

REVIEWS

"softness" in work of stone and glass, it may be because Priour infuses his work with meaning beyond mere manipulation of the materials. Here, head, hand and heart work together.

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AT THE ARMORY

Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Avenue, New York, New York, 1—3 May 1987.

Honeycombs of cubicles cluttered with antiques have imprisoned generations of weary collectors in New York's Seventh Regiment Armory. So it was a relief to saunter through the Armory's open vistas at the American Craft Fair, presented jointly by the Associates of the American Craft Museum and American Craft Enterprises, Inc., where exhibits stood out boldly against a backdrop of eggshell white. Your reviewer spent parts of two days cross-checking first impressions and interviewing most of the eleven glassworkers exhibiting.

Exhibitor tally for the other media was ceramics 24; jewelry 19; wood 15; metal, fiber, and mixed media each 10; enamel 2. As craft challenges sports, beer, and television for the title of prime American indulgence, the restraint shown in most of the "sophisticated American crafts" came as a surprise. To be sure, there were some metal pieces struggling to be sculpture, a few displays of large objects that seemed made from instant pancake mix, one booth of what looked like fast-growing carnivorous plants, and even some custom-graffitied display cases. Another booth contained whole scenes in wood painted to look like other materials, and SANDRA BERRY showed brightly painted carnival toys jigsawed not out of wood but of iron. Why?

Woodworking in general requires skill, and while DANIEL MACK's Adirondack style chairs seemed a bit flimsy, SILAS KOPF's *trompe l'oeil*, Magritte-like cabinetry, some pieces combining up to 40 different woods, was perfection. ROY SUPERIOR's superior wooden Rube Goldberg machines seemed to perform even less than they formerly did. An exhibit of meticulously turned wooden mini-cups and goblets set in shadow boxes reminded me of glass lampworker Francis Whittemore's tiny vessels. Pity Whittemore's work was not there.

DOUG STOCK's fragile sculptures of Chinese pheasant feathers, split bamboo, and fibers require a quiet environment.



Robert Levin, *Hamburger Cup #2*, 1986. Glass and rubber. Photo: Dan Bailey copyright 1986.

Fiber and fabrics displayed well. Attractive printed cotton kimonos by CHIGYO update Japanese silks, while the kimono feeling was carried in DEBRA CHASE's mixed-media hangings of aluminum accented with tiny plastic cutouts, buttons, sequins. The best post-Japanese work was the gallery of GRACE A. KRAFT's boldly designed serigraphic diptychs and triptychs, framed in elegantly simple anodized aluminum and large enough to dominate a wall or make a room divider.

But readers of *New Work* expect discussion of the glass. ANDREW MAGDANZ was the juror for glass and he selected the work of several west coast glassworkers less exhibited in the nation's supposed culture center. SONJA BLOMDAHL's generous-sized, double-fused bowls in ravishing Kugler colors whirled like flying saucers as

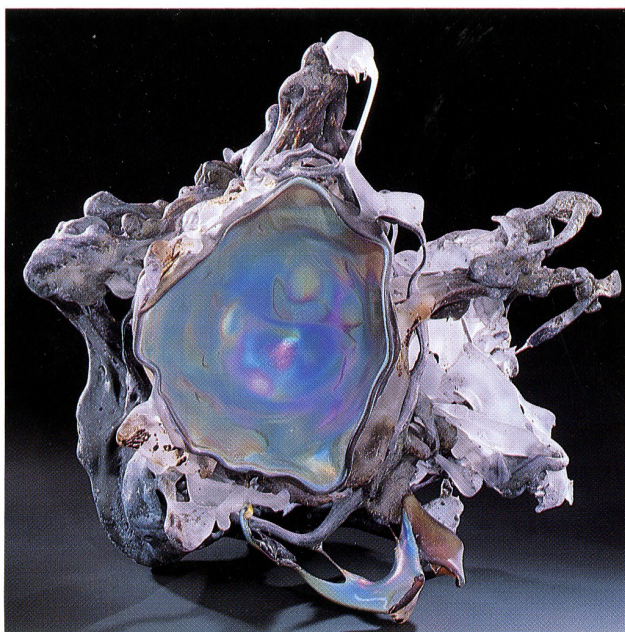
one came in the door. Her color sense enhances the superior technique with which she and a female assistant blow these beauties. It would be difficult to select only one bowl. ROBERT LEVIN of North Carolina remains in debt to pop art, whose inflections he executes with skill and humor, as in *Hamburger Cup #2*. It's really a cheeseburger with the cheese squelching out and the cup lifted by an obligatory rubber handle.

STEVE MASLACH has broken free from production goblets with wild and fascinating bowls, whose heavy, boldly faceted bases, each zapped with vaporized metals, stun the viewer with a series of changing dichroic displays. The bowls perform their color dances and look almost as well when turned upside down. BEN MOORE, Chihuly's longtime assistant, blows bowls the size of small pools. The delicately tinted glass, with the suggestion of watery ripples spun meticulously over the broad rims is glassblowing at its finest. Moore's metal and glass lighting fixtures, produced with WALTER WHITE and including both standing and hanging lamps, are smooth in the articulation of their parts and merit a design award. One hanging example shows Danish influence.

RICHARD ROYAL, another longtime member of the Chihuly team has, like Ben Moore, developed his own style of glassblowing. And spectacular it is: massive, thick-walled vessels blown with a double inner core and cased in brilliant single colors peeled in stripes like fruit. Some organic forms suggest large desert plants—enticing yet aggressive—while others appear as succulent as watermelon. Bill Morris was missing from the Pilchuck group, but he is represented here by Heller Gallery.



Richard Royal, *Form Study #41*, 1986. H.9 in.

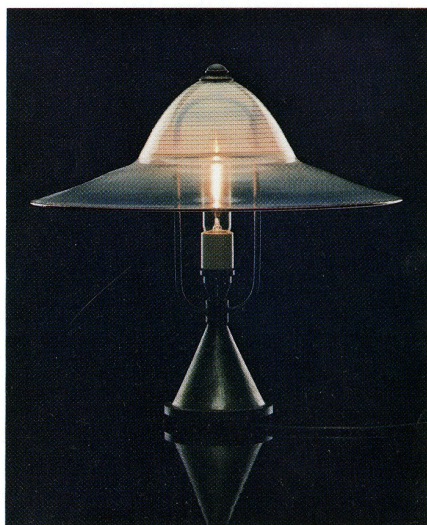


Josh Simpson,
Teklite, c.1987.

JOSH SIMPSON's work is something else again: tektite (meteor material) in black foam like lava surrounds pearly glass shells of silver content that have been whiffed with stannous chloride in a reducing atmosphere. The combination is like nothing you have ever seen—beautiful like some Tiffany lava glass yet more like something in a dream. Simpson has placed inside some of the shells high-tech glass grids that could serve as flower holders but otherwise seem totally out of place.

The other glass on view was less interesting; and SARA YOUNG, who got her BFA at RISD, seems still to be in the kindergarten of cast glass.

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Benjamin Moore and Walter White, *Alabaster Table Lamp*. H.16".

DELAWARE VALLEY GLASS ARTS/A TRIBUTE TO SY KAMENS

Rosenfeld Gallery, 113 Arch,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 8—
31 March 1987.

When Sy Kamens died last year, the glass world lost one of its most enthusiastic supporters. A successful businessman, Kamens had a passion for glass; he collected it and blew it. He sat on the boards of the Contemporary Glass Group of Delaware Valley, the Creative Glass Center of America, and the New York Experimental Glass Workshop. He was a friend to artists and anyone else connected with glass. Even though he could not be physically present at the Glass Art Society meetings in Philadelphia this March, his spirit was there. There were tangible reminders of him at a cocktail party hosted by Irvin Borowsky and Laurie Wagman to raise money to help keep future GAS student fees low and for education programs and in the exhibition mounted by the Rosenfeld Gallery: *Delaware Valley Glass Arts/A Tribute to Sy Kamens*. Curated by Kamens' widow, CHRIS PETERSON, and his glass blowing son ADAM KAMENS, the exhibition was intended both to honor Kamens' memory and to survey what is happening with glass in the Philadelphia area. Although these artists share their geographical location and the use of glass in their art, they follow no single vision. The work ranged from KARLA

TRINKLEY's astonishingly large pate-de-verre vessel that retained the delicacy and fragility of her earlier work to KARL HENSEL's *Profile with Rocket Eyes and House*, a whimsical table-like sculpture. WILLIAM DEXTER's *Waterbabies* and *Pearls* still elicit oohs and ahs as do PAUL STANKARD's floral paperweights. HARRY ANDERSON's anthropomorphic lamps never fail to amuse; they are funky constructions combining found fixtures and blown shades with a sure sense of design. Not everything was as good, but the Delaware River Valley seems a fertile area for glass.

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MATEI NEGREANU

Galerie Trois, 2 place de la
Taconnerie, Geneva, Switzer-
land, 5 February—28 March
1987.

MATEI NEGREANU is a Rumanian artist who since 1982 has lived and worked in a small town outside of Paris. In Rumania Negreanu trained in the art of glass sculpture but he has also translated an interest in graphics and drawing into a series of free-standing glass screens. At his recent solo show in Geneva, examples of both his sculptural and flat pieces were on view. What is immediately striking about Negreanu's work is that it gives evidence of two quite different streams of creativity in him. If left in the dark as to the authorship of these objects we might be inclined to believe that two different artists had created them. There are works in the show which incorporate both the flat and sculptural aspects of Negreanu's creativity but even they look like a collaborative effort rather than the fruit of one creative mind. Such coexistent creativity and its "oil and water" inability to mingle smoothly does not necessarily mean a lack of cohesion on the artist's part. In Negreanu's case the twin lines of creativity do comment on each other and therefore on the differing impulses of the mind which made them.