COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOUR

contemporary glass from Canberra + Berlin

Klaus Moje • Richard Whiteley • Ruth Oliphant • Madeline Prowd • Marcel Hoogstad Hay • Alexandra Frasersmith • Charles Walker • Kate Nixon • Jesse Günther

Museum Kunstpalast
Berlin Glas e.V.
Australian National University School of Art

Exhibition in the Museum Kunstpalast
Ehrenhof 4-5, 40479 Düsseldorf
19 February – 16 May 2016
For several years now the Australian Embassy in Berlin has run a program presenting artists from Australia, some based in Berlin for longer periods of time, others making a stop in Berlin as they are pursuing their international careers. They have all added in fascinating ways to showcasing Australian experiences in this vibrant city, a key place for contemporary arts in Europe.

In some instances we have also shown works reflecting perspectives on Australia from outside, by Germans bringing back images from travelling in Australia.

This time it is our pleasure to provide the first stop of a tour of ‘collaborative endeavour’ between Australian and German artists working in a very special field, in contemporary glass. The Australian National University’s Glass Workshop has been working with Berlin Glas e.V. on joint projects in particular based on Klaus Moje’s legacy - a fine example for creative exchange, supported by Australian and German government agencies, including a number of Australian Endeavour Awards for artists participating in the exchange.

This show is a wonderful opportunity to present a selection of fine, elaborate artworks resulting from this cooperation, and it will contribute to our engagement with visitors and audiences at the Embassy. As a Canberra resident, familiar with the superb work of the Australian National University and the Canberra Glassworks, and as a temporary Berlin resident, I particularly warmly welcome this exhibition!

Collaborative Endeavour showed at the Australian Embassy in Berlin from 18 September until 4 December 2015

H.E. DAVID RITCHIE AO
Ambassador to Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein
An affection for distance

In Dusseldorf's Glasmuseum Hentrich, many of the glass objects on display have come down to us from very distant times. It is amazing to stand in front of a ribbed bowl that some Roman legionnaire may have had in his hands about 2,000 years ago. The exhibition Collaborative Endeavour: Contemporary Glass from Canberra to Berlin also confronts us with a long distance - not in time, however, but in space. From the South-East of Australia to the North of Europe, these works of art, or their artists respectively, have travelled far. Do they look different? Does distance show?

In its original sense, the Latin source word for distance, distantia, means that distant things are set apart from each other. Distance often implies difference, and it can be used with negative intentions (such as in "keeping at a distance"). But distance also offers chances and opportunities, for which the history of contemporary glass in Australia offers a striking example. From the onset, the history of Australian contemporary glass has had a global character. Studio glass had apparently been introduced first by the American artist Bill Boyesen, who toured the country with a mobile glass studio in 1974. When the director of the Canberra School of Art, Udo Sellbach (1927–2006), decided to establish a glass program, he invited in 1982 a fellow German, Klaus Moje (born 1936), to set it up. Distance may have helped in the search for an ideal candidate. The German tradition of apprenticeships and specialized glass craft schools may have played a role: Moje himself had passed a formal training with specialization in cold-working techniques like glass cutting and etching. But Moje also had three years of teaching experience at various international glass programs, especially at the Pilchuck glass school near Seattle, in the northwestern-most corner of the United States. Moje brought an emphasis on the teaching of glass techniques to Canberra, and to this day the school is proud of its sound craft tradition. At the same time, studio glass has spread to many places in Australia, and the International Glass Art Society Conference in 2005 in Adelaide has impressively shown the continent’s liveliness and power of innovation in the field of glass art.

The exhibition in Germany of glass from the Australian National University School of Art in Canberra is an opportunity to explore how the origins that this art had in various European glass traditions has developed in Australia. Part of the exhibits were made back in Canberra, and another half were produced at the workshops of Berlin Glas e.V., during and between courses that were taught by the Australian artists. The young studio glass tradition in Australia meets the much younger project of bringing the first public glass studio to Berlin. Overcoming distances is at the roots of Berlin Glas e.V. itself. From its founding in 2009, it has been a truly international project, bridging the gap between nations as well as between notions of decorative art and sculpture.
Forty years ago three art school graduates built a glass factory in Portland, Oregon, USA. Without Klaus Moje and Richard Whiteley, it would be a very different place than the one it is today.

Today, while daily rolling out thousands of pounds of colored glass for distribution around the world, Bullseye Glass Co. also supports in-house studios filled with students and artists, testing, learning, and exploring new methods for working with an ancient material. This was never the plan.

The factory founders never expected the factory to be operating in 2015. They intended only to make enough money to start their own studios, then to retire to their personal art-making. It was a get-rich-quick scheme, not a long-range business plan.

Then the Portland artists met Klaus Moje. It was 1979. Moje had come from his home in Hamburg, Germany to teach a short workshop at Pilchuck, a glass school, three hours north of Portland. By chance that summer Moje was exploring a glassworking method that the Bullseye artists were also investigating: the fusing together of disparate colored glasses in a kiln, a haphazard method largely abandoned two millenia prior on the advent of glass blowing.

For the following decade Klaus Moje creates not only some of the most innovative works in contemporary glass seen anywhere in the world, but also a generation of artists that put the Canberra School of Art on the glass world map, leaders in a method that is today at the forefront of contemporary art in glass. One of those first students is Richard Whiteley, today the head of the Canberra glass program.

In the decades that follow, Moje, Whiteley, and other artist/teachers from Canberra continue to fuel the passion of the Portland factory. They export to our shores not just ideas and inspiration, but also students, and fellow artists. We, in turn, reshape the way a small business operates: from simple production to a complex and energizing mix of artist residencies, technical exploration, exhibition and international collaboration.

For our successful past and our even more exciting future, we are indebted to Klaus Moje, to Richard Whiteley, and to all the artists who have evolved under their tutelage, Bullseye is proud to have been witness to their remarkable accomplishments, and to celebrate them with this current exhibition.

Fast forward two years: Moje interrupts his own career as an artist in Germany and accepts an offer to start a glass program at the Canberra School of Art in Australia. In the same time frame, encouraged by Moje’s interest and the remarkable artwork he is creating, the Bullseye factory develops the world’s first line of “tested compatible” glasses designed specifically for kilnforming, their shared technical passion. One of the first crates goes with Moje to Canberra in 1981.

Artists and Industry: A Short International Story

LANI MCGREGOR

Director - Daniel Schwoerer, CEO - Co-owners, Bullseye Glass Co.

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NOLA ANDERSON

Arts writer and curator

On Klaus Moje and Collaborative Endeavour exhibition

Collaborative Endeavours is a joint project between the Australian National University School of Art (ANU-SOA) glass workshop and the Berlin Glas e.V. studio.

You could say the show presents three “generations” of Australian artists. Klaus Moje was born in Hamburg where he began to build his international reputation in the 1960s and 70s. He moved to Australia in 1982 to establish the ANU-SOA glass workshop where he taught for 10 years before turning again to concentrate on his studio practice. Richard Whiteley completed his initial training under Moje and returned in 2002 to head the ANU workshop. The five young Australian artists in the show have studied at the ANU-SOA under Whiteley’s tenure. These five have also recently undertaken international residencies at Berlin Glas e.V. The Australian artists are joined by Jesse Günther who took up the position of Studio Manager at the Berlin workshop after graduating from the National College of Art and Design in Dublin.

This generational perspective of the show started me thinking about American critic Susan Sontag’s concept of “a continuous serious modern tradition”. When writing in 1965 Sontag thought this quality to be lacking in the modern novel form but not in music or painting. Sontag was not referring to evidence of stylistic influence or the shock of the new. She was looking for a sustained mature and self-conscious development of artistic purpose from which effective critical dialogue will grow.

The combined careers of the artists in this show span around 55 years - perhaps sufficient to generate something along the lines of what Sontag was looking for. Whether speaking of Australian artists working in glass or in a wider international context, you need to have the opportunity of seeing consistent, self-conscious development in one or a group of artists’ work over many years before such a discussion envisaged by Sontag can make any sense. Elsewhere Sontag also refers to the value of sustained maturity often seen only through extended and incremental change. It gives the audience “breathing space” and time to assimilate what the artist is saying. It offers the opportunity to spend time looking and re-looking. There is time to savour minute variations and enjoy nuanced vocabularies.

Moje’s work from the 1970s to the present certainly offers this opportunity. There has been a sustained and nuanced development from his first colour work in Hamburg to his work with the vessel forms over subsequent decades and on to the later wall panels. The Chromatic Evolution panels (2012 and 2013) use the artist’s highly refined language of colour, geometry and light in a slow peaceful meditation. In other works such as Puget Sound (2012) the language is more dynamic and gestural but remains loyal to his nuanced vocabulary of line and colour. The earlier wall panel series using the layered cross motif dating from the late 1990s and the later freer gestural geometric panels show the same language made to working across a variety of conceptual themes. Here in a life’s work is the tradition of a sustained endeavour that Sontag is looking for.

Richard Whiteley is the “second generation” in this show. Whiteley’s experiences in Australia as a young artist were completely different to Moje’s in Hamburg. University courses promoted active self-awareness as well as technical diligence; arts funding programs had been established; international exchange was common and there were galleries that paid
attention glass. But while Moje’s and Whiteley’s early experiences were radically different, their shared endeavours at ANU-SOA created substantial and important affinities. Of his years studying under Moje, Whiteley notes that students were expected to “get working and to figure out who we were, what we thought and what we wanted to say.” A sound basis for serious work. Since then Whiteley’s art has shown a mature and consistent development over 20 years. His is a sure and elegant arc of investigation and careful exploration that will allow a sustained and thoughtful critical evaluation.

And what of the third generation? As for all artists, they have inherited a world where everything is possible, and everything is expected. New York critic Roberta Smith said in 2009 that even though the “idea of originality has been dissected and pulverized by so-called postmodern artists, they are still expected do so in an original way”. Despite this overabundance of choice, the younger artists here show no signs yet of being lost at sea. The settled confidence in this work is refreshing. There are Madeline Prowd’s elegantly simple vessels, and Marcel Hoogstad Hay’s sure handling of the Venetian tradition. Ruth Oliphant continues to elaborate her theme of layered cityscapes. Charles Walker, one of the most recent graduates, confidently picks up the theme of tectonic thrusts of the land. Alexandra Frasersmith builds on her interest in integrating natural forms into personalised statements. Jesse Günther is working on his magical biomorphic creatures in glowing colours. Who knows what critical discourse, academic trends, galleries and audiences will expect of these artists over the next half century? If they are brave, this will be entirely theirs to shape.

A Collaborative Journey Home

The exhibition Collaborative Endeavour – contemporary glass from Canberra + Berlin is a celebration of the two-year cooperation between the glass workshop at the Australian National University School of Art and Berlin Glas e.V. Germany had a strong impact on glass and the modern glass movement in Australia, when in 1982, Hamburg-based artist Klaus Moje was invited by the Director of the Australian National University in Canberra to start a glass programme. He took the opportunity to start something that would not be limited to glassblowing, introducing techniques he had been researching in his own practice at home: kiln forming, carving and “cold-working”. Students at the Australian National University were taught a wider range of working with glass, and he created a curriculum that emphasised technique as much as it did concept. Klaus Moje’s tenure at the Australian National University School of Art (ANU-SOA) inspired subsequent generations of artists using glass as a principle material, including Richard Whiteley, who is now Associate Professor and Head of the Glass Workshop at the ANU-SOA, and partner in the collaboration with the Berlin Glas studio.

The partnership started in 2013, when Nadania Idriss took Whiteley’s class at the Pilchuck Glass School outside of Seattle, Washington. The idea was to send his graduates to Berlin to gain an experience in one of Europe’s major art capitals; and as well, to bring back to Germany the strong influences that Moje taught, and that continue to resonate in Australian glass art. There are five graduates who have thus far been to Berlin Glas, each carrying traces of Moje’s influences with sensitivity. If Moje’s bright colour fields have been interchanged with more subtle, monochrome palettes, a desire to combine, whether style or materials, is very much present in all of their works.

Madeline Prowd and Marcel Hoogstad Hay blow glass combining bold, and sometimes, unusual colours, using traditional, Venetian, rolled-up cane and incalmo techniques. In Ruth Oliphant’s series Hidden Histories 1-4, the artist depicts, with intense realism some of Berlin’s landmark buildings as they were once photographed on postcards. Oliphant fuses multiple layers of glass and carves them to unearth - and remind us of - the stories our built environment is waiting to tell.

Alexandra Frasersmith rebels against the rules (literally!), using combinations of liquids and glass, to create deeply texturized, elegant reliefs that are polished, or rolled-up on a blow-pipe, and transformed into something completely different. Charles Walker has successfully casted glass with metals and stones, creating sculptures that are astonishingly fused on or engulf these foreign materials.

These artists’ works are testaments to the legacy that Klaus Moje originally took to Canberra; and one, which Richard Whiteley continues to foster at the ANU. And now this legacy is making a journey home, through the collaboration between the Australian National University-School of Art and Berlin Glas e.V!

Collaborative Endeavour – Contemporary Glass from Canberra + Berlin is a culmination of the hard work, support and friendships that have been forged during the last two years: Jesse Günther, Sadhbh Mowlds, Rudy Faulkner, Madeline Prowd, Justin Guinsberg, Ruth Oliphant, Alexandra Frasersmith, Marcel Hoogstad Hay, Charles Walker, Julius Weiland and Wilken Skurk, thank you for helping to transform a possibility into reality.
This exhibition would not be possible without the support of the Australian Embassy Germany. Günter Schlothauer, Julia Kaute, Susanne Kalabanter, thank you for your support and for hosting Collaborative Endeavour in Berlin. Martin Lorch, Owner and Director of Galerie Lorch+Seidel Contemporary is equally responsible for the exhibition coming into fruition. Dedo von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk, Head of Glasmuseum Hentrich, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, Uta Klotz, Editor-in-Chief of Neues Glas Art & Architecture, and Nola Anderson, arts writer and curator, thank you for your constant support and encouragement. This type of moral support is invaluable for the growth and development of Berlin Glas e.V.

Lastly, but hardly least, a very special thank you to Richard Whiteley for asking a young, start-up studio to collaborate, and Valentine Destrait, my right-hand in running our programmes, and designer of this catalogue!
KLAUS MOJE

Australian/German, Founding Head of the Glass Workshop at the Australian National University, National Living Treasure in Australia

Klaus Moje’s work and teaching has created strong and enduring links between studio glass practice in Germany and Australia. In 1982, Hamburg-based artist Klaus Moje was invited by the Director of the School of Art in Canberra, Udo Sellbach (1927–2006), to start a glass programme. He took the opportunity to start a new programme that would not be limited to glassblowing, and introduced kiln forming and carving and cold-working techniques which he developed in Germany over the previous 20 years. Students were taught a wider range of working with glass, and he created a curriculum that emphasised technique as much as it did concept. Klaus Moje’s tenure at the Australian National University School of Art (ANU-SOA) inspired subsequent generations of artists using glass as a principle material, including Richard Whiteley, who is now Associate Professor and Head of the Glass Workshop at the ANU-SOA. The glass workshop remains one of the only glass programmes that offers a craft-based training. The students acquire a significant, advanced skill-level, and refined, articulated voice to communicate their concepts.
Richard Whiteley studied under Klaus Moje at the School of Art in the 1980’s after having completed an apprenticeship in stained glass and window restoration. It was during this time at the ANU, when he came into contact with the international studio glass movement and spent a Summer at the Pilchuck Glass School, taking a pivotal class with the famous Czech duo, Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová. Light and shadow and voids became a fascination for Whiteley. Upon the completion of his undergraduate degree, he went on to study Sculpture in the United States, completing an Masters in Fine Arts at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Richard Whiteley returned to Australia in 1994 to teach at the Sydney College of the Arts, before moving to Canberra in 2002. Whiteley is currently Associate Professor, Head of the Glass Workshop, and convenor of the Craft and Design at the Australian National University.

www.richardwhiteley.com
RUTH OLIPHANT

Australian Artist + Designer based in Canberra, Endeavour Award Visiting Artist at Berlin Glas e.V. 2014

Ruth Oliphant graduated with honours from the Australian National University’s glass workshop Canberra in 2008. Since graduating, she has gained recognition as an emerging artist and has exhibited both nationally and internationally. Ruth originally studied architecture and these links can be seen in her work as a glass artist, where she uses the city and the built environment as a canvas to explore her own experiences and memories. The works change between external experiences and internal spaces and she often uses windows as a metaphor through which to look into these spaces and into the past. Her pieces are constructed by layering fused painted and carved transparent and opaque glass blocks. Together, a strong depth-of-field is created, drawing the viewer into Ruth’s mind and memories.

Ruth was the first Endeavour Award recipient for a residency at Berlin Glas e.V. in the Summer of 2014. She spent four months working and teaching as part of a professional development experience; and as Berlin Glas e.V. is an emerging studio, Ruth assisted in launching the kiln forming programme, using rudimentary equipment until the studio was able to secure donations, such as a kiln! Following her residency at Berlin Glas e.V., Ruth travelled to Portland, Oregon, where she was Artist in Residence at the Bullseye Glass Factory. She is currently living and working in Canberra.

www.rutholiphant.com
MADELINE PROWD

Artist, Designer + Assistant Studio Technician at JamFactory, Adelaide, Arts SouthAustralia Fellowship Visiting Artist at Berlin Glas e.V. 2014

Madeline Prowd completed Bachelors in Visual Arts at the Australian National University, School of Art in 2009, studying under Richard Whiteley and Nadege Desgenetez. Madeline then relocated to Adelaide to undertake the two year Associate Training Program in the Glass Studio at JamFactory. Madeline is heavily influenced by traditional Italian glassblowing techniques and the technical proficiency inherent in the process of making. She strives to make work that incorporates an element of the handmade. Since graduating, Madeline received a myriad of prestigious awards and grants, allowing her to travel and undertake residencies in studios abroad. In 2014, Madeline was an artist in residence for eight weeks at Berlin Glas e.V, and a featured artist in the Berlin Design Week/DMY Festival.

www.madelineprowdglass.com
Marcel Hoogstad Hay completed a Bachelor of Visual Art in 2012, and subsequently moved to Adelaide to train at JamFactory, where he began to focus on making glass production. For years he has been working with traditional Venetian cane work. He is drawn to these techniques because of the ability to create complex patterns. By playing with various combinations of line and colour, he is able to create pieces that contain vivid, optical effects. Marcel’s work also explores the ideas around the everyday, ornament, the handmade, and public space as a site for artistic interventions. He has investigated these ideas by installing highly finished glass objects in urban areas. He is fascinated with the contrast between his polished works of art and what he refers to as a banal, or mundane setting. He is equally interested in the chance encounters between people and his artworks, and the potential for his art works to disrupt the routine of life. Marcel received the Endeavour Executive Fellowship in 2015 to undertake a four-month residency at Berlin Glas e.V.. He was a featured artist in the Berlin DMY International Design Festival and held a workshop on goblet making.

www.marcelhoogstadhay.com
ALEXANDRA FRASERSMITH

Artist based in Canberra, Endeavour Award Visiting Artist at Berlin Glas e.V. 2015

Alexandra Frasersmith graduated with a Bachelor in Visual Art in 2013. Her work focuses on casting glass, and is informed by the connections between the human body, nature and architecture. She seeks to explore the ambiguous, visceral and beautiful qualities of these themes and the relationships between them. Drawing inspiration from the structures of science, medicine and religion, she makes cast glass sculptural work that is a mix of movement and growth, rich in surface grains and evocative of the body and nature. The ambiguities of the form invite closer inspection and contemplation of the imagery associated with the internal, the natural and the architecture in devotional infrastructure. Alexandra received the Endeavour Award in 2015 and will spend four months at the Berlin Glas e.V. studio on a professional development residency.

alexfrasersmith.wix.com/glass
Charles Walker is an emerging artist who studied at the Australian National University, graduating in 2013. His influences are drawn from the diversity of our environment. He is moved by nature and its power, by the cracks that naturally form in stone and the hidden movements of the earth. In contrast to this, he finds inspiration in the nuances of modern architecture, in its simplicity and its form. To reflect an interest in the natural and modern aesthetics, he combines glass with stone and metal during the casting process. This exploration of material often leads to unexpected results; the glass may crack due to stress or undergo chemical reactions with the introduced material leading to changes in colour. Charles is motivated to look beyond perceived flaws and to investigate why a material has cracked or broken and how one can take advantage – artistically - of the result. Charles was given the Endeavour Award in 2015 and will spend four months at the Berlin Glas e.V. studio on a professional development residency.

www.charleswalkersculpture.com
Kate’s work explores how our private identities are expressed through the things we collect and the material mass we will eventually leave behind. She is interested in the value and function of collected objects and the narrative that is formed through the creative activity of assembling a collection. By exploiting the transformative properties of glass, cheap knick-knacks, 1970s wallpaper and gaudy flowers morph into precious decorations, adorning large urns and sparkling mosaics. She completed her honours degree at the ANU School of Art Glass Workshop in Canberra in 2013, incorporating a diverse practice ranging from traditional processes of blown glass, lost wax casting and mosaic, alongside new technologies such as waterjet cutting and ceramic decals.

www.katecnixon.com
JESSE GÜNTHER

Artist + Studio Manager at Berlin Glas e.V.

Jesse Günther graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, Ireland, the country where he was born and raised. He was awarded the Leonardo da Vinci scholarship to complete a professional internship experience, and chose Berlin Glas e.V. for his residency in the Autumn of 2013. When he finished his internship, he was offered a position at Berlin Glas e.V. as Studio Manager, lead Gaffer and instructor. Jesse’s work explores the philosophical and aesthetic notions of the natural world and its processes. Issues around metamorphoses and beauty come to the forefront in his work, which is very much also centred on minute, micro-details that are often missed by the human eye. His sculptures are made with a variety of media, including hot-glass, wood, metal, and neon, which reflects and connects the various strands of his investigations.

www.jessegunther.com

Jesse Günther
Gomphus Vulgatissimus, 2014
Moldblown glass, forged and welded steel
50 x 50 x 27 cm
Photo Credit: Jesse Günther
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Cover Photo: Detail from Klaus Moje, Vertical over Horizontal, 2010, Courtesy of the artist
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