

Modern Studio Glass

by Judith Clarke

Over the past decade there has been a very strong interest in more modern glass of the twentieth century. This has resulted in a very wide collecting base which, for some names, rivals that of ceramics of the same period. Whilst many auction rooms would still include names such as Lalique, Whitefriars, Monart, Murano and Venini under the umbrella of "modern glass" there is also a whole host of contemporary designers and artists whose work will most probably provide the collectable studio art glass of the future.

Indeed, prices have become so competitive for items such as Geoffrey Baxter Whitefriars 1960s designs (particularly the iconic Banjo and Drunken Bricklayer vases) and top names in Scandinavian art glass of the 1960s and 1970s, that contemporary studio glass provides a highly affordable option. Here are just some of the major names to look out for and a brief description of the kind of art glass that they produce.



Anthony Stern 'Baroque' vase.

Adam Aaronson (b. 1957) is one such glass artist who, with his team, produces stunning hand blown pieces, many of which are either part of collections with a common theme or one-off commissioned pieces. Many of the items he makes incorporate silver leaf for decorative effect and the colours used in his glass designs are particularly bold and vibrant. For further details contact Aaronson Noon Ltd, Roxby Place, London, SW6 1RS. Tel: 020 7610 3344. Or visit their website: www.aaronsonnoon.co.uk.

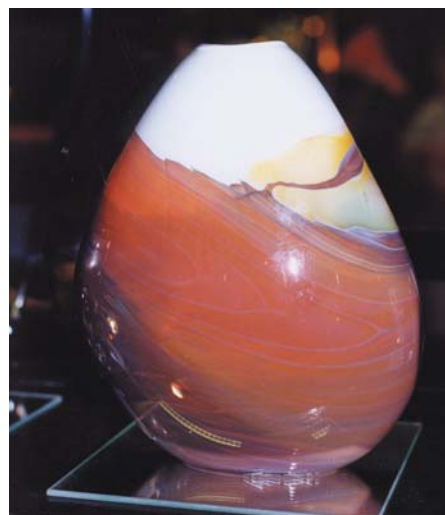
Anthony Stern is an internationally renowned and commissioned glass artist. Born in 1944, he initially studied Art and Architecture and worked in photography and film before turning to glass blowing and studying glass at the Royal College of Art. Like so many other top designers in glass he experimented in many other media before finally finding an affinity with glass. Stern's work has a great breadth and diversity to it and he has assimilated wide ranging influences into his glass production, encompassing everything from classical antiquity to Pop Art. His individual and signed pieces are very sought after, especially his "Seascape" bowls and his Baroque, Roman and African ranges. Anthony also makes jewellery and both his sculptural and functional glass items have attracted international admiration and collectors from all walks of life. More information is available at: Anthony Stern Glass, Unit 205, Avro House, Havelock Terrace, London SW8 4AL. Tel: 020 76229463.

Malcolm Sutcliffe's glass attracts an international following too. Born in 1954, he studied ceramics at Birmingham Polytechnic but then changed courses to study glass instead. After working at glass studios in Redditch and Cambridge he moved to Chesterfield and has had his own studio there since 1991. Some of Sutcliffe's best known and more recent work are his extensive range of bowls and vases depicting dolphins, polar bears, whales and elephants brilliantly embodying the creatures' natural element. All the glass is free blown and pieces are signed. More details can be found by contacting: Malcolm Sutcliffe Glass Studio, 1 Chesterfield Business Centre, Pottery Lane West, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 9BN. Tel / Fax: 01246 271948 or taking a look at www.malcolm-sutcliffe.co.uk.



Large Siddy Langley bowl.

Siddy Langley (b. Lancashire 1955) began studying ceramics in 1976 and three years later served an apprenticeship under Peter Layton at the famous London Glass Blowing Workshop. Working there until 1988 she then established her own workshop in Berkshire (Maidenhead) and in 1997 moved her operations to Devon.

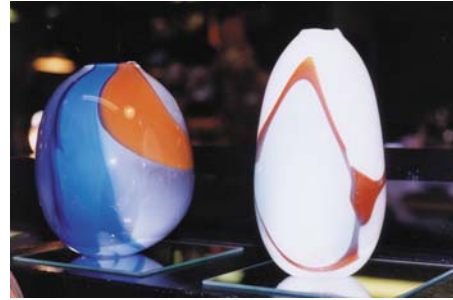


Substantial 'Sahara' vase by Peter Layton.

Her work draws inspiration from natural forces, in particular the sea. Iridescence is achieved by the use of gold, silver and tin and ranges such as "Ecuador" have been inspired by overseas trips. A wide variety of handmade items is available to adorn the home as purely decorative items or in many cases functional objects such as bowls, vases, paperweights and scent bottles. Siddy has exhibited all over the world and her work can be seen in several European museums. Pieces are signed and dated and all are free blown and quite unique. For more information contact: Siddy Langley Glass, The Longhouse Studio, Lower Weaver, Plymtree, Devon, EX15 2JW. Tel: 01884 277426. www.siddy.com.

Oiva Toikka (b. 1931) is probably best known in this country and the United States for his wonderful range of individually hand blown glass birds. This highly talented Finn is a top designer in glass as well as other media. The distinctive glass birds which he has been designing for around 30 years have been highly popular with collectors for some time now. The birds depicted include crows, singing birds, bullfinches, cuckoos and even kiwi birds.

On the secondary market most are valued at between £50 - £100, depending on age, whether they are still boxed or are limited editions, etc. Birds by Toikka are retailed through Iittala, a leading design company since the 1930s which specialises in products for the home, based on modern Scandinavian designs.



Two large light filled vases by Marie-Worre Mastrup Holme, Denmark.



Siddy Langley vase.



Vase by David Weeks.

All photos in this article were taken courtesy of Patricia Markbride. This husband and wife team are dealers and experts in studio and collectable contemporary glass. They exhibit at all major fairs around the UK. For further details, Tel/ Fax: 01225 864848.

Some other top names to look out for producing beautiful and excellently made decorative and functional objects in glass include Peter Layton, Andrew Potter, Rebecca Morgan, Morag Gordon, Karen Lawrence, Simon Moore and his recent work with Dartington Crystal, David Prytherch and David Weeks, to mention just a few.

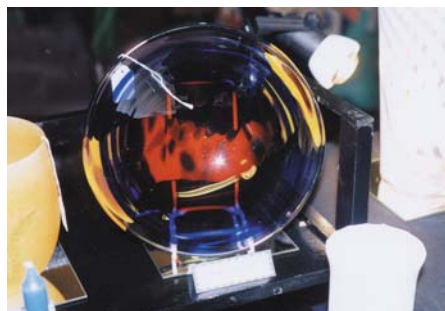
As well as showcasing their work at galleries and exhibitions, many studio artists in glass are using their own websites as an excellent way of displaying their work in a controlled environment and reaching a potentially ever widening audience. With so much to choose from as studio glass goes through a timely renaissance it will be very interesting to see what will prove unique rather than just of its time.



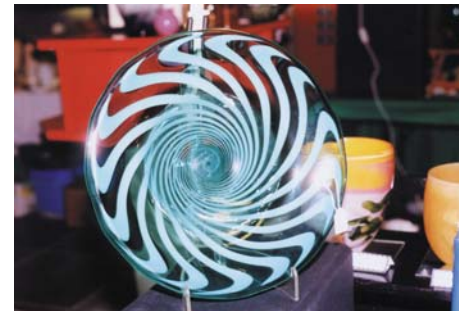
Close up of Toikka bird showing different glass effects used in the finish.



Three hand made glass birds by Oiva Toikka.



Peter Layton large shallow bowl with striking colour effects.



Large and distinctive Anthony Stern shallow bowl.