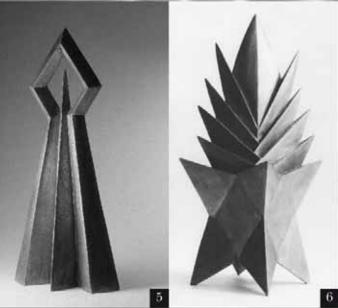
PETR VLČEK WORKS 1988-2008





- 3. Squeezer, 1989, bronze, H. 35 cm
- 4. Cenotaph, 1994, bronze, H. 30 cm
- 5. Milestone, 1989, bronze, H. 39 cm
- 6. Palmette, 1988, bronze, H. 67 cm
- 7. Important memories, 1990, bronze, H. 35 cm

8. Toter

9. How

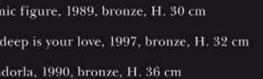
10. Mar





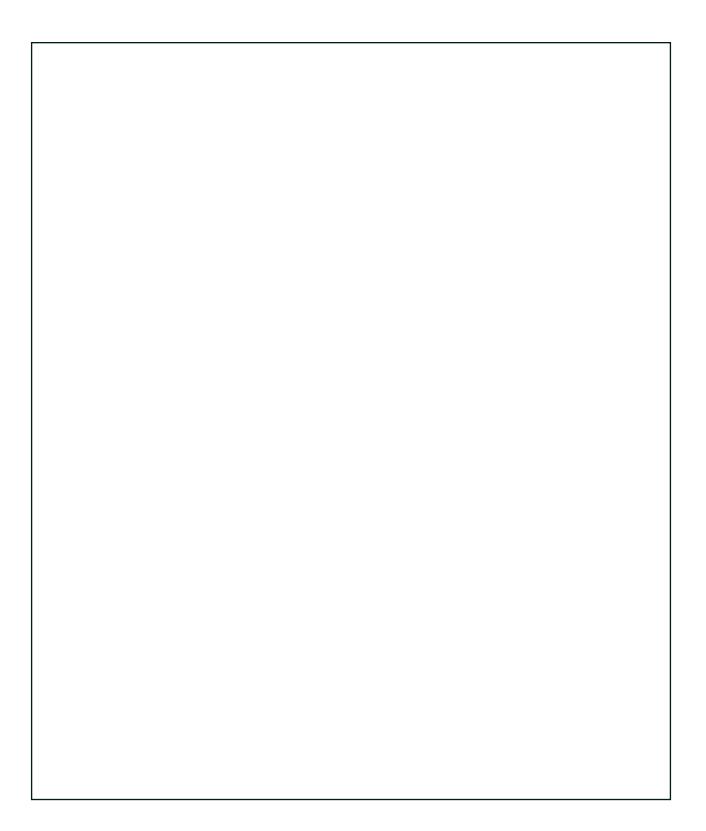








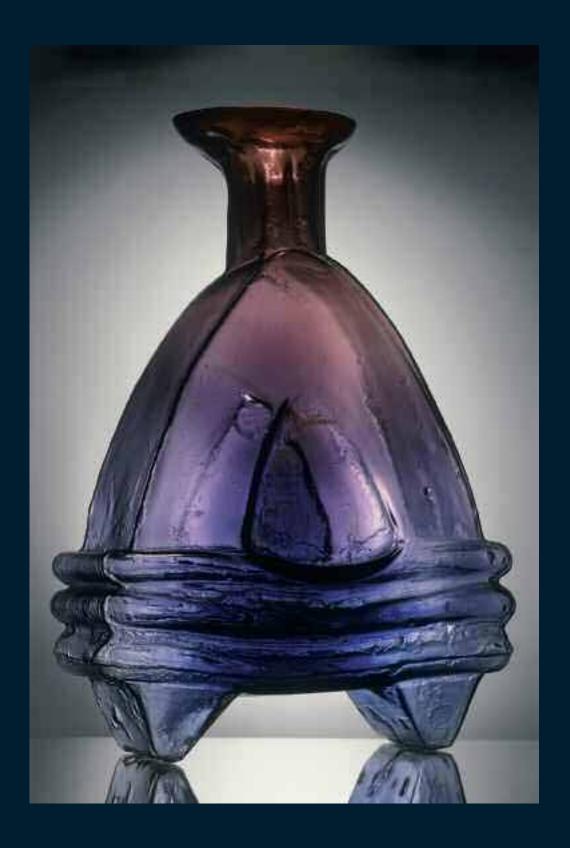
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Studio Glass Gallery, Mayfair, London



Vase I., 1988, blown glass, H. 75 cm

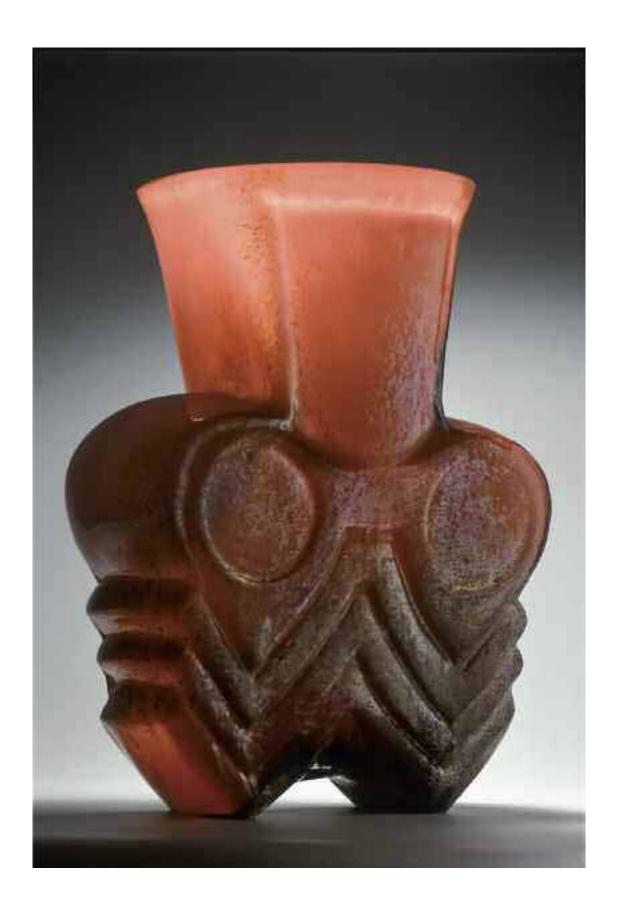
ON THE PATH

Perhaps it's precisely because glass in its most varied utilitarian and technical forms, from drinking glasses to optical fibres, surrounds us that only a small fraction of the population is aware that glass can also be the means for creative works of art. As far back as ancient Egyptian statuary, artists occasionally used glass whenever they felt the need to for transparency, which other traditional materials such as stone or bronze couldn't provide. Of course, creative experimentation with glass as the sole material didn't fully enter into the sphere of art until the second half of the 20th century. It was Czech artists who made one of the most crucial contributions to the birth of free expression in glass, to shrug off this material's traditional utilitarian functions, thus helping to break down the barrier between the hitherto conventional divisions between free and applied art. The influence of their experiments has shaped a good many international trends over the past decades. The unique role of Czechs engaged in glass has finally been acknowledged in many studies by leading art historians that have been published since the year 2000.

Among those who have contributed to this internationally recognized success, as members of the third generation of glass artists, is Petr Vlček. On the face of it, this is somewhat at odds with the fact that it is also almost the only thing that connects him as an artist with the Czech glass scene. In contrast to many of his Czech colleagues, whose educational background was in glass craftsmanship and then glass art, first at specialized glassmaking high schools and then at Prague art academies, although he studied at the same schools of graphics, art and design, glass was never his main area of concentration. He came to glass a little later than his peers, informed by different experiences and different ideas, but followed immediately after them with comparable results and successes. Even though mastery of glassmaking techniques is difficult, and it is thought to be unattainable without specialized education and training, Vlček's life experience turns this preconception on its head.

The fact that he learned everything working on his own oddly enough did not become a limitation for him but instead has been an advantage, more easily liberating him from the insularity of the professional glass art scene, which at the end of the 1980s had already begun to be a bit counterproductive for his generation. Perhaps it is precisely because he is a person with more than one profession that glass as a material isn't the only means for his art but just one of the possibilities, albeit a very essential one. He has reconfigured many of his glass sculptures into metal, and likewise has translated an object from plaster then metal into glass, as if he needs to explore a discovered form from all possible visual angles and test it out in different relationships. Certainly, a form enriched with the quality of transparency, and therefore also of light, behaves differently and evokes different ideas, even though the original matrix of the form is the same. Even with his lifelong agenda of exploring forms, whose morphological language absorbed the archetypes of Czech Cubist geometry and domestic Art Deco, but also pre-Greek cultures and totems, ritual objects and masks of unknown origin, at times resonating with the curves of other European art historical styles, Vlček's work differs from that which is understood as typical of the Czech glass scene.

In the past twenty years of his professional artistic career, this artist has successively gone through a number of very productive periods, in which he explored the possibilities of applying various glassmaking techniques in new contexts of form and content, for example of blown glass into oversized open forms; he tested painting hollow forms with new graphical-geometric compositions, then he turned to mold-melted sculptures, to which he systematically continues to devote himself. On a list of the artist's interests and commissions, we find objects and sculptures but also works which reinterpret design and, exceptionally, even installation. The most compelling themes of Vlček's works are masks as a symbol of fanciful worlds and mystery and at the same time of social roles and their behavioural conventions, a Goyaesque



probe into pretence and insincerity, but also of ritual, holding up a mirror to our times.

It would obviously be a mistake to believe that this artist's independent position outside or apart from group projects and currents happened by accident. It's true that right at the beginning of the 1990s Petr Vlček gave the impression of an allegiance to the movement of young postmodernists, among which he occupied a prominent place, and at one time he accomplished a lot for other glass artists through his voluntary work on organizing a successful symposium. In reality, however, by that time he had already gradually developed a postmodern type of quiet individualism, today bordering on artistic seclusion, which has led him to a personal and creative independence from structures and agendas. If he depends on anyone aside from himself, it is his family and a couple of close friends. At a time when success, and not just in the art world, often relies on shock tactics, media publicity and scandal, when to be "trendy" in the context of a certain "mainstream" offers financial security, his is a risky path, because he has chosen a path against the current. It means, travelling along a path to oneself, to authenticity and to self-reflection, which is accompanied by a knowledge and maturity which Petr Vlček is closer to than others. In the end, it is the only path to art.

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Faculty of Arts, Design & Media
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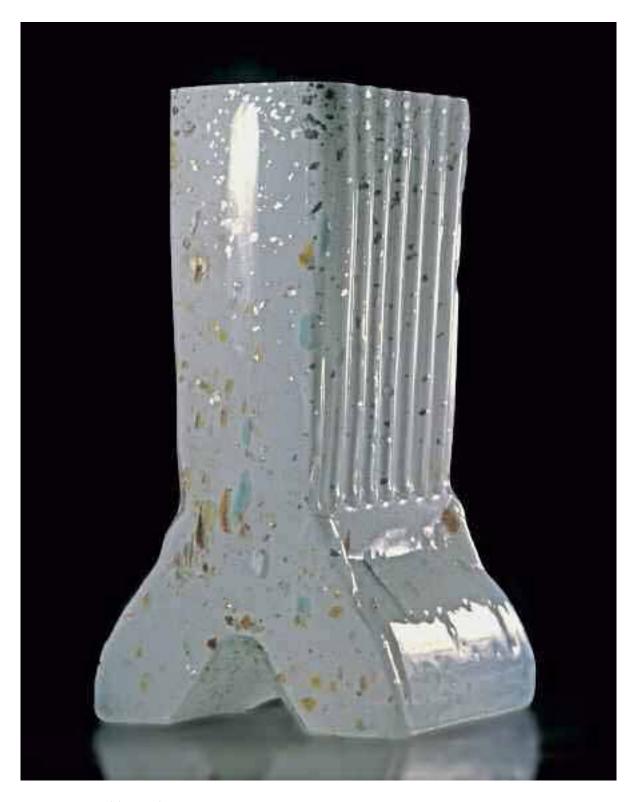


Vase III., 1988, blown glass, H. 60 cm Vase II., 1988, blown glass, H. 61 cm >



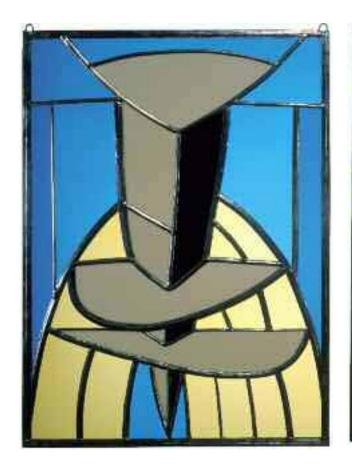






Vase V., 1988, blown glass, H. 50 cm Vase IV., 1988, blown glass, H. 66 cm >







Father, 1992, stained glass, 65 x 47 cm Mother, 1992, stained glass, 65 x 47 cm





Vase XIII., 1991, blown glass, metal stand, H. 80 cm < Vase XIV., 1991, blown glass, metal stand, H. 45 cm



Vase XI., 1991, blown glass, H. 76 cm Vase X., 1991, blown glass, H. 52 cm >







LIGHT AND FORM

The ancient land of Bohemia in the Czech Republic, from which the artist Petr Vlček hails, has always been a turbulent place throughout its history due to its position in the centre of Europe. Numerous nationalities and cultures have passed through this land, many of them settling here and several of them even ending their existence here. From an early age, the artist thirstily drank from all the available archaeological wellsprings, and the theme of the enigmatic past dissolving into the present became very natural for him. That enigma, that conception of something that is necessary to raise from the ashes and renew its form, is the essential character of the content of Vlček's sculptures and is the source of their power.

The initial wave of postmodernism arriving in Bohemia coincided with the period of his studies, but in contrast to its main current, which to a certain extent was replete with literature, *le sujet* and bringing archaic symbolism back to light, Vlček's work gets down to the fundamentals, where the social and personal cease to have their otherwise natural primacy. Almost all of his works contain something that we would normally call geometric abstraction, but which, however, is revised, augmented and permeated with the elegant curve of organic form. That's where the spark occurs, seeming to emerge straight from the core of its genesis.

The mystery of form is among the most enigmatic. The creation of form (both inanimate objects and also people), was initially thought to be entirely the work of God. Form is the limit of impenetrability for our bodies and also in sculpture, through which the artist arrived at glass creation, and this question emerges only after pushing aside the layers of figuration that denote the depiction of social roles and spiritual upheavals. Form, however, is at the same time visible, and in situations where the body cannot intervene, sight attempts to provide information about the possible consequences of the limits of corporeality in the observed form. Vlček's conception of sculpture works precisely with these tensions – when, in

this fundamental existence of form, to give truth to vision and when to the body.

The tension grows deeper still when we penetrate form with vision. That is the essence of the bewitching effect of glass, whether it involves a simple glass pipe or an artistically conceived form. Of course, it is exactly this searching for and harmonizing of limits, when form is borne by delineating optical lines, when the optical is supported by the corporeal, that causes a special paradox in the area of glass sculpture. That which it offers to the eye at first glance, a view through form into its core and some perception of its depth, causes us to suddenly glimpse the opposite - the light emerging from the inside of this liberated substance and thrusting its strength into the space around it: From this perspective, the glass achievements of Petr Vlček are not monumental in mass. They are, however, concentrated. It is as if he has created focal points from which it is possible to control the adjacent fields with the energy originating within them.

Jaroslav Vancat, Ph.D. Associate Professor at Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague, CZ

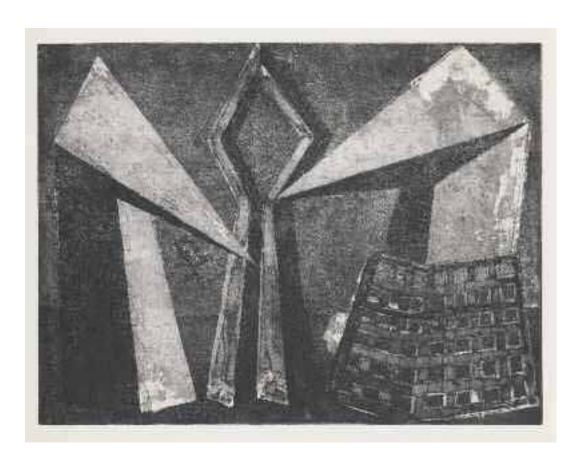




How deep is your love, 1997/2004, mold-melted glass, H. 17 cm



Milestone, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 38 cm

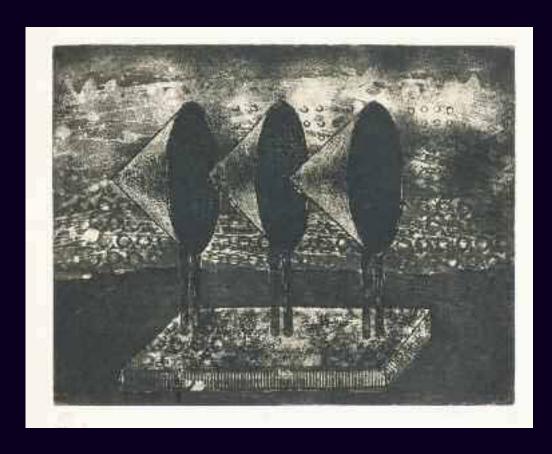




Phoenix, 1988, mold-melted glass, H.40 cm

Totemic figure, 1988, mold-melted glass, H. 93 cm >





Trinitas, 1989, aquatint, 32,5 x 41,5 cm

Searchlight, 1989, mold-melted glass, H. 35 cm >





Green leaf, 1997, mold-melted glass, H. 40 cm

Accordion, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 39 cm >













Mandorla, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 36 cm < Gate, 1992, bronze, H. 46 cm



Light object I., 1988, stained glass, wood, electrical installation, H. 53 cm

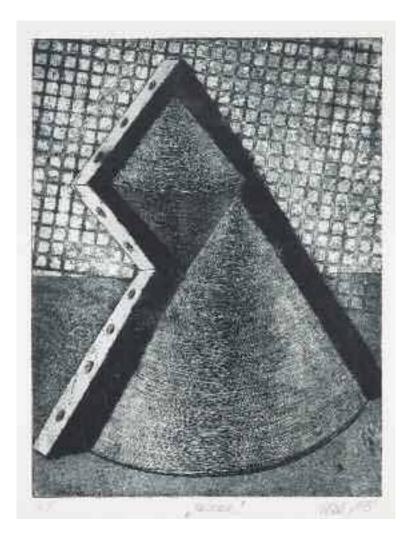
Palmette, 1994, mold-melted glass, H. 60 cm >













Dog, 1988, aquatint, 41,5 x 31 cm $\,$ $\,$ Seamstress, 1991, bronze, H. 45 cm $\,$ $\,$ < $\,$ Red house, 1989, mold-melted glass, H. 48 cm $\,$

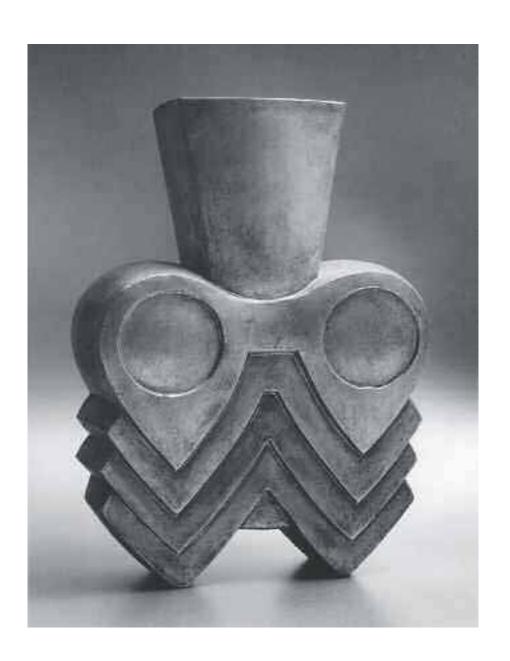


Beach, 1989, aquatint, 41,5 x 31 cm

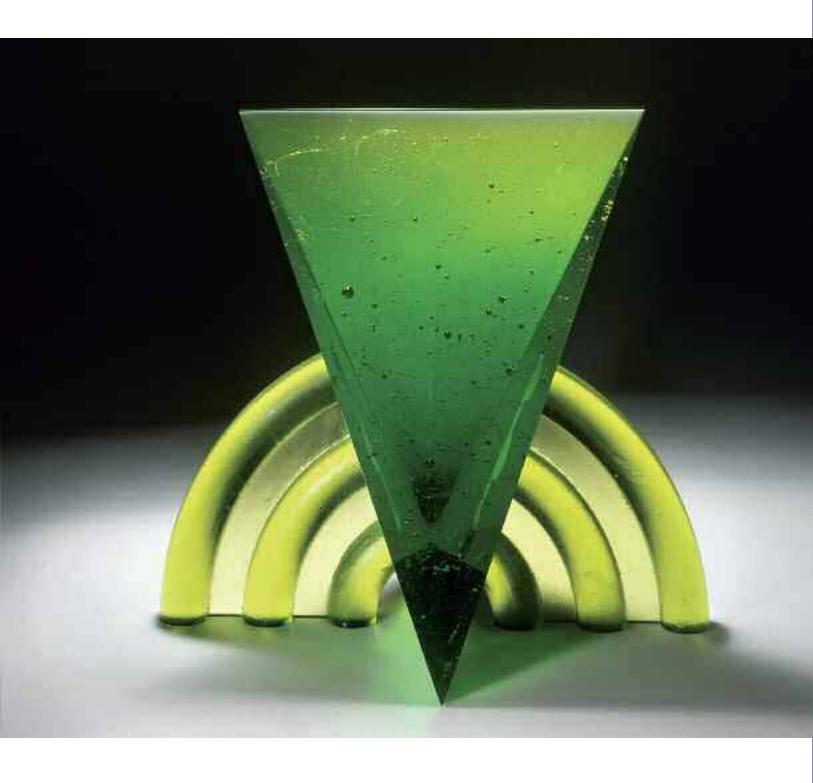
Small vase, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 26 cm >





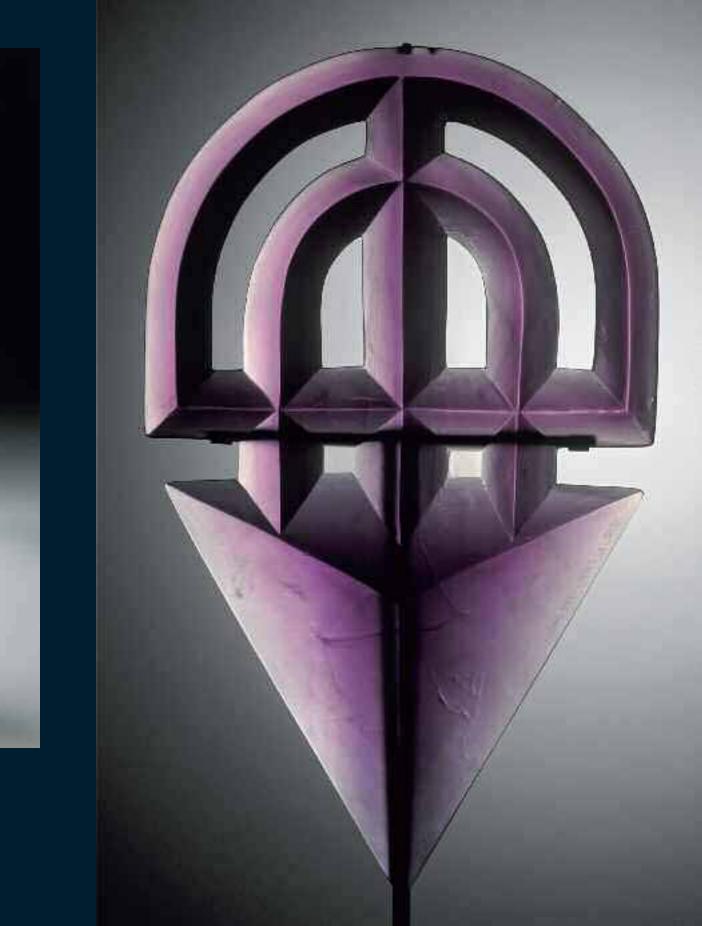


Vase VIII., 1990, bronze, H. 40 cm < Big milestone, 1991, mold-melted glass, H. 55 cm



Princess, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 30 cm

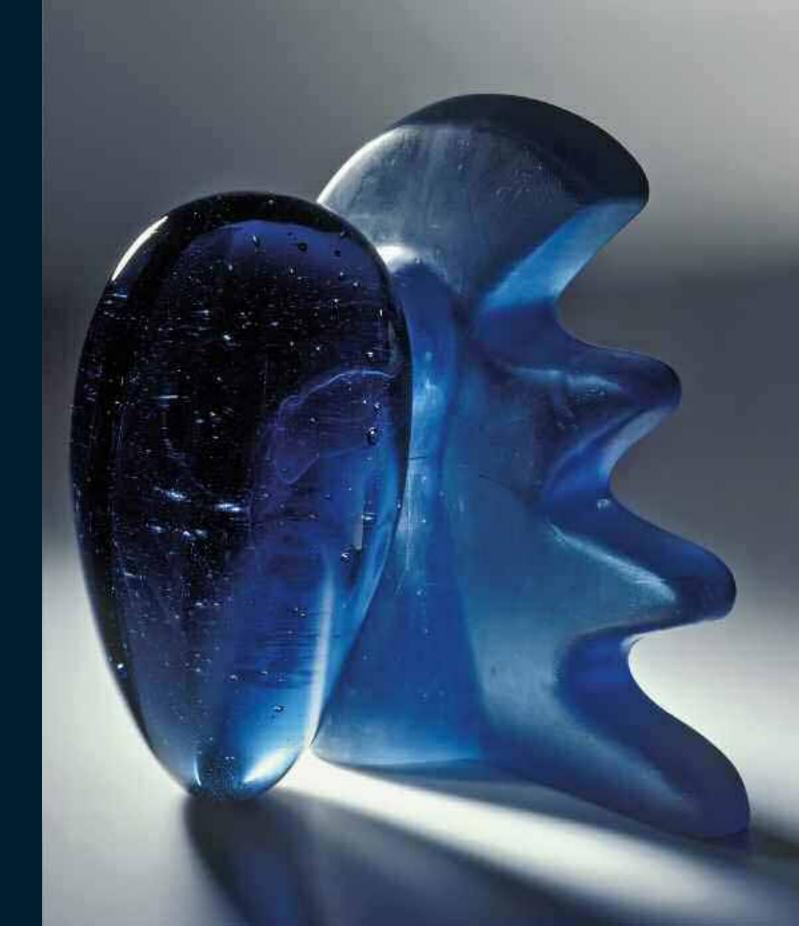
Violet mask, 2001 mold-melted glass, metal stand, H. 85 cm >

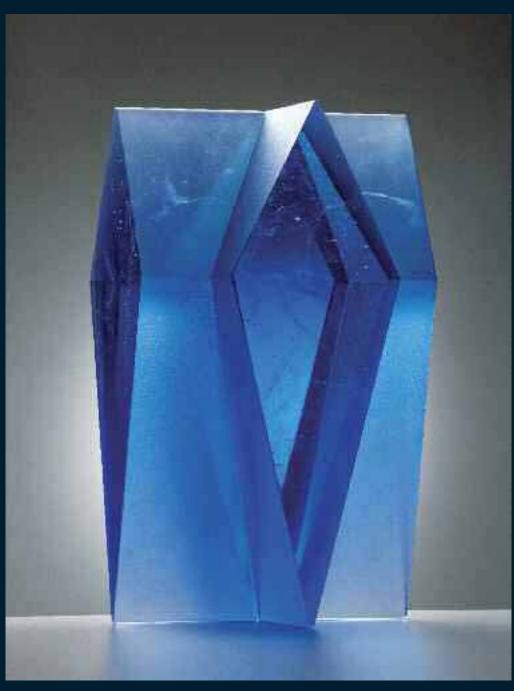




Idol, 1991/93, bronze, H. 90 cm

Head, 1990/93, mold-melted glass, H. 33 cm >





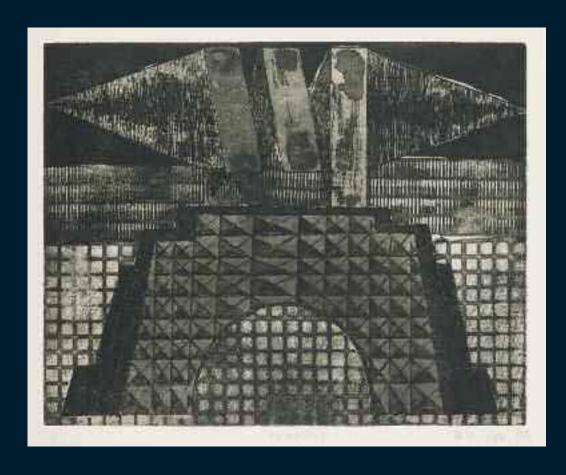
Launch, 2005, mold-melted glass, H. 31 cm

Wave, 1991, bronze, H. 27 cm >



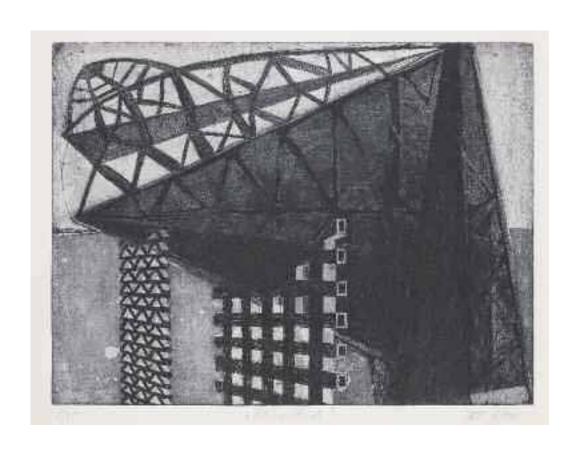


Important memories, 2007, mold-melted glass, H. 26 cm













Crystal, 1998, mold-melted glass, H. 14 cm < Vases VI., 1989, blown painted glass, H. 36 cm each





Enigma, 1992, bronze, H. 58 cm Woman, 1991, bronze, back >

Woman, 1991, bronze, H. 80 cm >
Crosses, 1991/99, mold-melted glass, H. 50 cm > >





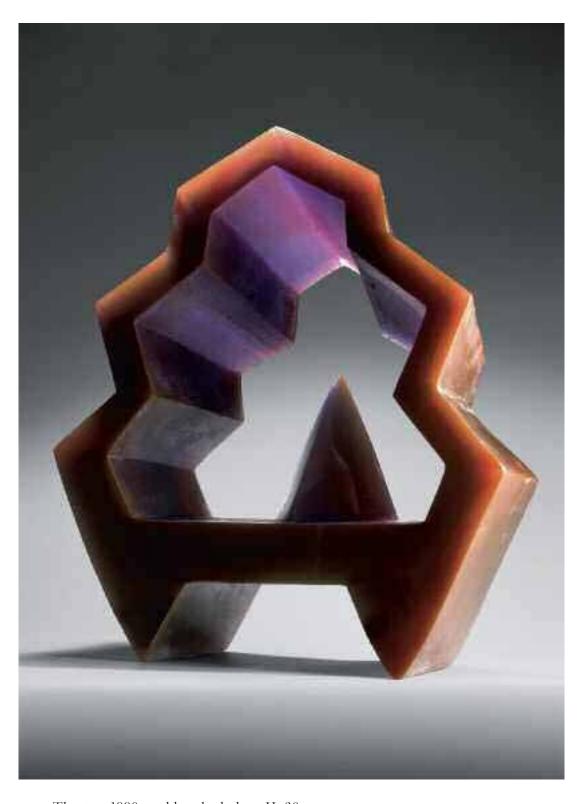








Mother, 1991, bronze, H. 51 cm



Theatre, 1990, mold-melted glass, H. 30 cm $$\operatorname{Mask}$$ with snake, 1993, mold-melted glass, metal stand, H. 80 cm >





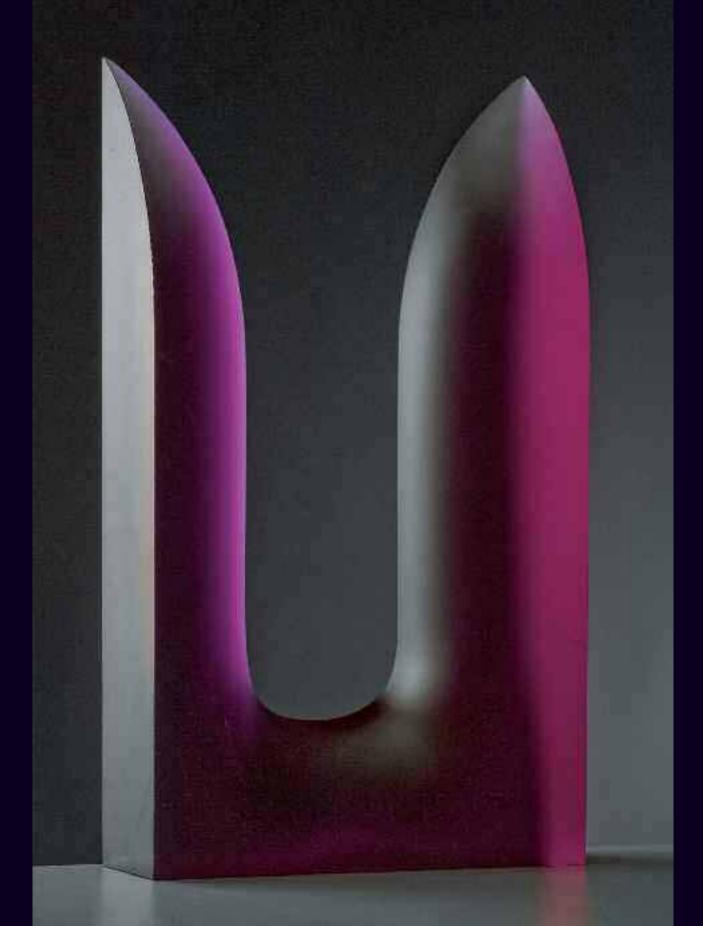


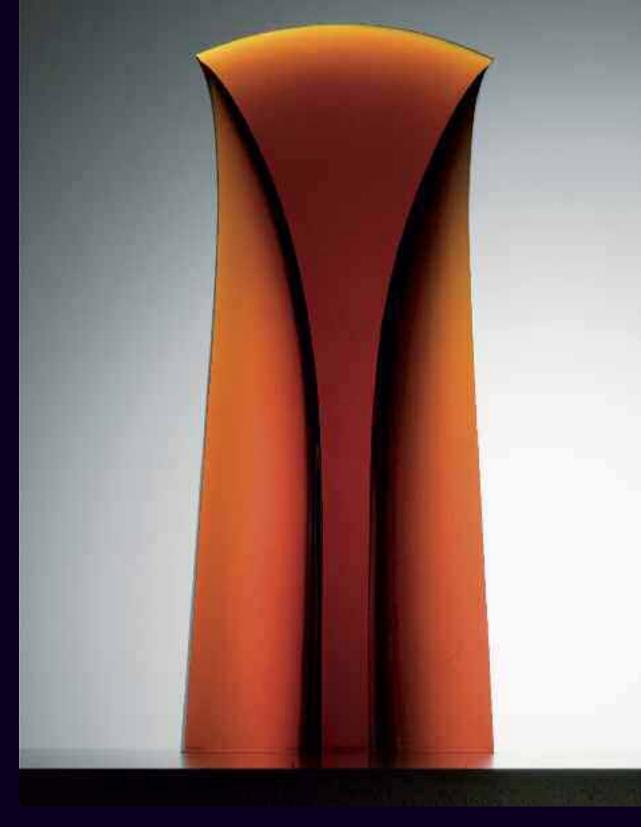
Noose, 1997, mold-melted glass, H. 46 cm < Body, 1998, mold-melted glass, H. 45 cm



Idol, 2003, mold-melted glass, metal stand, H. 90 cm Green mask, 2003, melted glass, metal stand, H. 81 cm >







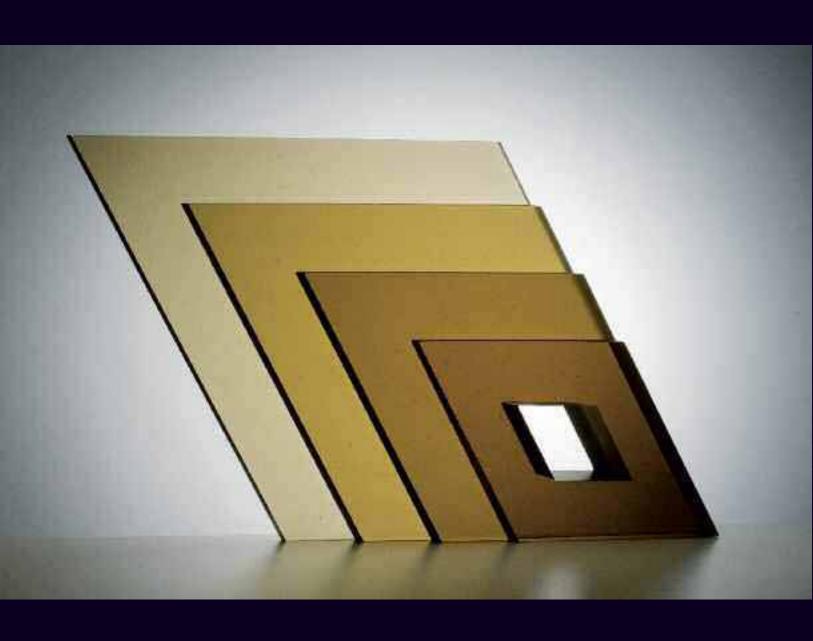
Lotus, 2002, mold-melted glass, H. 80 cm < Mykene, 2008, mold-melted glass, H. 45 cm



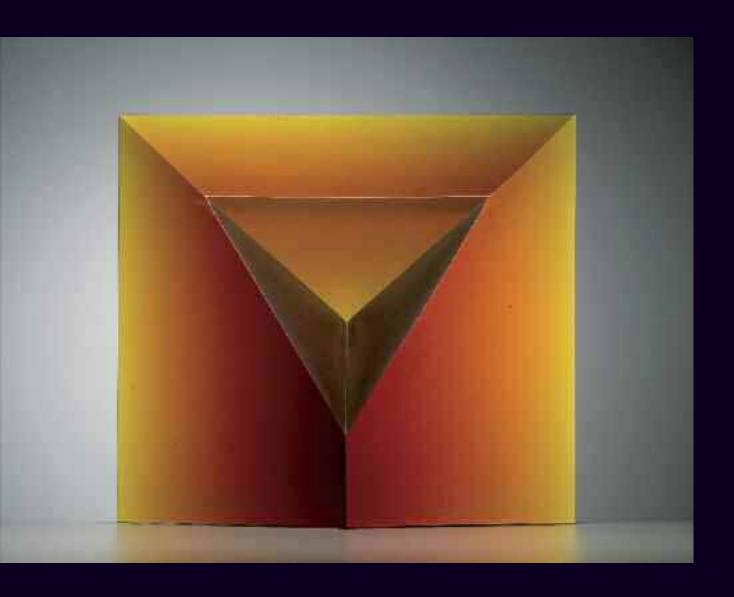
Mask (Man), 2008, mold-melted glass, metal stand, H. 86 cm

Cubistic stele, 2000, mold-melted glass, H. 44 cm >



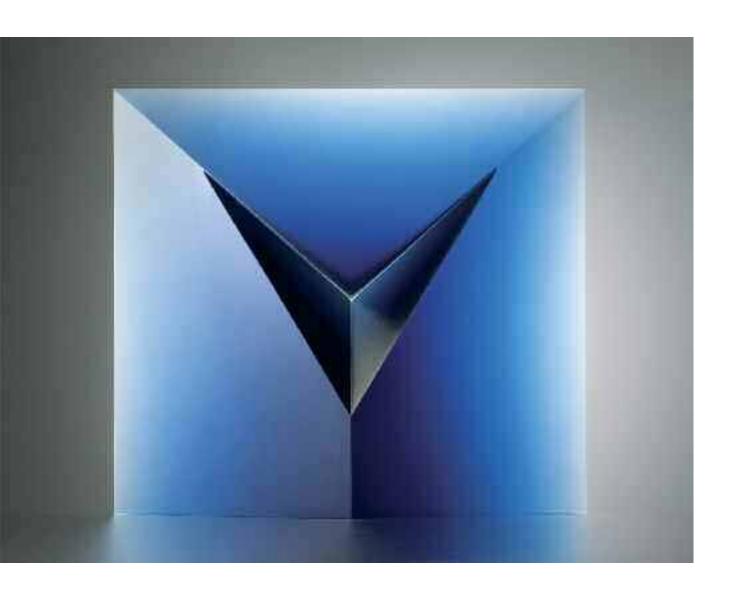








Stele II., 2006, mold-melted glass, H. 62 cm



Geometric mask III. blue, 2008, mold-melted glass, H. 46 cm

Geometric mask II. violet, 2007, mold-melted glass, H. 54 cm $\,>\,$



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EDUCATION:

1981–1984 High Art School of Vaclav Hollar, Prague 1984–1990 Academy of Arts, Architecture

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SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

2008 Museum Of Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, US

2008 Musée des Beaux Arts d'Alger, DZ

2008 Glasgalerie Hittfeld, Hamburg, DE

2007 Galerie Havelka, Prague, CZ

2005 EXPO 2005, Aichi, JP

2005 SOFA, New York City, US

2004 Leo Kaplan Modern, New York City, US

2004 PalmBeach3, Palm Beach, Florida, US

2004 SOFA, Chicago, Illinois, US

2003 The Studio Glass Gallery, London, UK

2001 The Studio Glass Gallery, London, UK

1999 North Bohemian Museum, Liberec, CZ

1998 Tula Art Center, Atlanta, Georgia, US

1997 Gallery Compositions, San Francisco, California, US

1997 Young Glass, Glasmuseet Ebeltof, DK

1997 Galerie Genia Loci, Prague, CZ

1998 Museum of Glass and Jewellery, Jablonec n. N.,CZ

1996 Pratt Fine Arts, Seattle, Washington, US

1996 Leo Kaplan Modern, New York City, US

1995 Alternative Arts Gallery, London, UK

1994 Historische Museum, Bamberg, DE

1993 Gallery Lara, Chicago, Illinois, US

1992 Kunstindistrimuseet, Oslo, NR

1991 Ambiente, Hamburg, DE

1990 OB' ART, Paris, FR

1990 Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry AS, Prague, CZ

1989 Galerie Ewers, Köln, DE

WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

National Gallery, Prague, CZ
Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague, CZ
National Technical Museum, Prague, CZ
Moravian Gallery, Brno, CZ
Museum Of Glass and Jewellery,
Jablonec n.Nisou, CZ
North Bohemian Museum, Liberec, CZ
East Bohemian Museum , Pardubice, CZ
The West Bohemian Gallery, Plzeň, CZ
Česká spořitelna collection, Prague, CZ
Slovakian Museum of Glass, Lednické Rovne, SK
Kunstsammlungen der Veste, Coburg, DE
Glasmuseet Ebeltof, Ebeltoft, DK
Ernsting Stiftung, Alter Hof Herding,
Coesfeld, DE

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PETR VLČEK

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Flame, 1999, mold-melted glass, H. 40 cm







