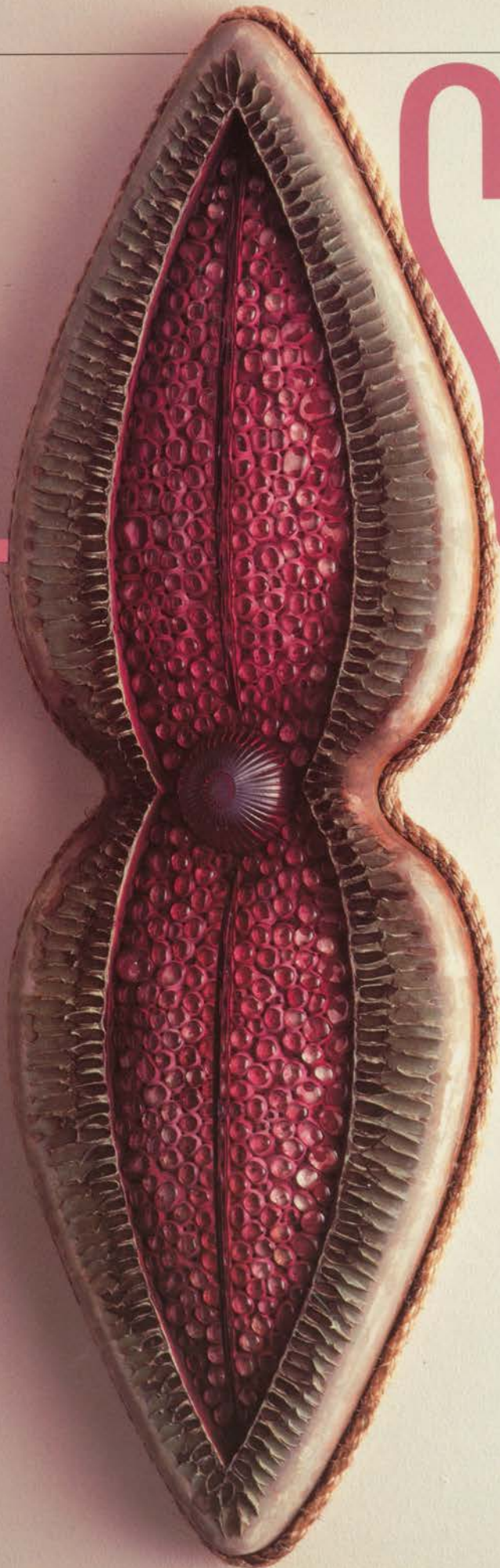


# GLSS



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**Cover: Susan Stinsmuehlen-Amend's *Pelagic Variations (Radiolarian)* (1991), glass, papier mâché, wood, rope, and paint; 44" x 16" x 4". Collection: Gerard Cafesjian. Photo: Robert Brown Studio.**

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**Kaj Franck's *Kilta Salt and Pepper Shakers* (1949-1952), glazed earthenware, 2 1/2" high. Courtesy: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.**

## Michael Glancy

Heller Gallery  
New York, NY

*Echo Pulse* (1992),  
blown glass with  
gold-foil inclusions,  
industrial plate  
glass, and copper,  
14" x 18".

The night before I went to see Michael Glancy's latest exhibition I had a dream that conjured up what the work might look like.

Awakened by the imagery, I jotted down the following: a banner of migrating birds, Lalique's *Tourbillons*, a software program, the great horned owl, a gyroscope, density of traffic, a tree knot, the precision of the bezel-setter, a computer-graphic

dimensional patterns horizontally. Two vessels rest on gilded slabs; one of them, *Golden Enigma*, lightly brushed. My favorite pedestal goes with *Sterling Umbra*, the colorless glass vessel flecked with shattered gold foil seen through a black-patinaed metal screen as daring as a Spanish dancer's veil. Viewed horizontally on the pedestal, the same motif suggests a fertile marsh at ebb tide, its sandy, shell-strewn bottom evoked in sandblasted tide rivulets and the underside of electroformed metal. These intricately detailed pedestals could serve on their own as wall paintings. To be able to carve a sense of movement into a massive hand-blown blank is no small feat. *Echo Pulse* appears to swell and contract like a cobra during peristalsis. Frequently, Glancy applies floral and coiled relief to the vessel forms, and some of these embellishments also penetrate the thick glass walls of, for example, the ruby-colored bottle *First Iteration* and the

## Joey Kirkpatrick and Flora Mace

Foster/White Gallery  
Seattle, WA

*Fruit Grouping*  
(1992), blown glass.  
Photo: Kim Zumwalt.

This was a watershed event for the two artists who have collaborated since 1979. It traced a transition between an earlier, less successful body of work and three new ideas that operate far better both as glass and as art.

In one of the most beautiful installations the gallery has ever mounted, the artists displayed giant-size fruits and vegetables, goblets, and carved-alder figurative

sculptures. The overall effect was of a ghostly paradise. In a region where "green" issues are paramount, there was also the impression that the vegetables had grown out of control and the human forms had become eviscerated, rendered hollow. Suggesting a kind of ecologically topsy-turvy world, Kirkpatrick and Mace point up how pollution, clear-cutting, and genetic experimentation might be destroying our environment, causing such radical about-faces in the scale of familiar objects.

Most glass artists seem to have only one new idea per decade. Kirkpatrick and Mace spent much of the past decade in painful efforts to make figurative sculptures. Blown-glass white heads were attached to mixed-media constructions of painted wood in an effort to assemble symbolic structures of expressionistic impact. Rarely successful, they exuded a repetitive, generic appearance and generally failed to transcend their circumstances of process.

In the recent exhibition, *Limbed Tumbrel* seemed a final stab at using glass along with wood to create large-scale figurative sculpture. Nearly five feet tall, its glass head crowned a body of carved tree limbs that, in turn, held white blown-glass fruit—limes, pears, apricots. With the winding, wavy line of the tree limb defining the piece's composition, *Limbed Tumbrel* was formally weak, lopsided, and generally downbeat. The relation between the figure and the fruit was also unclear. *Fruited Sylvan* was also in this vein and equally troubling. Credit goes to Kirkpatrick and Mace for moving beyond the mixed-media constructions in favor of virtuoso glass fruit still lifes. Among the largest glass objects ever blown, *Fruit Bowl* and *Fruit Grouping* captured an uncannily realistic likeness of real fruit, complete with peach blush and strawberry speckles.

Now avoiding the lugubrious quality of their figures, the two artists concentrated



projection, the double helix, and the expanding universe. Glancy's universe is certainly expanding, and the range of this imaginary projection was not too far off; but it doesn't begin to convey the robust fullness of form, subtleties of color, rich interior casing, and meticulous surface textures—the sculptural completeness of each piece.

Poised on their glass and metal stages, these sculpted presences breathe, float, twist, knot up, and spiral. *Imploding Vortex* is caught in a lasso of metal that looks like soft leather. In *Sudden Impact*, a crashed flying saucer sends out shock waves on a glass base that has the solidity of a classic rotunda. The glass pedestals to Glancy's vessels used to resemble exercises on graph paper that were sometimes at odds with the vessel's patterns. But no longer. Now each pedestal sets the stage for the sculpted vessel, reinterpreting its three-

somber brown *Frozen Entropy* punctured by dead metallic leaves. In *Ruby Font* a shallow ruby glass bowl floats as a sacred libation in a colorless glass casing, in turn encased in metal. The sculpted pedestal beneath bears the patina of an ocean floor. Incredibly, all the above work was done in the first four months of this year. By far the largest piece, the 33-inch-high *Arete-The Virtue*, was achieved in 1991 with a grant from Centre International d'Art Contemporain—Chateau Beychevelle, the well-known French vineyard. The vessel is suspended in a golden double-spiral wire cage that rests on a black marble plinth shaped something like a cello. Michael Glancy's technical wizardry, motivated by an apparently inexhaustible projection of design possibilities for glass combined with metal, puts his work in a class by itself.

Paul Hollister