

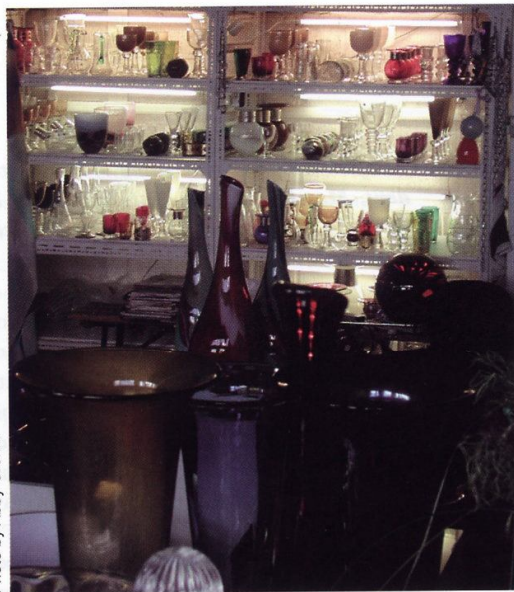
Fine Arts and Antiques

The Language of Glass by Abby Cronin

Although the language of glass is centuries old, it continues to evolve and re-invent itself. Imagine how globs of molten glass can be transformed into magnificent objects by glass artists. The functional possibilities are infinite and each piece reflects the aesthetic, philosophy and skills of its maker. Anthony Stern, an exceptionally gifted glass artist understands this fully. A Cambridge graduate and formerly a photographer and film maker, Stern established his studio in Battersea in 1979 after completing an MA degree in glass blowing and sculpture at the Royal College of Art. His unique pieces are painterly watercolours in glass. They embody magical, transcendental moods and reflect Stern's love of landscape, water, sun, sea and sky. His colour palette behaves like liquid paint or inks frozen at the moment of fusion in the furnace. The final forms contain a multitude of sculptural elements combining depth, perspective and translucency.

Whether purely decorative or functional, Stern's glass art is mesmerising. Glass is his first language. "I can express an endless variety of ideas and thoughts from the functional and prosaic to lyrical, healing and mystical. I create a series of controlled accidents. The process evolves moving from chaos to a level of precision. I try to become the piece I'm working on, experience its growth as I work on it. The layering of glass gives depth and perspective to the pieces. I am completely focused because the technique of glass-blowing is extremely dangerous." Anthony 'paints' at the furnace. You feel the presence of this artist in each of his pieces.

Photo by Abby Cronin



Variety of Stern's Glass Designs in his studio.

Stern has experimented and innovated continuously throughout the past twenty-seven years. His remarkable designs include simple contemporary pieces as well as ranges which incorporate features adapted from historic and classical forms. In his Baroque range there are 18th century elements in wine glasses, bowls and table centrepieces. Variations on the Baroque range include exquisite vases with silver collars. Several styles of glass are displayed on his studio shelves – many are pictured here. No two sets are alike. They differ in size, shape, and colour. Some are transparent, golden, pale purple, green, red or opaque white.

Diverse themes are integral to Stern's work. He describes his Tribal Art glass as a means of uniting the First with the Third world. The African baskets (pictured) are glass vases poured into hand-woven mesh made from copper telephone wire commissioned from craftspeople in South Africa's Zululand. The surface of the glass is then silver-plated and decorated with beads. Here unique cultural traditions are united: ancient Roman glass-making techniques are rediscovered and fuse contemporary hand-made vessels with tribal craft. This range takes various identities and forms: tribal copper, tribal pots and tribal

'Carnival' Seascape Bowl

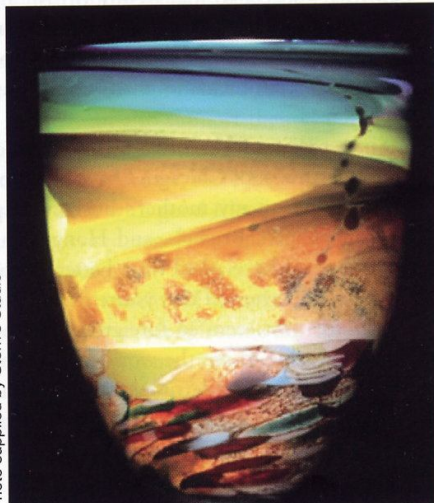


Photo supplied by Stern's Studio

vases. They can all be seen on Anthony's website.

Signature pieces are the remarkable Seascape Bowls first exhibited in 1983. Each one is different. These gorgeous vessels contain abstract coloured swirls. They are Anthony's 'action paintings', his take on the natural world of sea, sun, and sky. Endless graceful movement is frozen in layers. With names like 'Eastern Dream', 'Abyss', and 'Seascape Sunset' (seen here), they personify nature's beauty. The subjective feelings Anthony has as he moves through the stages of creating them results in a flowing imagery.

Highly prized by collectors, these Seascape bowls can be found in galleries in London, Europe and North America.

Experimenting with the properties of glass is a constant source of stimulation for Anthony and 'wall art' represents a new direction. Drawing on his fascination with and knowledge of photography, he is making flat glass painterly panoramas. These "paintings in glass" are striking panoramic visions of landscapes and seascapes intended to be mounted on walls. Technically this complex process involves taking a 360 digital photographic image of a hand blown seascape bowl which is then printed on to a glass panel. Like illuminated paintings, these visual compositions reveal jewel-like tones. Pictured here - 'Tropical Landscape' and 'Blue Wave' illustrate the painterly properties in the panels. The 'Lacy Panel', a white composition, embodies shells and sea-like forms which reflect light and weightlessness.

In the commercial world, Anthony's work is highly sought after. Collaborating with architects, shop and interior designers has given him the opportunity to create art glass for numerous clients. His commissions are found in Barneys and Bergdorf Goodman in New York City, Liberty in London, and

'Seascape Sunset' Bowl

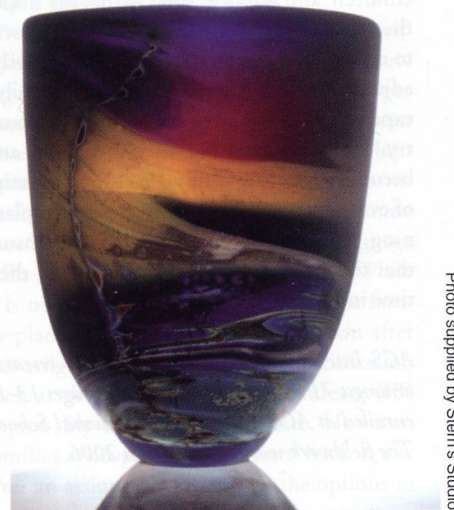


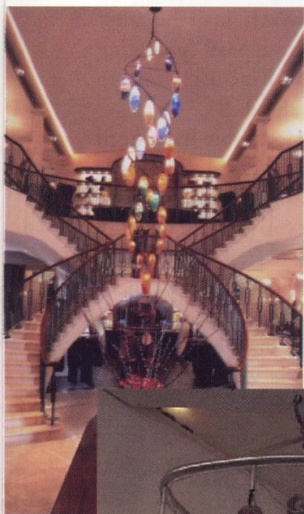
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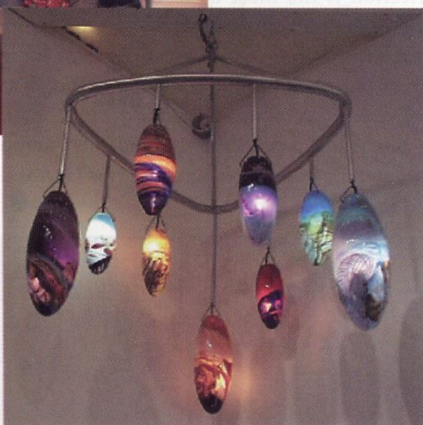
Painting in Glass- 'Tropical Landscape' - Wall Art

Takashimaya in Tokyo, to name but a few. Chandeliers, lamps, bowls, paper weights and even jewellery are now standard items in his inventory. A remarkable chandelier was commissioned by the Jigsaw flagship store in the Chapel at No. 6 Duke of York Square in London on the Kings Road. Based on the Double Helix, the structure of DNA, it has thirty-two lights configured for a two storey progression. It lives in the centre of the staircase on the



Left: *Chandelier in Jigsaw, Kings Road*
Photo supplied by Stern's Studio

Below: *Pendant Chandelier*
Photo supplied by Stern's Studio



ground floor and wends its way up to the first floor (pictured here). This light sculpture has a striking presence in the middle of a commercial space and draws the attention of shoppers to the soft colours of earth green, pale blues and violets at the top. Further down the Kings Road, the chandelier in Osborne and Little, Stern's collection of sculptural lights, resembles individual watercolour paintings.

Not long ago Stern was researching his photo archive and discovered hundreds of photos he had taken at pop concerts in the 1970s. It was a period when rock stars, the

Rolling Stones in particular, were on the crest of a wave of celebrity status. The photographs brilliantly captured the mood of these occasions. Stern thought: "Why not see if I can use images from my photo archive in my glass?" The technical challenge was daunting but there are now a few prototype vases with unique photos of the Rolling Stones embedded in glass. Is there a market for Rock culture in a glass vase? In all likelihood there is. Perhaps the message is 'watch this space'. With a little savvy PR, these models are likely to become highly collectable.

African Baskets



Photo supplied by Stern's Studio

If you are curious and want to learn more about centuries of glassmaking, visit the Glass Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum where you will find an extraordinary collection representing a 4000 year history of glass-making. Room 131 holds a display of glass vividly illustrating its entire history from ancient times to contemporary. Included are Islamic, British and European collections among others as well as a selection illustrating various techniques such as Dutch engraving. Allow time to use the computer inter-actives and touch screen resources. They will help you identify items

Glass Balustrade in V&A Glass Gallery by Danny Lane.



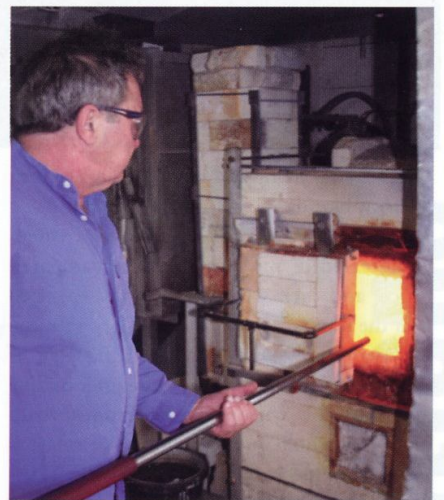
Photo by Abby Cronin

in the collection and learn about the history of glass. There is an early example of Stern's work tucked away in a case on the top level. Room 129 contains new acquisitions of contemporary glass sculptures and installations by artists from home and abroad. Room 131 in the gallery features a spectacular glass balustrade staircase commissioned by the V&A in 1994 from the American born glass artist, Danny Lane. Lane's glass balustrade leads to a mezzanine crammed with cases housing historical treasures. The staircase establishes a perfect mood for visitors to enjoy the National Glass collection. And it just might help you to understand how molten globs of glass have been transformed into remarkably decorative and useful objects for thousands of years. ■



Photo supplied by Stern's Studio

White Spiral Range



Anthony making glass in his workshop
Photo supplied by Stern's Studio

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Victoria & Albert Glass Galleries
www.vam.ac.uk/collections/glass/galleries/129/index

DECOREX INTERNATIONAL 2007 –
Anthony Stern will exhibit his glass art 23rd - 26th
September 2007 ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA
LONDON SW3 www.decorex.com
Email: abby-artsjournalist@blueyonder.co.uk