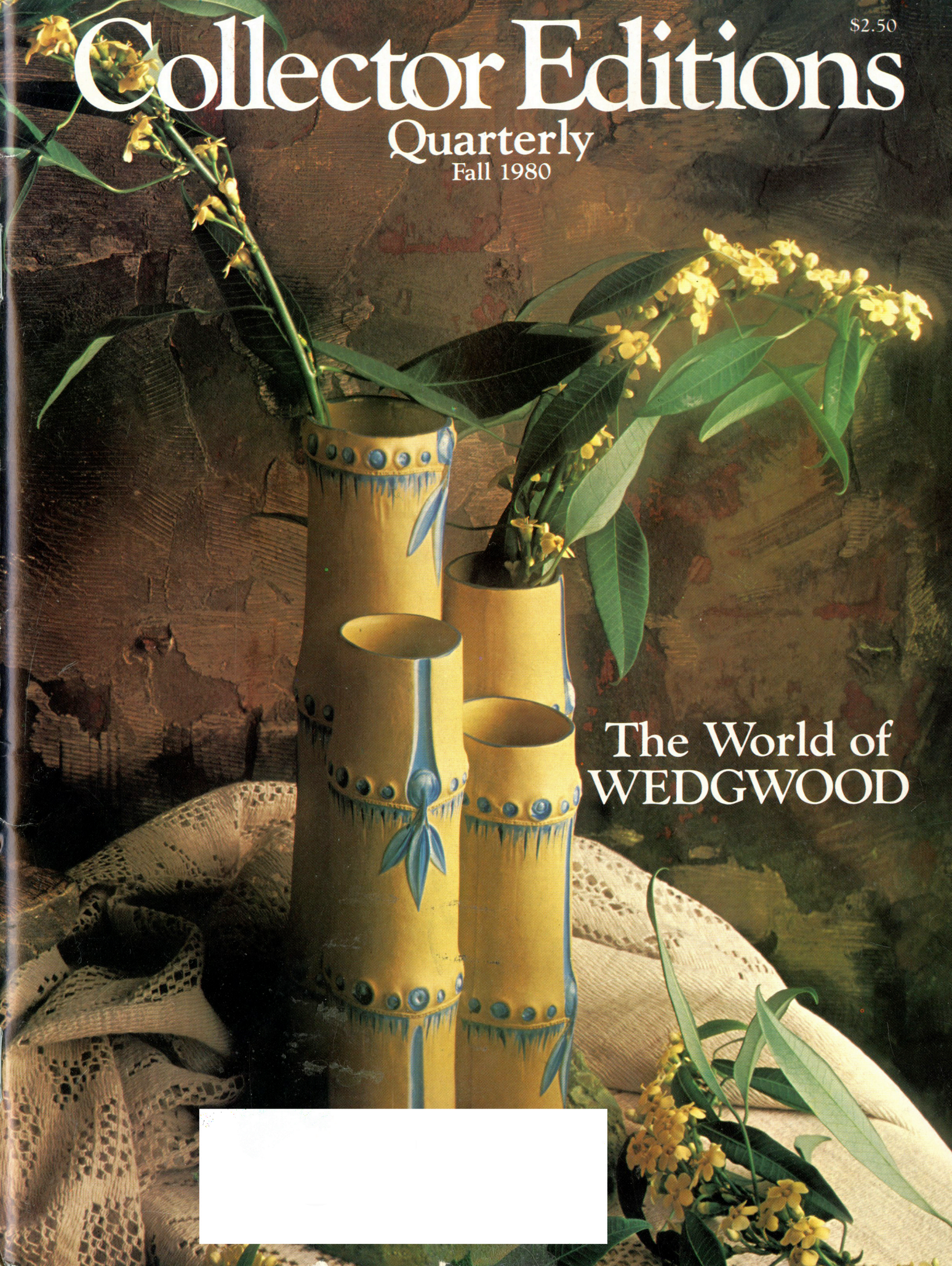


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Collector Editions

Quarterly
Fall 1980



The World of
WEDGWOOD

Collector Editions

Quarterly

VOL. 8

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On The Cover

A Wedgwood cane ware vase or flower-holder in the form of four lengths of cut bamboo standing upon a grassy mound, produced in 1785.
 Photograph by Robert Golden.

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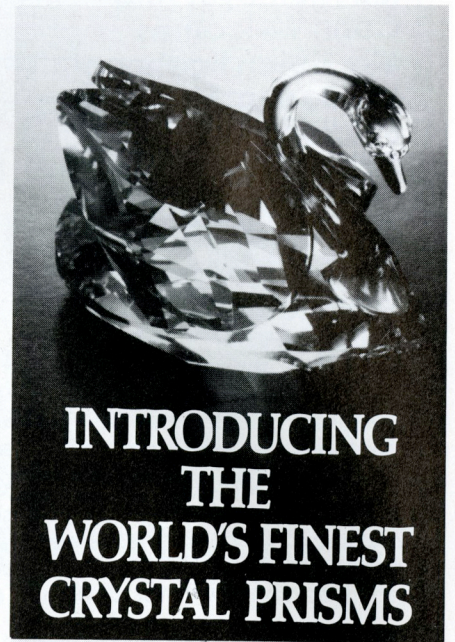
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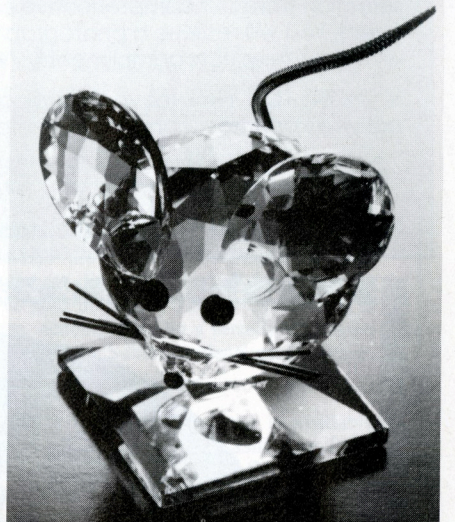
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HOLLISTER ON GLASS



IN GLASS CIRCLES 1980 is becoming Scandinavian Year. Three galleries have already had the courage to interrupt momentarily the inventive flow of American studio glass: Ten Arrow in Cambridge, MA., Habatat in Lathrup Village, MI., and Contemporary in New York City. The stars of the Scandinavian glass world shone June 14-July 14 in the distinctly Scandinavian ambience of Habatat's handsome new galleries, where white walls, open plate glass cases, and unfinished wood enhanced the clean lines of the glass shown and afforded collectors an opportunity to assess and enjoy the sophistication of a long-established glass tradition.

The concept of employing artists to design glass produced by craftsmen began in 1917 at the Orrefors factory in Sweden, when painters Simon Gate and Edward Hald were hired to design glass and to monitor its blowing and engraving in the practical confines of the factory itself. This interchange between designer and master glassblower merged the art and craft of luxury lead crystal glassmaking in a process whose end result was to set the standard for Scandinavia and eventually for Steuben. At Habatat we saw the time-tested styles sixty-three years later, hardly changed.

At Orrefors, for example, Gunnar Cyrén and Eva Englund are still using the Graal technique of 1916, in which an inner colored layer of glass is cut away until only the design remains, and then cased with an inner bubble of clear glass that seals off the design. Cyrén's sense of architectural balance and Eva Englund's delicate floral tracery reflect familiarity with inherited styles. Olle Alberius (Orrefors) employs the Ariel technique of the 1930's, sandblasting the inner design to create figural bubbles that resemble mercury. His Ariel vases echo the freedom of Lindstrand's designs of about 1940. Lars Hellsten, resident designer at Orrefors since 1972, is also the glass sculptor whose large piece in Corning's "New Glass" was a work of awesome power. Here he transfers some of that power to small but massive vases whose fat, silvery spirals of trapped air in Ariel technique suggest tightly furled leaves or bursting blossoms. Restricted in color and limited to a single motif, these vases are a much an icon for the 1980's as Lalique's whirlpool "Tourbillon" vase was for the 1930's.

The Habatat show contained a variety of vessels by German-born glass designer/decorator Ann Wärrff and the man whose

signature appears with hers on each piece, master glassblower Wilke Adolfsson, who left Orrefors as she had left Kosta that they might combine their notable talents. She has the art and he has the skill; he blows and colors the bowls to her specifications, which she then etches with her own private imagery. Ann Wärrff's classic bowl shapes are elevated on ringed feet or flared stems to catch the light above the surface on which they rest and call attention to their special chalice-like quality, as if they were receptacles for rare wines. She etches the designs through wax into the inner layers of these vessels in a 360 degree panorama of her fantasy world, overlapping two images here, partially eliminating a figure or object there, and sometimes sandblasting away an area to create a zone of "calm" between scenes. It is the creative drama we associate with painting, and Wärrff/Wilke pieces resemble no one else's. Ann Wärrff also showed evocative vertical glass panels where sculptured hot glass forms are fixed with epoxy to a clear and sandblasted flat window glass surface, a technique she developed with several master blowers at Kosta. Characteristically, one picture is titled, "No one finds huge turtle eggs lying inland on the floor of the old sea."

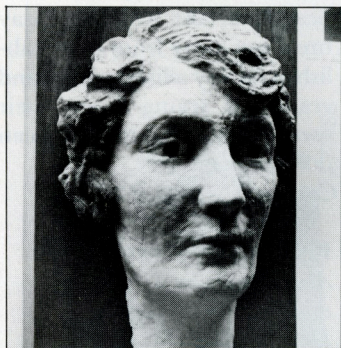
Haiku, anyone? The Wärrff/Adolfsson team is typical of some Scandinavians who are today breaking away from the established factory alliance of art and craft and trying it on their own—as Americans have been doing since 1962.

Continued on page 34

From left to right: (1) Like American studio glassmakers, versatile Finn Lynggaard of Denmark blows his own glass in exciting variety of pictorial and abstract styles. Vase shows oriental poppies executed with almost Japanese painter skill but in Kugler glass colors on unusual background of alabaster translucency. (2) Cloudy opal chalice by Wärrff/Wilke is superbly blown by Adolfsson to Venetian Renaissance shape with swirled knob and trumpet stem designed by Ann Wärrff. This is teamwork at its best. (3) At Orrefors since 1974, Eva Englund continues leafy and floral Graal designs of 70 years ago in small vases and bowls that appeal to today's collectors. This one is only 4 x inches high. (4) Vase designed by Edla Freij of Norway's Hadelands Glassworks shows attractive leafy design raised by sandblasting. Her work neatly combines flowing forms of Art Nouveau with hard edge of Art Deco.

Space does not permit discussion of the work of Monica Bäckström, Benny Motzfeldt, Ulla Forsell, Eric Höglund, or several others known to glass students and collectors. Prices ranged from \$65 to \$1600, and there were bargains at every price level. I would like to have owned the opal-tinted vase by Ann Wärff/Wilke for only \$65, or the large, thick, long-ringing crystal bowl by Jan Johansson (currently a freelance designer for Orrefors) with its superb flute cuts below a tier of lunette cuts. Apart from the lunettes, nothing new about the design, but that bowl is perfection. At \$1600 it was a steal.

Corning's Glass Mecca



Pâte de Verre head by Georges Despret (1862-1952). The Corning Museum of Glass.

THE NEW CORNING Museum of Glass let drop its veil of architectural mystery and opened to the public last June 1. If for some the exterior of the building seems to have retained its stainless steel-treated glass veil, the interior reveals that the new museum is indeed the world center for the display of glass and for publications on glass. Once up the ramp, through the confusing 'discotheque' lobby, and into the museum proper the logic of this treasure house of glass becomes self-evident. For the plan is built logically around a central library core, where one may ask to see the latest issue of *Collector Editions* or the most arcane bit of



The stainless steel and glass entrance lobby to the new Corning Museum of Glass building is dominated by a large glass sculpture made especially for the new museum by two of the world's great glass artists., Stanislav Libensky and Jaroslava Brychtova of Czechoslovakia. The symbolic sculpture has three parts: a meteor, a bird and a flower.

glass incunabula and be cheerfully served by helpful librarians.

Around this circular core curves the long main gallery, called the "time tunnel." The restfully dark, carpeted, and quiet gallery presents a selection of highlights from among the museum's 20,000 pieces of glass, arranged chronologically from the earliest Egyptian and Mesopotamian glasses of 1500 B.C. right up to the present. The gallery is punctuated by twelve columnar cases, each containing a "masterpiece", or at least a rare or a characteristic example from a different period. The inner wall of this gallery is lined with a padded bench where one may rest at any point in this historical procession of glasses and gaze across at the exhibits. These, by the way, are attractively arranged with comfortable intervals between groups of glasses of each type or period, which are suspended almost magically on paper-thin shelves magnetized to the backs of the cases. The eye is never crowded by too much glass. Visitors with minimal curiosity or little time to spare can give the columns the once over in a few minutes, the gallery itself in perhaps twenty.

The large remainder of the museum, that is the area between the long gallery and the curving exterior, consists of a series of oddly shaped bays or rooms, each containing glass of a different period and country. The glass is set dramatically in vertical displays lit from behind, and in horizontal cases against the curtained daylight of the curving outer walls. These rooms are basically study areas for those interested in particular kinds of glass. Here you can see it all, case after case of ancient Roman glass; Islamic cut glass; German forest glass and enamelled glass; Venetian *cristallo* and filigree glass; Bohemian engraved glass; English cut crystal; Chinese carved glass; African trade beads; French paperweights; American pressed glass and historical flasks; the Art Glass of Gallé and Daum, Tiffany and Carder; the Strauss Collection of 2400 drinking glasses of all periods; contemporary American and European glass; in short, encyclopedic collections of every type of glass from every century. Even if one knows nothing about glass, these beautifully conceived displays offer an instant education.

What can be seen is artfully

explained in context in a series of repeating films showing the various important historical techniques involved. We watch an ancient Egyptian flask being made over a core held on the end of a stick, and we see how the hot decoration is trailed on in rings and then combed into colored zig-zags. We visit a primitive glassblowing furnace in modern day Afghanistan in a recent film that could not be made today. We witness the incredible skill of a Venetian glassmaking team coping with the intricacies of a dragon stem goblet, making the impossible look easy. We watch a man operating a nineteenth century American pressing machine, flipping his pressed glass plate in the air as if it were a pancake, and catching it. These films tell a lot in five minutes, but if you want the pedigree of any piece of glass, all you have to do is punch out on one of the computer terminals the information given on the accession card. For greater detail, it's into the handy library.

If you plan to go to Corning plan to stay overnight. This collection of collections is unquestionably mecca for glass, and you cannot take it all in at one viewing.