

# Collector Editions

\$2.50

WINTER 1978

Quarterly



**Mettlach**—  
the grand old  
name of steins is  
back, plus a  
collector's view of  
the parent company,  
**Villeroy & Boch**

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# Collector Editions

Quarterly

VOL. 6 NO. 4

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**Dear Reader,**  
**Due to serious delays in production and printing, we have decided to combine the Fall and Winter issues of Collector Editions. We apologize for the delay. This is the largest issue in the magazine's six-year history. All subscriptions will be automatically extended by one issue.**

Collector Editions Quarterly is published quarterly in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, with an additional issue published in January by the Acquire Publishing Company, Inc., 170 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, telephone 212/989-8700. Editorial and Advertising offices at 170 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010. Second Class Postage is paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. © Copyright 1978 by the Acquire Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprint permission must be granted in writing. Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts.

Subscription price in the U.S.: 1 year (5 issues) \$8.50, 2 years (10 issues) \$15.00. Add \$1 per year for Canadian, \$2 per year for foreign subscriptions. Please allow 6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

# Glass: Something For Everybody At Habatat

In its Sixth Annual National – sounds impressive and it was – Habatat Galleries, Dearborn, Mich. put together a cross-section of American Studio Glassmaking that counted 67 glassmakers and over 652 pieces of glass. Sizes ranged from a two-inch bottle to a 30-inch lamp; prices from \$25 to \$1500.

Habatat is located in the heart of Carmaking Country, where the only other glass is non-breakable, and gets recalled if it does. Yet in three weeks (April 15 through May 6) over 300 individually handmade pieces of Art Glass were sold. Though collectors came out from New York to purchase from the show, considerable collector interest in the Michigan area itself is indicative of a growing interest in American Studio Glass from Florida to California. Equally significant in terms of quality is that glassmakers are now able to plan a year ahead toward putting their best work into next year's

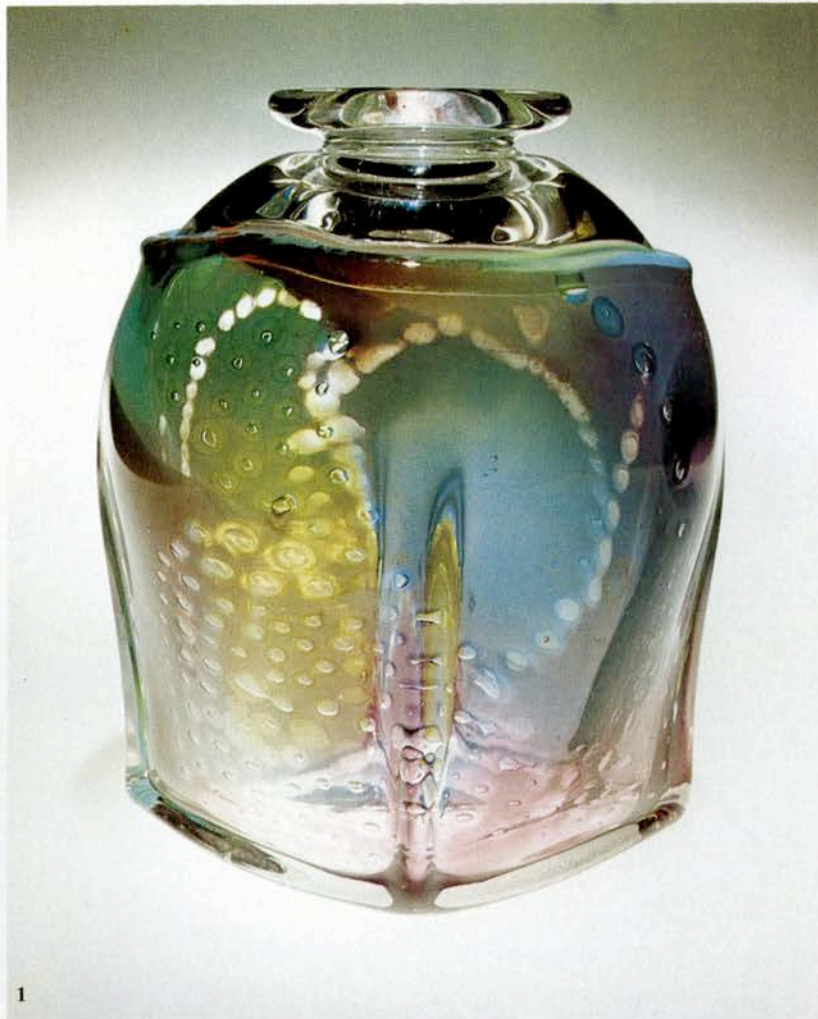
Habatat National. Whenever an artist has a one-man show at Habatat a workshop is set up so that glassmakers from the area can learn the problems and solutions.

As for the glass exhibited, the range of ideas and techniques for achieving them give one faith in American creativity. Among the 67 exhibitors there were bound to be a number who seem content to repeat their past successes, to restamp their trademarks; and there were an obvious few included who were just entering the world of glassmaking at the stylistic and technical level where their mentors were five or ten years ago. A very few seem to me to have lost their nerve or let their imaginations go unfed. Yet, exclusion of these leaves scarcely enough room to rave about the beautiful, exciting, innovative highlights of this big show.

If I were handing out awards, my first prize would have to be shared

The American Studio Glass movement demonstrated its vitality at the Habatat National with 67 makers showing over 650 pieces of glass.

jointly by Thomas McGlauchlin for his imaginative innovation, and by Richard Ritter for achieving remarkable textures and color schemes, each example different within a similar limiting glass form. Obviously talented, though appearing in recent years to flounder about in search of something new, McGlauchlin has suddenly mobilized all his creative forces and achieved stunning results. It is difficult to imagine a more subtle enhancement of the squarish, decanter-like vessel (1.), or the classic bowl (not illustrated because the photo did not show all that is going on inside it), or the debonaire (in all senses of that word), 13-inch bottle (2.) with its cascading veils of dimpled color. McGlauchlin's high-clarity inner glass and classic forms are swathed in tatters and veils of color – lettuce green, cocoa, cobalt, mulberry, scarlet, pale pink, yellow amber – suggesting the harvest harmonies of late summer and



early autumn in the mountains. These deceptively simple (good art usually is) overlappings are stitched together with engraved lines that required skilled incisions between casings of hot glass, and dimpled bubbles that suggest the marbling of the endpapers of seventeenth century books, or perhaps tire-tread marks left on oil smears in a filling station. These festoons of pearly bubbles could be grapes ready for picking. As a painter who has played on cold canvas with the Morris Louis-Paul Jenkins type color swashings, I know that these similar veilings in hot glass must be far more difficult to control.

In a stage just before he reached this inspired level of artistic harmony McGlaughlin did a couple of vases with engraved, then cased vermiculation, one in pink and green that seals in the effect of Chinese jade carving. McGlaughlin gives a sense of having absolute color-form control. Prices \$225-\$500, and cheap at all prices.

A vase by Richard Ritter (3.), \$1300 and weighing in at ten to fifteen pounds, looks as if Ritter had taken up home pickling: two dozen oysters with pearls, a squid, a filleted fish, whale gills, all in a dozen luscious shades of gray and crammed into one multi-

layered vase that must have taken days to anneal. Yet the next vase, similar only in its classic ovoid shape, contains a livid, living tissue of vermilion, oranges and yellow; while still another is all in swimming pool aqua, thick with gorgeous surprises of undersea life along the jampacked coral reef. One feels compelled to rotate these heavy glass bodies in order to follow the rhythmic play of internal layer upon layer of surprises. The layering is so subtle, so skilled as to be absolutely without explanation. At the same time, no part of the overall design is static and one must rotate these ponderous possessions to see what happens next. A photograph does not do justice to Ritter's work: whoever buys one must feel compelled to buy another for contrast, as if somehow each vase is a clue to another.

For over a decade Joel Philip Myers has drawn upon a broad background in graphics, industrial design, and teaching to produce through varying techniques a surprising range of forms and colors. One easy-to-like series is his cylindrical containers (4.), ceramically opaque but coated with a collage of blobs, splashes, trailings, kufic squiggles in brilliant color displays that explode over the surface like the land-

scapes of a Chinese scroll or one of Coleridge's laudanum dreams. But Dale Chilhuly, Michael Pavlik, and others have used the cylindrical vehicle for their color dreams, and the form is becoming slightly monotonous. One thinks of giant candles and longs for another shape. Fortunately, Myers also showed fumed bottles with ball stopper, some with cane and glass fragments inside; and one solid, almost spherical vase with a tiny top opening leading down to a large, mirroring interior that hauntingly reflects the dead-stiff clutch of rusty autumn leaves surrounding the bubble. This solid piece of limpid glass wanted to be cupped in the hands. Matrix glass of other similar Myers vases was not so clear, and appearances suffered accordingly. Prices \$250-700.

Happily, some glass makers are not satisfied to work with dishwasher glass. For example, Paul Manners' ten to twelve-inch-high decorative pieces enclose lobed, flamelike color motifs that spiral upward in the cleanest containing glass halos imaginable this side of Steuben or Baccarat (5.). Like Michael Boylen's bi-lobed vase interiors, these rising motifs carry silvery, tapering bubbles that help propel upward the rockets of color. But Boylen's internal



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glass struggles between void and form are earthbound, and though his colors have become more positive, Boylen seems to have wearied of the internal combustions that activated his earlier forms. The appearance of Manners' pieces is so brilliant it almost has a tinselly, gift shop look, as if the colors were really made of cellophane. But the prices (\$125-\$145) were gift shop prices too, and every piece was understandably carried off to become someone's conversation piece.

John Bingham's mounted sculptures complete what Harvey Littleton's bent spaghetti, albeit intentionally, only begins. Bingham (6.) manipulates his clear glass tubes while hot by folding them over, pinching them, tweeking here, dimpling there, puckering, pulling out. The deft manipulation of creases and folds shows through the clear glass and creates new shapes as one moves around the piece. Only qualification: some iron-green cast to the glass, which should be clear as proverbial crystal.

While Robert Bartlett showed some vases that were a poor second to the meticulously programmed designs and precise color placements of John Lewis' denatured landscapes, when Bartlett conceived the idea of making

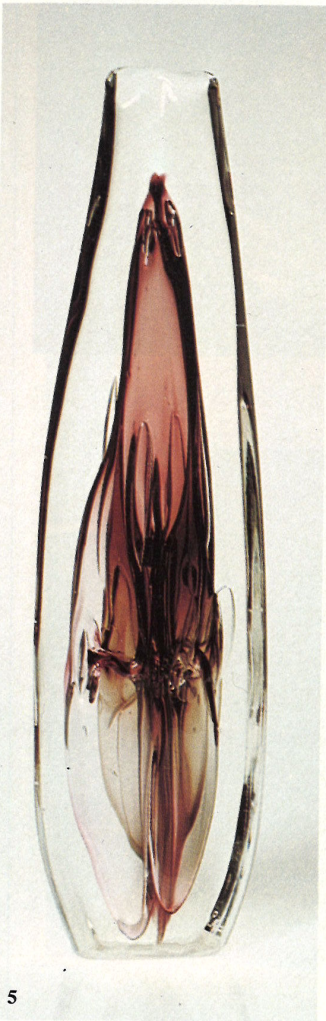
frost-banded and stoppered cube bottles, he created something original (7.) Externally suggestive of Art Deco, these bottles of cast glass contain mysterious internal essences in which vague, imaginery forms appear to float and languish like pickled specimens. Is it a turnip? A registered nurse's wravelled stocking? A hermit crab seen by X-ray in its shell? There is a hint in the pleasantly yellow tonality of the glass of the storage of rare perfume oils, something to be sampled only in the presence of witnesses or the secrecy of the inner sanctum. They are very elegant, these bottles. To own one (they were each \$200) would bestow upon the purchaser a sense of chic.

George Thiewes (he pronounces it The-uess) is widely known for his attractively-shaped vases (\$200-\$600) in which, he says, the displacement of the nasturtium-like blossoms in hot reds, oranges and yellows determines the shape the vase will take (8.). Thiewes makes his own colors and they have become his trademark, though now his shapes are adding interest. The control required to make flower and leaf shapes follow (or determine) contours that are created by reshaping the original blown bubble without distortion is considerable. The

recently not so simple shapes seem so natural that we fail to notice that the interiors of his vases are lined with yellow, opal white, or tomato. Pinks and smoky browns appear on Thiewes latest work in thickets of color that suggest the child-grabbing vines of Arthur Rackham's book illustrations.

As late as last autumn Chuck Wright was filling standard, hemispherical paperweights with writhing folds of glass taffy (Collector Editions, Jan. 1978, p. 20, fig. 3) Now he has taken a giant step forward in both shape and content. Wright's clear glass forms, sensuously indented, coaxed and kneaded are now definitely sculptural. Instead of taffy inside we have flamelike veils as arresting as Martha Graham's early, cloaked and hooded danceforms. These highly original, mesmerizing forms could be holy flames of some secret vigil (9.). In other examples scarves of color within the undulating outer forms suggest a block of moving seawater with its cargo of folding and unfolding undersea plants. Wright is using limpid if not flawless glass now and his form and color work together in beauty.

Janet Kelman's naturalistically accurate yet artistically rendered portraits of actual kinds of tropical fish appear



as if painted just under the surface of vases of delightfully small size – in fact I find them the delight of the show. The fish are actually drawn onto the inner layer in glass of six or eight different colors as if she were painting a watercolor. Behind the fish the glass bowls are tinted emerald green (for a pipe fish), smoky blue, aqua, or sandcolor (10.) as in this example, where the fish seems to be swimming over a sandy shoal. Green aquatic fronds appear through from the opposite sides of the vases, lending an artistic illusion of three dimensions that is in truth present. A former student at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, Janet Kelman had the sense to watch and study before she began to work in glass. She watched, among others, Mark Peiser, who also draws on glass. Her bargain prices ran \$45 to

\$90 and most of them sold on the spot.

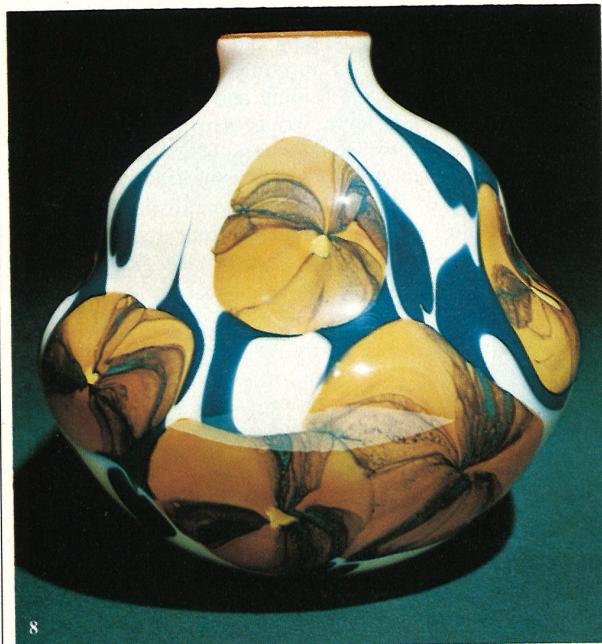
Closer to paleontology than to piscian, Brent Young's bucket-shaped bowls are wrapped on fossil treasures, delicate in shape, beautiful in texture, harmoniously subdued in coloring (11.). These are pieces for quiet contemplation and long-lasting enjoyment.

Oh, there were many bargains in this big show; one of the best being Brian Maytum's abstraction like an oxhead, beautifully mounted and lit from beneath for only a third of what it must have cost him to make the work. Nearly every well known name in the glass world was represented: Tom Patti's pioneering triumphs of blown, laminated glass, John Lewis' latest vases, slightly irregular in the rim for a change, Milropa's enclosures of the glassy detritus of civilizations and planets – probably ours. Flora Mace's

bowls and taller vessels, divided between her homespun prairie and medieval tapestry styles. Robert Fritz's highly finished blown sculptures, with their silver and champagne lustres. Richard Marquis' jazzy mosaic playthings, some with rather unpleasant *carnival glass* surfaces, others done as nonfunctional teapots and other tricks. William Carlson's still mysterious but not overstyled cross-sections of inner mysteries, faceted like the heads of owls and bearing extraneous and vestigial stoppers from his earlier bottle making days. And, as the auctioneers say, much much more.

But I have run out of space, and those I have neglected to mention will be back next year, some this year in one-man shows. American Studio Glass has put its show on the road. ●

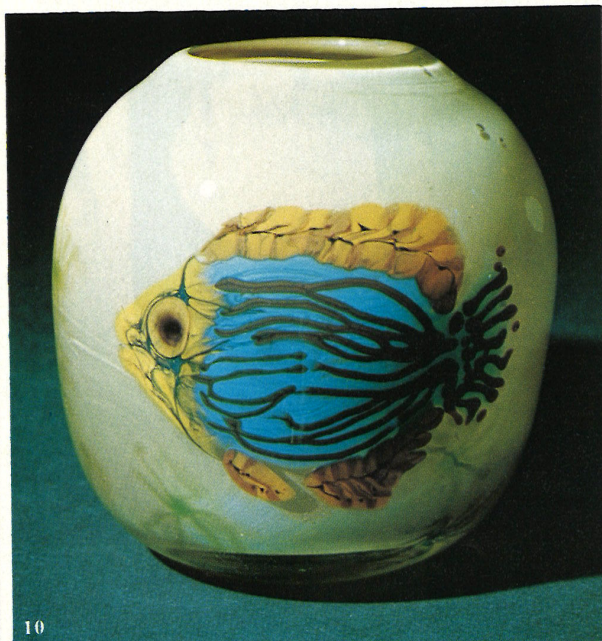
PAUL HOLLISTER



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