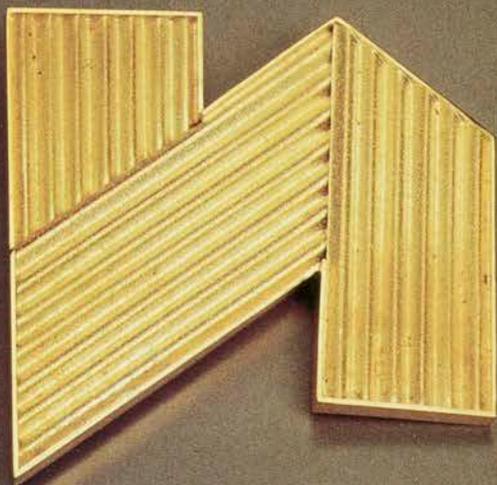


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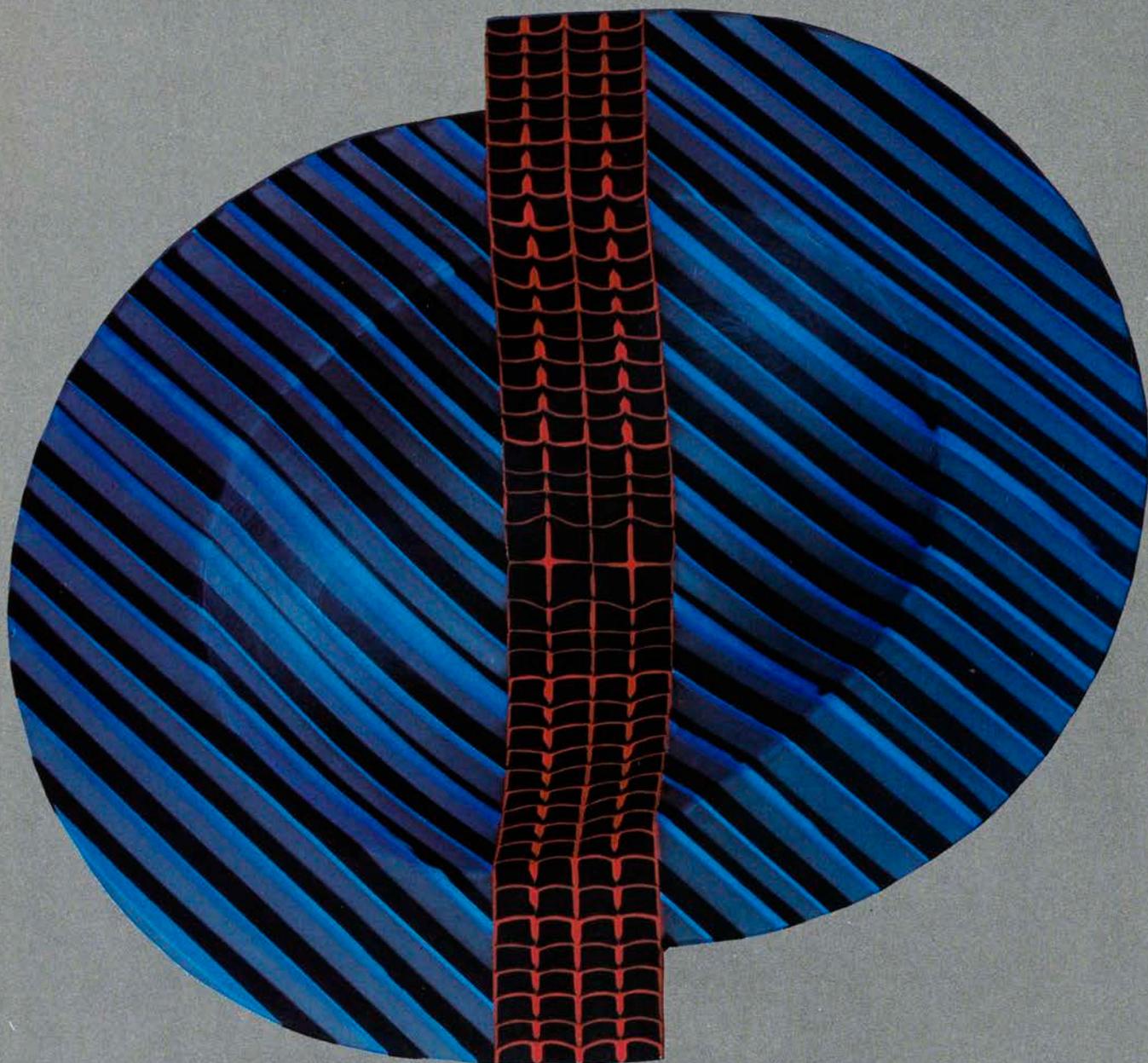
Back Cover: Doublewall Triptych (center element), 1983-84, hemp and synthetic fiber, 6'9" x 12" wide at top, by Claire Zeisler. See page 96. Photograph by M.J. Toles, courtesy of Rhona Hoffman Gallery.

The American Craft Council is a national, nonprofit educational organization founded in 1943 by Aileen Osborn Webb to promote interest in contemporary crafts. In addition to publishing AMERICAN CRAFT magazine, the council maintains the American Craft Museum in New York City and sponsors a library and nationwide audiovisual service. Through its subsidiary, American Craft Enterprises, Inc., craft markets are presented in various parts of the country. Membership in the American Craft Council is open to all.

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Klaus Moje

He tries consciously to avoid the natural beauty of glass to give each piece his own stamp.



CHUCK BOZIO

BELOW: Klaus Moje working at The Pilchuck School, 1982. OPPOSITE PAGE: *Number 18* in "Shield" series, 1983, colored glass canes, slumped, fused, 21½"x20½"x2¾".

TEXT BY PAUL HOLLISTER

A master of mosaic glass, Klaus Moje stumbled upon that ancient process by chance. In 1972, at the Hessinglas Company near Frankfurt, West Germany, for whom he was then a designer, Moje saw cylindrical, opaque, colored glass canes from one to two inches thick, the raw material used to make glass jewelry, beads and buttons. Moje took some of the canes to his studio in Hamburg and began cutting them up for his own amusement. Eventually, he made a mold of plaster and grog, put into it parallel slices of cane and fused them together. The result was a mosaic bowl. One of the first pieces he made was an oval, opaque white glass bowl that caught the eye of Axel von Saldern, director of the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg, who purchased it for the museum. Moje (he was given a one-man show at the museum in 1980) believes that if he had not had that "beginner's luck" he might never have pursued the mosaic technique.

Moje was born in Hamburg in 1936. At 16 he learned his first basic cold-glass skills in his father's shop, Glas-schleiferel Hugo Moje, cutting and beveling the edges of flat glass and mirrors for showcases. In 1956 he won top prize in a competition of glass journeymen, and with it his journeyman's certificate. An education grant in 1957 enabled him to enter the state polytechnic (trade) glass school in Rheinbach. Leaving Rheinbach after one semester because he felt the instruction was inadequate, Moje switched to the polytechnic school at Hadamar, where he earned his master's certificate in glass cutting and etching in 1959. Although he had no formal art training, Moje says that at Hadamar he received a broad education that prepared him for a future in glass.

Moje's first commission—to create a group of meditation windows for a semicircular chapel—came in 1961 from the Bauhaus master Lothar Schreyer. The windows were produced in a studio set up by Moje and his wife Isgard. More window commissions followed, including a church in Jordan and the restoration in 1965 of a German church in Jerusalem, in which the faces in the Nazarene windows had been shot out.

In 1967 Isgard and Klaus began decorating glass for which they soon became well known. The mostly lead glass was blown to their specifications at the Hessinglas Company, and they decorated it with metallic resins painted in layers. The work was jointly signed MOJE. It was also in 1967 that the couple first heard about the American studio glass movement—already five years old—from Erwin Eisch. In Hamburg they had started the Workshop Gallery of Klaus and Isgard Moje, first showing the work of Eisch, the only other person then producing "contemporary" glass in Germany. Interest in the new work spread, and after the Mojes'



ROGER SCHREIBER

gallery was well established, other galleries began to appear. Klaus believes that he and Isgard had a significant impact on cold-worked glass in Germany. But it was not until 1969 in Ireland that Moje, as German representative of the World Crafts Council, first met an American glassworker—Marvin Lipofsky. Moje considers Lipofsky to have had a strong influence on studio hot glass.

In the mid-to-late 1970s Moje carved clear glass vases with deep spirals that were left unpolished and gave the vessels the appearance of having been whittled. But since 1975, he has been concentrating on mosaic glass. In nine years he has taken an ancient Alexandrian or Roman luxury glass concept and updated both its form and technique.

Roman mosaic glass bowls—both "ribbon" bowls and those combining ribbons with millefiori elements—are now assumed to have been made by placing the preformed elements in or over a mold or between two molds and heating them until they fused together. Moje, who watched Venetian mosaic bowls being made at Murano, says that when the ribbons are hot enough, they are pushed together with irons and the hot glass is placed over a mold already in the oven, into which it soon sinks down. If the mold is deep, the glass is likely to split. He says that uneven rims are caused by misgauging the amount of glass needed to fill the mold to the rim, and by too rapid melting.

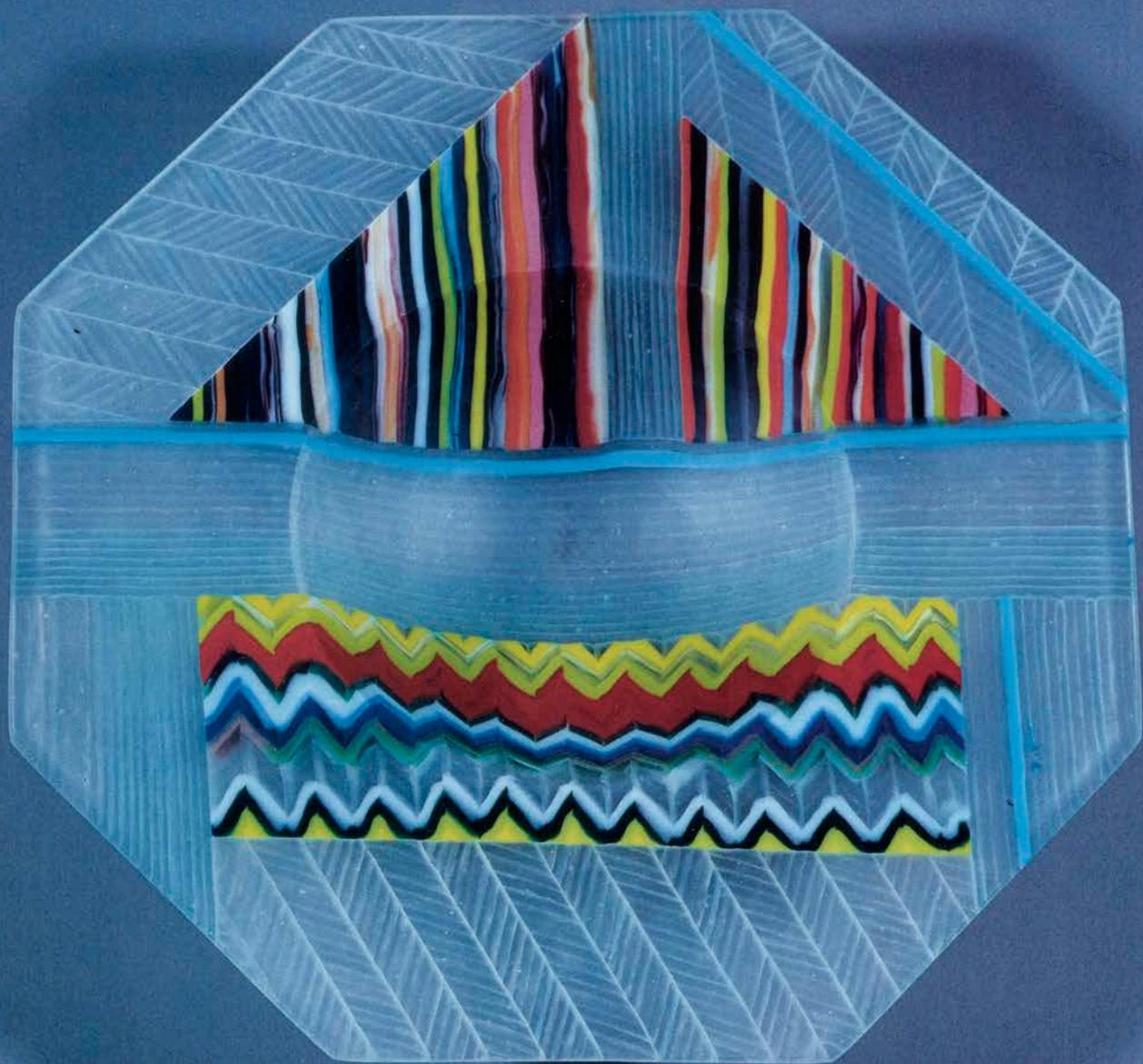
As opposed to the fast Venetian hot-working method, Moje considers his procedure "cold work," that is, glass not touched by handworking during the hot or fusing stage. Moje cuts his colored glass canes into ribbons or strips

with a diamond saw, arranges their design as a flat sheet, and fuses them together in a pottery kiln or firing furnace at a precisely controlled temperature. A second, low-temperature firing slumps the flat-glass design slowly into the mold. The final stages involve many tedious hours of grinding to smooth the rim and create a matte finish on the upper surface of his mosaic bowls. He leaves the bottom surface shiny for tactile contrast.

Of his mosaic work Moje says, "I cut and fuse, lay out the strips of color, cut off again, fuse, cut and fuse. I mistrust all cheap chance effects and I work very slowly, step-by-step to eliminate them. If one occurs I try to control it, to transform it. By working the glass cold, I have more control than the various Italian factories where the glass is worked hot. My cold preparation is so precise that when a piece comes out of the slumping kiln it looks exactly as I want it to look."

Moje's mosaic bowls and plates of the late 1970s were of many shapes—octagonal, oval, circular—but of two basic types: those with longitudinally or transversely sliced canes in pulsing, two-color designs, and those softly tinted in one color with pink, gray or blue ribbons that give the appearance of watered silk. This moiré effect was achieved partly by slicing the canes lengthwise to reveal a striated cross section, and by heating certain colors to specific temperatures. The simpler overall shapes allowed the bolder patterns to dazzle and the softer tones to glow, whereas more complex ones, such as a hemispherical bowl with an octagonal rim tend—for this viewer at least—to recall an ashtray or a trendy table centerpiece. A stunning Moje dish in cardinal red, slumped without rim in one smooth arc, a piece that The Corning Museum included in its 1979 exhibition, "New Glass, A Worldwide Survey," is ample evidence of the power of the simpler shape.

CHUCK BOZIO

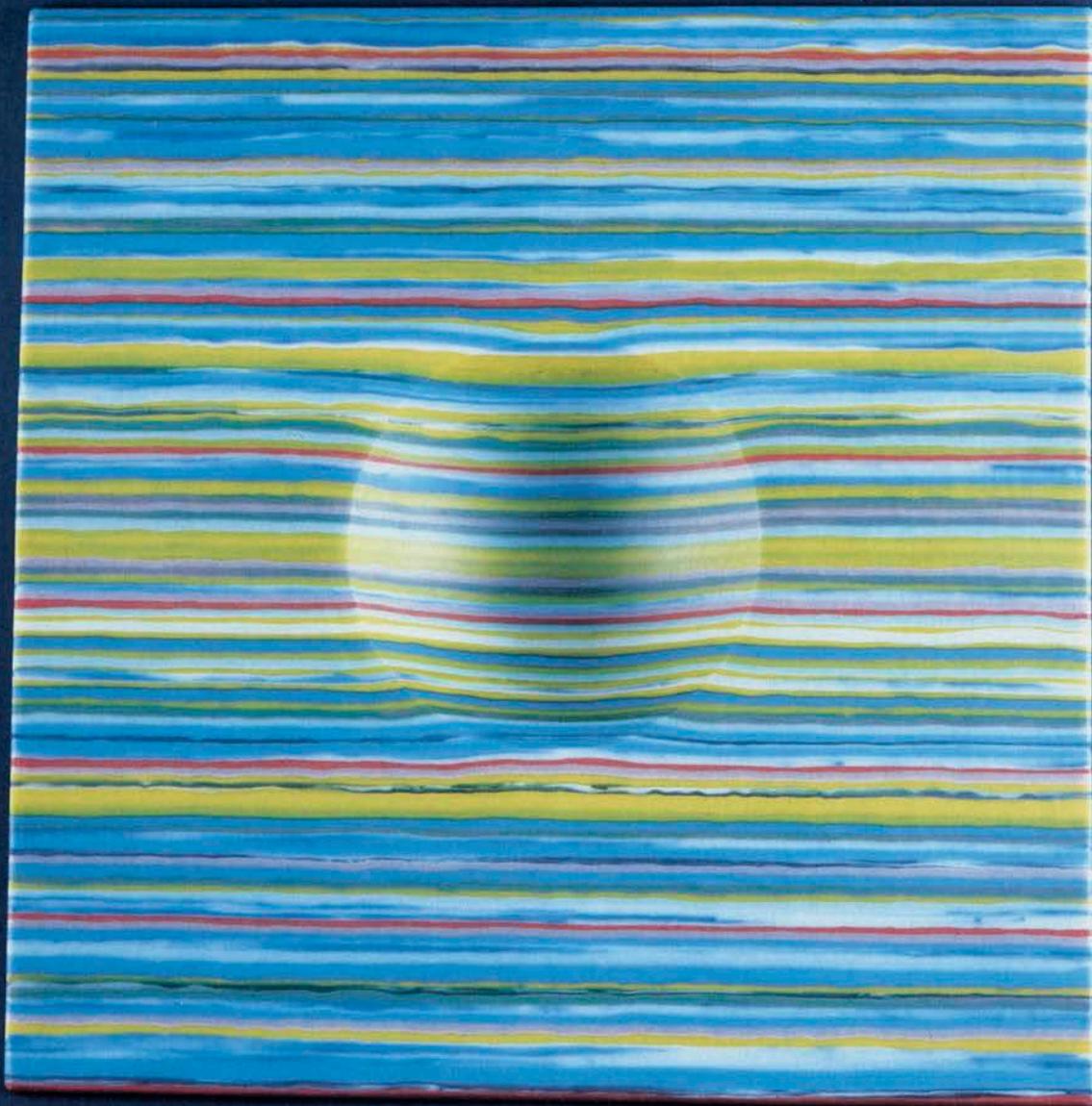


Teaching is an enjoyable part of Moje's working life. He has lectured at the Skolan for Brugskunst, Copenhagen, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, London's Royal College of Art and the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland. From 1979 through 1982 he was engaged by the studio glass artist Dale Chihuly to teach and work at The Pilchuck School, Stanwood, Washington. Moje is a great admirer of Chihuly who, he feels, has produced students able to think for themselves.

The American experience was vital to Moje's work. "For the first time I was no longer afraid of bright colors. I was excited by the energy of the American student, which gave me back something for my own work. America has become my artistic homeland."

I watched Moje at work at Pilchuck in 1982, standing for hours at the grinding wheel, up to his elbows in cold water and slurry, cradling a large heavy mosaic vessel in the

BELOW: *Number Nine* in "New Horizons" series, 1984, colored glass canes, cut, slumped, fused, 16 1/8" x 16 1/8" x 2". OPPOSITE PAGE: *Number Two* in "Shield" series, 1984, colored glass canes, cut, slumped, fused, 12 3/4" x 12 3/4" x 2".



laborious rocking-rotating arcs that would finally achieve the perfect roundness and velvety matte finish he sought. In contrast to the opacity of his earlier mosaics, translucent bands of red, greens and blues appeared, enlivening the work when held to the light. There were herringbone patterns and plaids, single bands of patterned mosaic cut across pulsing fields of pink, yellow, orange, vermilion. Moje was laying out the design combinations within the formal boundaries of circle, oval, octagon; it seemed only a matter of time before we would have the complete range of mosaic pattern and color combinations.

Then in August 1982 Moje's career took another turn: he flew to Canberra, Australia, where he had been given a five-year appointment to set up a glass workshop in the government-sponsored Canberra School of Art. Of Canberra Moje says, "It is an artificial city made on a drawing board in 1927—each residential area has an identical shopping center with all the same shops in exactly the same places. The uniformity is unbelievable. Even the lake is artificial. You have your little house and garden. But I brought my glass and ceramic collection and my books with me to break up that uniformity and preserve my identity."

As Moje states, the Canberra School of Art is not a technical school. Its program includes most arts and crafts, and students in the first semester are exposed to drawing, painting and the language of art through many teachers; only later are they admitted to the workshops of their major and submajor subjects. Each year 12 students enter the glass course, some going for the four-year BA degree, others—including those with a strong art background—for the two-year associate diploma. Students' ages range from 22 to 42, and Moje finds he can teach both groups with equal intensity. Wary of repeating what he regards as the mistakes of the European technical school system, Moje emphasizes the development of an artistic idea that the student wants to realize in glass. Techniques come later, and Moje explains them as problems are raised by the students.

"Each morning before the workshop begins we have a short brainstorming session. I encourage students to learn to solve the problems themselves through group discussion. I don't want to press my stamp on them. The only thing I can really teach is independence of thought."

So far, the workshop has been confined to cold glassworking, as Moje defines it, with Neil Roberts as co-lecturer. The hot shop is being set up, and for construction of the most advanced furnace, Moje has engaged the Dutch glassworker and furnace expert Durk Valkema, who will be at the school in March and April. Each semester hot glass will be taught in two-month workshops by Australian and international glass artists.

Though Moje tries consciously to avoid the natural beauty of glass and to give each piece his own stamp, the effect of Australian light and space on his latest work is unmistakable. "The sun hits you like a fist. The Canberra sunsets are spectacular. Deep dark colors are struck by sudden rays of light like a diamond. After thunderstorms you often see a double rainbow up so close you can walk into it. I found the end of a rainbow in the landscape." Overall patterns of small mosaics and ribbon fields crossed by patterned bands have been replaced by multiple patterns spaced over a single piece. Since 1983 Moje's method of working has changed radically. "With the old pieces I worked directly from the cane into the final design. Today I allow myself to relax a little. I build up flat plates of fused patterns with no final design in mind. They are like pages in a sketchbook from which I may take an idea here, a slice of pattern there. I cut up these mosaic sketches, reassemble them,

and fuse them together into other flat plates. When a satisfactory design is achieved, I slump it into bowl form."

Moje slumps the flat designs because he feels that slumping gives them more power, more tension, and makes them look twice the size. "I always look for the most powerful statement. And also, I want people to touch my glass on both sides, which they can only do if it's slumped. The vessel context associated with a piece does not bother me; it's irrelevant."

New work includes the "Shield" series, in which bold swatches of houndstooth check, rickrack and checkered mosaic are arranged dynamically over a pointed oval surface that is frequently of a translucent, iridescent glass Moje obtains from the Bullseye Glass Company of Portland, Oregon. The shields are slumped in one shallow, unbroken arc, which gives them a more sculptural presence, like leaves carried on the wind. Many of Moje's new pieces have colored borders composed of hundreds of tiny slices of cane.

Other pieces, center-slumped in the old shapes, support mosaic swatches and iridescent areas similar to the "Shield" series. One of these, a bowl with octagonal rim, showing a triangular patch of colorful ribbons above a horizontal band of zigzagged colors, has the totemic force of primitive signs and emblems. After all, the wild, mountainous outback is only a ten-minute drive from Canberra.

Not content with jarring pattern arrangements, Moje has cut some rims askew to give his pieces more torque and tension, as if the sections of pattern had been reassembled and fused incorrectly after slumping. These pieces demand hand contact as the mind tries to rationalize the form and put Humpty-Dumpty back together. Moje may be trying too hard here, and the persistence of the vessel form may be the problem.

Moje's more successful pieces are from his "New Horizons" series, in which three circular, centrally slumped forms are crossed by innumerable parallel, wobbly stripes in the many new colors obtained from Bullseye, which supplies some 50 colors that are compatible in fusion. The wobbles, which suggest freely painted lines, result from using the irregular edge of the glass. In each of three "New Horizons" the same opaque pink appears in varying relationships to other colors, which gives each piece its own special tonality of light. One is reminded of Monet's series showing the effect of various lights on a haystack. In "New Horizons" we no longer have patches of mosaic wallpaper, but waves of grain, pulsations of sunlight, rainbows of color.

Recently Moje has carried his vibrating stripes a giant step further with a riveting piece in which a large, flat square is indented by a small, shadow-trapping hemisphere. The predominant tonality is yellow in the center and sky blue towards the edges. This time the slumping works. The flat square has suddenly become the canvas, and we might be standing in a field watching an eclipse of the sun.

Moje considers that cold work is now more important for studio glassworking than it was in the hot-blowing 60s and 70s. "People can work alone without the need to share studio space to keep costs low. Cold work is the way out of many problems. In the next decade 80 percent of studio glass exhibited will be cold-worked." Given his experience and his dedication, Klaus Moje's work is certain to be in the forefront of that ancient way of working glass. □

Paul Hollister is a free-lance writer who frequently contributes to AMERICAN CRAFT.