



Eudaemonia

A Process Document

Sydni Weatherson

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this space to acknowledge the people who have supported me while at Sheridan and especially during my capstone. This was a labour of love, and it would not have been possible without an incredible group of people guiding me through this and to them I say thank you.

Delaney for everything always. Every taco night, every broken piece, every 8am slot on a Saturday, for reading everything I wrote this year and giving feedback on every concept

Cathleen Niccolson

Vivian and Thomas for being my introduction to the crafts

Simon, Aiden and Bram for assisting me. This collection would not have been physically possible without you three.

Farida, Simon, Kayla, and Claire for documenting my time in the hotshop, and for helping me with the film aspect of this document. You all caught my coolest moments.

Alyssa and Claire for being two of the most incredible women I have ever met

Everyone in the hotshop for the incredible energy, I have never wanted to be anywhere else on a Friday night

The other fourth years

Mickey Wang

My friends in ceramics for always letting me stop in for an hour or so at a time when I absolutely had other things I should have been doing. You all always made me feel so welcome in your studio space.

My friends in furniture for all the odd projects throughout the year.

Jess Schummer

The most important acknowledgement of all: my family. Thank you.

Abstract

My love for glass was instantaneous. The way the molten material flows and moves captivated me, like many others, the second I stepped foot into the hotshop. It was a match for my love of watercolour painting in that they were equal but opposite.

As I moved through the program, and eventually through my capstone, I wanted to find a way to capture movement, to create a collection of work where the sole purpose was to showcase the natural fluidity of the molten glass. I wanted eyes to dance across my work, following the piece as the rivers of colour flowed into one another as the engraved patterns revealed layers of colour. I wanted this collection of work to exist as a way to inspire, "Patterns stir the imagination; they conjure dreams. The beauty of a pattern depends on the extent to which it liberates the viewer's imagination" (Soetsu

Yanagi).

While watercolour paintings played a large part in my inspiration for this collection, the larger jumping off point was natural waterways and salt flats. The nature of water is to be ever changing, similarly to glass. On the other hand, the salt flats look like individual pots of paint, waiting to become something new again. The colours that are present change depending on the different minerals present, creating vibrant reds and deep purples, or the calming turquoise. This fed into my research in colour theory, what makes a strong palette, how discordant colours can enhance a piece, and to not shy away from an almost overwhelming selection. What began as predominantly botanical hues, morphed into bottomless purples and acid greens that mingled together in an unexpected way.

This document looks to explain colour selection, how we understand and value pattern, the relation between water and pattern, as well as how objects exist with and without "purpose". The intent of this collection is to create connection between object and viewer, as well as challenge purpose, and why or why not it is necessary to make something worth bringing into our space as a vehicle of inspiration.



Detail: Interior of CONFLUENCE II

Research

My process begins in the hotshop with a kiln brick covered in different chunks of colour bar. The tools are set up, the hole is hot, and the last thing to do is choose palettes that will turn into individual pieces later in the day. It is the step that brings the most excitement, it marks the beginning. Each kiln brick will turn into one stuffed cup, which will cool down, get engraved, and then be stuffed with molten glass to be blown out into a finished piece. It is the part in the process where I get to explore different colour combinations, and really consider colour theory as a whole. Occasionally other blowers will offer me their odds and ends that have splintered off, and I feel the excitement of adding someone else's signature colours into my work. At the end of it all, I hope to see a cup become a finished piece, joining the growing collection of work on my shelf waiting for a new home, waiting to inspire others.

The intensity that bar offers and the familiarity of the material makes it preferable over working with frits or powders. Oftentimes when chopping colour bar with a hatchet, small pieces splinter off, and if the bar was improperly annealed, it will break unpredictably. For many glass artists, those pieces are now unusable. They might not be big enough for the desired object, and picking up multiple pieces of bar can trap bubbles or create a myriad of other problems. For most, it is not worth the effort. However, I fully embrace the unpredictable nature of this method, welcoming trapped bubbles or striations in the bar. These smaller pieces of colour bar all get used, adding small flashes of acid green or deep cherry red against the bottomless blues and purples.

These colour combinations are chosen day of, with a healthy balance of transparent and opaque colours. My colour palettes change from piece to piece, but the underlying dominant shades are iris blue, new green, and dark violet blue. My accent colours change regularly, some pieces are heavily accented with pinks and purples, some with bright vibrant greens, a range of blues and some with a zesty yellow. These transparent colours are all very soft, meaning they absorb heat quickly and under the right conditions, will pull and stretch across the surface when sitting on top of another colour. In addition to this, these rich transparents create a powerful contrast with the opaque colours which illustrates the natural movement of the molten glass. Reactive colours such as blue chalcedony, iris orange, and metallic aqua blue are also frequently used in my work. As these reactive colours are heated and cooled, the different metal oxides in them, for example silver, will take on a range of different colours on the surface. Enamel white is a great addition to the colour

mixes as it is a very stiff colour. This means that the softer blues or or purples that are sitting on top of it will stretch in unpredictable ways, creating a webbed effect on the glass. Another advantage to adding pieces of enamel or opal white is that it will occasionally act as a primer for the transparent colours that are sitting on top of it, allowing the colours to be more intense.

My colour palettes are chosen for their ability to show range and motion. A range in value, saturation and warmth are all important. However, the ability for the colour to flow across a form as it is shaped is just as important. Keeping the base shades consistent allows me to create a sense of unity across a collection of work, “A rank order of dominant, subordinate, and accent colours is visually understood and maintains the importance of the main colour. If only two colours are used in combination, in general one of those colours should be dominant. If more than three colours are combined, it is even more vital to have a dominant shade that reinforces the major message.” (The Complete Colour Harmony Pantone Edition, Leatrice Eiseman p 55). This harmony is especially important as pieces are engraved. They all take on a different structure, but the underlying movement and rhythm is what creates a successful body of work. Moreover, the hierarchy of colour becomes apparent during the engraving process as well.

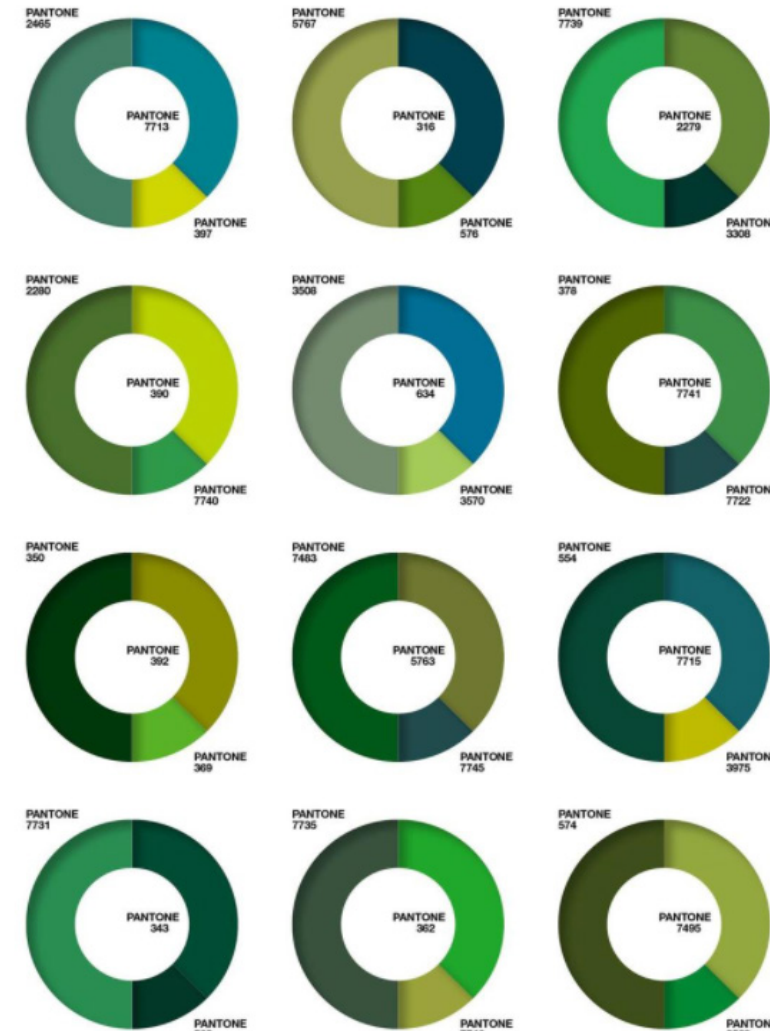


Image 1: Botanical Palettes, The Complete Color Harmony Pantone Edition p.112

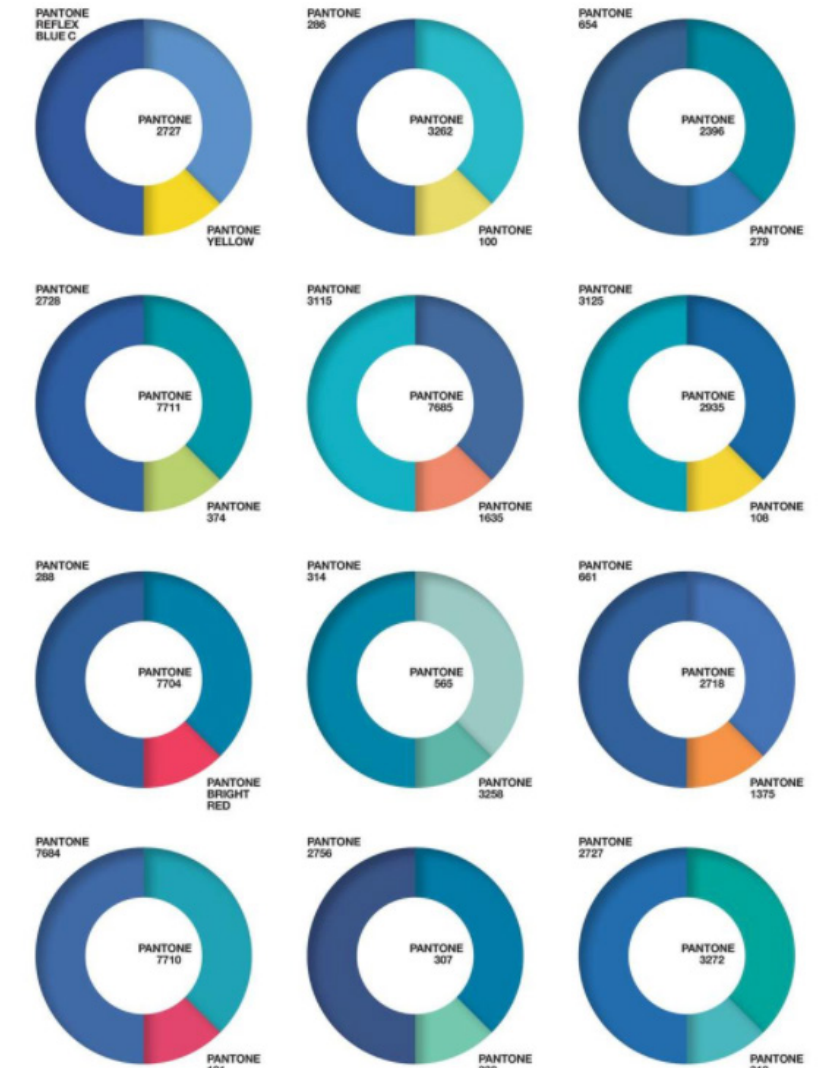


Image 2: Tropical Palettes, The Complete Color Harmony Pantone Edition p.144

When looking through the Pantone colour book, I find myself most attracted to cool toned palettes with bold colours. The botanical palettes are the most reminiscent of my work, which is in line with my main source of inspiration: natural waterways, leafy plants and salt flats. Salt flats are known for their range of colours depending on their location and the other minerals present. When photographed, the flats almost appear to be individual pots in a paint palette, soon to be made into something new. Much like glass, natural waterways are unpredictable and constantly changing each time you look at it. The more you observe, the more you see, "Social anthropologists tell us that the human eye is inevitably drawn to changing colour patterns as they often undulate in the same way that a body of water moves and changes. The rationale is that because humans need water in order to survive they are also drawn to the fluctuating movement of changeable colours. Whether we're thirsting for an object of beauty, or simply thirsty, we can't deny that there is a fascination for complexity in colour." (Eiseman p 22). This sense of movement is something I strive to capture in my work. It is a large part in how I define a successful piece, or a successful grouping. The eye should dance across the surface of my work, following the ribbons of colour as they swirl into each other, following the delicate webbing of a reactive colour that has reduced in the intense heat. The engraving adds another element of movement to this. The initial stuffed cup is cooled down over a period of approximately 18 hours, making it ready to be carved with a variety of patterns. These patterns typically focus on adding visual texture to areas where there is only one flat colour at the surface, following the natural movement the glass has when hot.



Image 3: Salt Flat N°TSSIII01, Tom Hegen

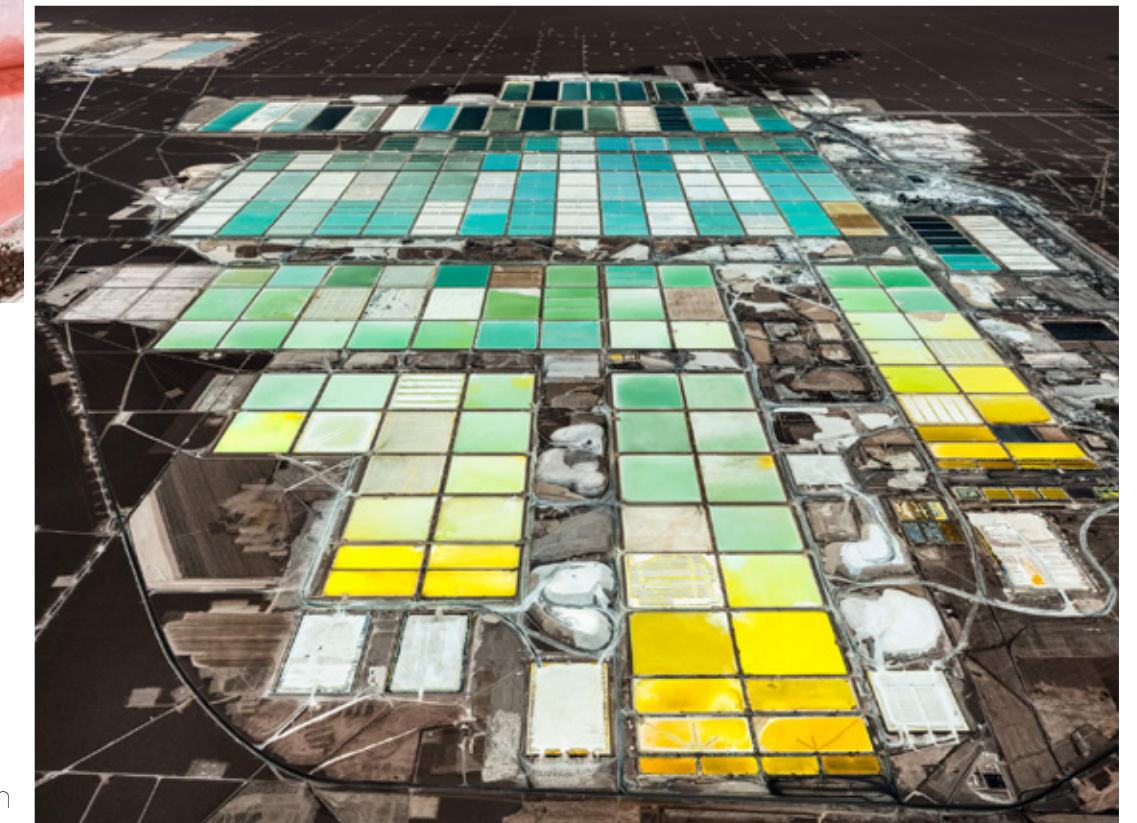


Image 4: Lithium Flat N°TLISL_03, Tom Hegen

After laying out my colour shards on a kiln brick, they are heated to a balmy 530 degrees celsius where I will then pick each piece up, stacking and swirling them together on a pipe. The process of heating and shaping the multicoloured mound of glass naturally encourages the colours to mix together creating a marbled effect. When I have picked up all of the shards, I overlay them onto a few gathers of clear glass. At this stage it is crucial to ensure that the clear glass is cold so that as I begin to stretch the mound of colour over top of it, the glass underneath won't become distorted or pull my seed bubble off center. From here, I blow the molten glass out into a cup, making sure to keep the bottom round with a wide opening and straight walls.

This becomes the first step in the stuffed cup process. When I have finished blowing the cup, it will take one of two paths; either I will place it into a small pickup kiln to be immediately stuffed and blown out into the final form, or I will place it into the annealer to slowly cool down to room temperature. This decision is also typically made day of and is entirely dependent on how the surface of the cup looks when it has been blown out. The heat from the glory hole encourages the colours to flow over one another like small rivers, however, because of the unpredictable nature of this process, sometimes a cup will have an incredibly uniform surface, or large sections without any variation. These are the cups that I will typically place into an annealer to be carved with different patterns before stuffing. On the other hand, if I decide to stuff the cup right away, I will choose from a small selection of forms that I feel would best suit the piece, and begin the blowing process. "This demonstrates the curious principle that the artisan is deprived of technical freedom but works in the freedom of nature." (The beauty of everyday objects, Soetsu Yanagi p 118) Giving up control of the colour and a level of control over the medium, letting go of a level of technical

precision in order to allow the glass to move organically and behave as a molten material would, unpredictable and full of movement facilitates a piece that will have depth.

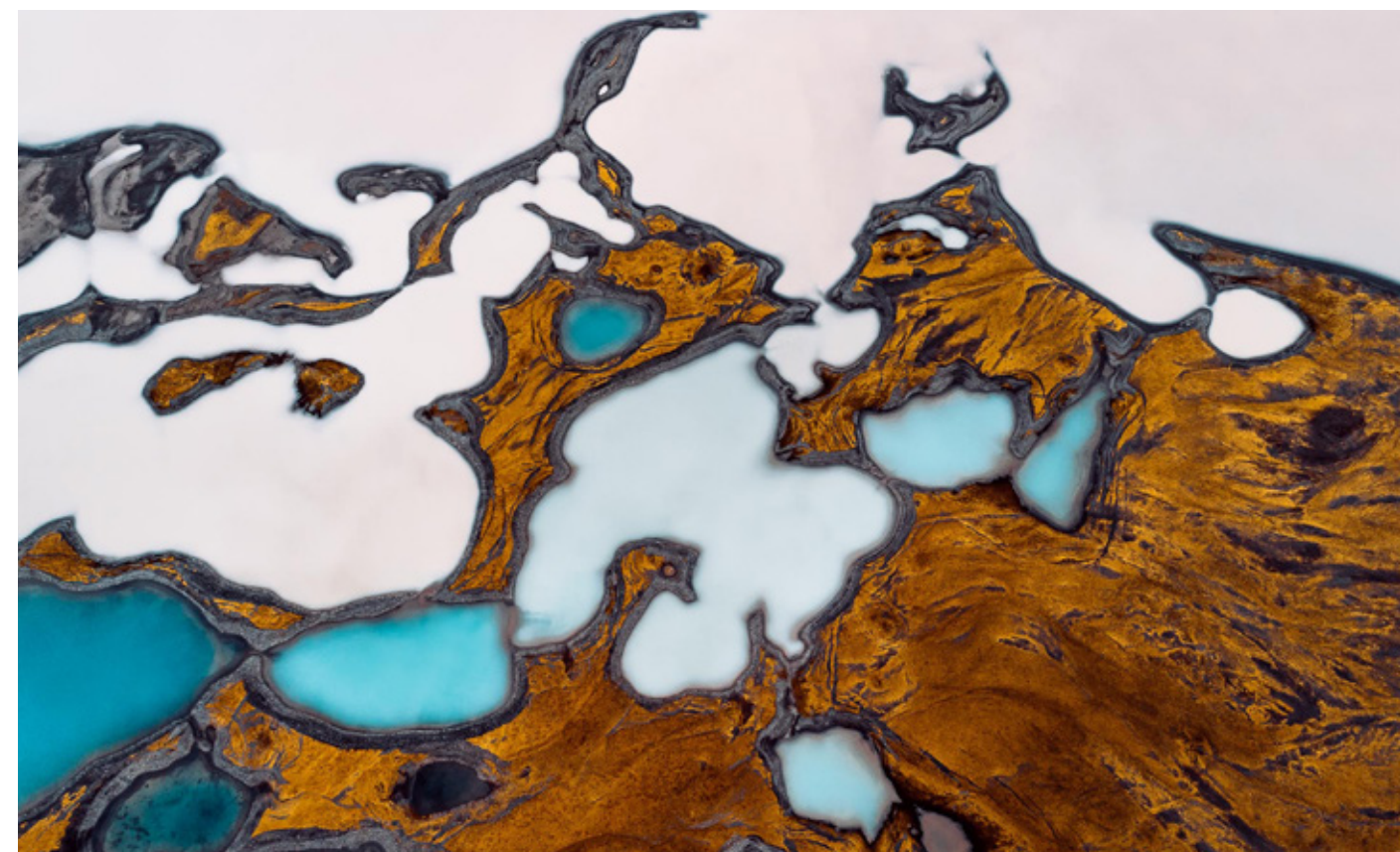
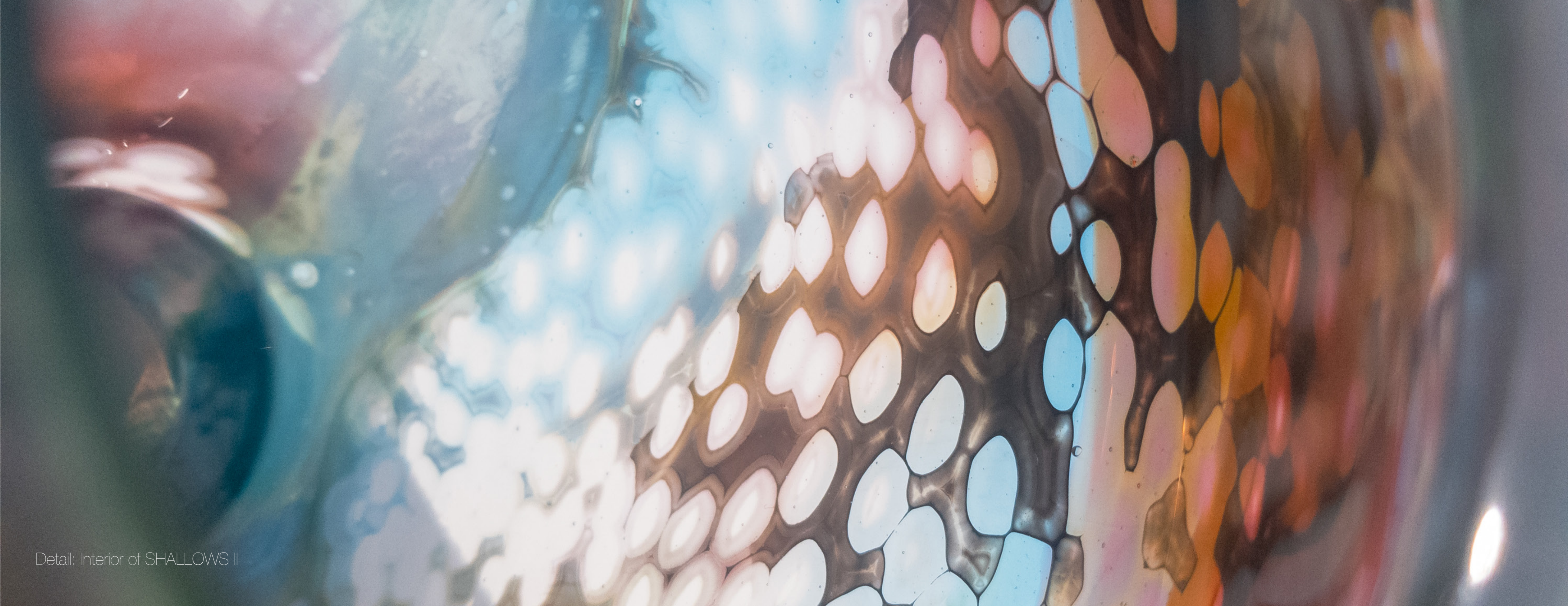


Image 5: Glacier Pools №TGPS07, Tom Hegen



Detail: Interior of SHALLOWS II

These pieces are to become a collection of work. Pieces will be displayed in small groupings, with some as standalone works. Although they have forms that lend themselves to function very well, they are meant to exist as art objects. "Beautiful objects do not serve ordinary human purposes, as plates and spoons do. A beautiful rose pleases us, but not because we necessarily want to eat it or even pick it for a flower arrangement... something beautiful has "purposiveness without a purpose." (Art Theory, Cynthia Freeland p 7-8). This quote illustrates perfectly my hopes for this collection. It is meant to bring joy and spark wonder in the same way a fresh cut flower would, only on a grander scale. Some of the objects are small, almost as an invitation to be held, while some are larger with carvings over the entire surface. The majority however just focus on how the piece was transformed while blowing out the carved stuffed cup. There is no hierarchy amongst the collection, but the variety allows them to strike a chord with as many people as possible. The colour and surface textures tickle the imagination the way art should. "...For Kant the aesthetic is experienced when a sensuous object stimulates our emotions, intellect, and imagination. These faculties are activated in 'free play' rather than in any more focused and studious way. The beautiful object appeals to our senses, but in a cool and detached way. A beautiful object's form and design are the key to the all important feature of 'purposiveness without a purpose'. We respond to the object's rightness of design, which satisfies our imagination and intellect, even though we are not evaluating the object's purpose." (Freeland p 10). While I don't agree with the notion that a beautiful object appeals to our senses in a cool and detached way, I do agree that the form and design are key, and that a well designed form will satisfy the imagination and intellect. This is why I have chosen forms for this collection that are intentionally very structural. I find that the mind is able to better focus on the depth of

colour and the range in motion with a strong form behind it.

The forms that I have chosen for this collection compliment each other as a whole, while also being strong enough to be standalone pieces. I have intentionally chosen very structural forms: the cylinder, the cone, the "donut" which is a cylinder with a folded top, the sphere, and a tapered vessel with a proud shoulder, as a way to contrast the organic movement on the surface. The forms give the natural movement of the glass room. It allows the patterns and lines to stretch both vertically and horizontally. Diagonal cuts stretch across the bold triangular cone, while round marks tend to expand into ovals when blown out into a cylinder. At the same time, very linear cuts tend to show the most movement when they are blown out, whether horizontal or vertical. Vertical cuts elongate and develop a twist indicating my tendency to marver only clockwise, while horizontal cuts become wider. Depending if I have pulled and trimmed the neck of a form, the vertical cuts will twist further, and the horizontal cuts will develop a slight wave. "Pattern is movement within quietude, a state in which opposites are one. There is no pattern without quietude; there is no pattern without movement." (Yanagi p 75). This kind of movement is what I strive to show in my work. I want there to be evidence of a human hand and the care that goes into these pieces at every stage. I want there to be evidence and almost a documentation of how the human hand, my hand, helps guide the molten glass.

This desire is a large part of why I have fallen in love with the process of engraving. In the past I was using stone wheels to add texture to pieces, but have since begun using sintered diamond wheels. My desire to use stone wheels stemmed from a desire to create pieces in more traditional ways, the way many glass artists before me would have. The wheels create such a beautiful surface on the glass without the need for polishing or a silicone surface protector like CRL. With that being said, the rate with which I am producing cups, and the number of pieces I am carving weekly, it makes more sense to use a sintered diamond wheel. They don't need to be frequently reprofiled while I'm working, which can disrupt my workflow, and they remove material incredibly quickly. Another important factor is that going forward, I would like to have my own set of engraving wheels. It has become, what I believe to be, the most important process in my making journey and necessary to my work. Because of this, I understand that I should become comfortable using the wheels that are available to me, and take advantage of this opportunity to gain experience before purchasing my own set. Pushing myself like this has allowed me to free myself of some of the mental roadblocks when engraving, and fully embrace the technique.

The process of engraving to become meditative in unexpected ways. I get lost in the colour of the glass and the process of making patterns. It becomes an act of excavating colour, of unearthing the hidden layers in a way that is wholly unique to that piece. The deeper the cuts, the more that is revealed. The light will dance through the cuts, creating windows to the interior when the piece has been blown out. The more wild the patterns in the colour, the more I want to create, "Patterns stir the imagination; they conjure dreams.

The beauty of a pattern depends on the extent to which it liberates the viewer's imagination" (Yanagi p 78). The patterns I have developed are meant to inspire and create wonder. They are about excavating layers and exploring the material more than creating a recognizable visual. The human eye interprets information differently from person to person, and rather than trying to push one to connect with a recognizable visual or illustration, my body of work is rather about connecting with the material and the relationship it has in the surrounding space.

My desire for connection with material and the space it exists in is why I have chosen in large part to document my making process with film. The relationship we have with film is different than that of digital. Photos are processed by people with care and attention, the same way I treat my pieces at every stage in their making. A digital photo is taken with instant results and is often undervalued. Film photography cultivates a relationship. It creates the same feeling of excitement of seeing a piece fresh from the annealer. Everyone in the studio talks about the new work, oohing and ahing, marvelling over the form. We talk about how the punty turned out, will it have to be coldworked, where we tagged the door or not. It becomes a community experience in the same way receiving freshly developed photos does. Prints get passed around and it connects the different generations in the studio, the same way we connected over glass. Both have longevity, with how long people have been creating with these mediums, and with how they will continue to exist in the world.

Final photographs of the collection will be taken digitally to ensure that the colours are true to life and the lighting doesn't lean too yellow. This was a personal choice that took a lot of consideration, why do one but not the other? The process photos are meant to show the process, they aren't meant to be perfect. It once again brings up the idea of letting go of control of the medium, working with the freedom of nature, or in this case, the freedom of bringing an old 35mm camera into the hotshop and enjoying the experience. The final photos on the other hand will be used for print and website development. There is a deeper need for polished photographs of these pieces that can only be fulfilled with digital media. Like the diamond engraving wheels, it is about knowing when to accept newer technology into an analog practice.

Analysis



Image 6: Purple Rain on Cubes (Detail), Curt Hammerly

Prior to attending Sheridan's crafts and design program, the majority of my artistic exploration was with watercolour paints. They were my first love, the way the pigments moved and how I was able to layer colours, and manipulate the material before it dried down was captivating. As I began my journey into the world of craft, I began to look for makers who approached their work similarly. I sought out artists and makers who allowed the nature of the material to take center stage as much as possible. The work of Denver based ceramicist Curt Hammerly of Hammerly Ceramics, has been a great source of inspiration for me. Hammerly approaches his work in collections or series, focusing on a set number of forms for that year, and zeroes in on surface. The slip casted work allows for production to be as streamlined as possible, while also allowing him to experiment with very intense geometric designs. These geometric mugs, planters, and vases allow for the glaze to run down the pieces, creating intense rivers of orange and red running through a bright turquoise ocean. The glazes are encouraged to run wild. His colours are bold and electric, and everything I have ever wanted to see, and make. His technical understanding of the material acts as a support for the experimentation and rigorous testing he does on his glazes, and it is something I admire greatly.

Although my work has a different order of operations than his, we share the same end goal, "I believe that when an object has been designed well and with the user in mind, it can become more than the simple use it was made for. Those pieces bring a greater enjoyment of the experience surrounding that object." My desire to make work that exists outside of the realm of the suggested function. To simply exist and bring joy and inspiration into someone else's world is what I aim to achieve, it just so happens that the vehicle for this is blown and engraved glass.



Image 7: Fire Coral on Brain, Curt Hammerly



Image 8: Fire Coral on Cubes, Curt Hammerly

Kari Molstad's body of work consists of blown forms with dynamic engravings that follow the natural curves of the forms. "When creating glass pieces she draws inspiration from nature's changes and her surroundings, and from the material itself, playing with different glass qualities and working the glass to technical perfection." When I began engraving my stuffed cups, I was looking for ways to integrate the various cuts within the natural patterns and flow of the colour layers. Her recent work titled "Pond", with the natural flow of the cuts, all very intentional and crisp, was a jumping off point for me. I looked to her work to build my own library of cuts and patterns. This led to experimenting with different wheel profiles, if I would engrave before or after stuffing the cup, and introducing firepolishing into the designs.



Image 9: Pond, Kari Molstad

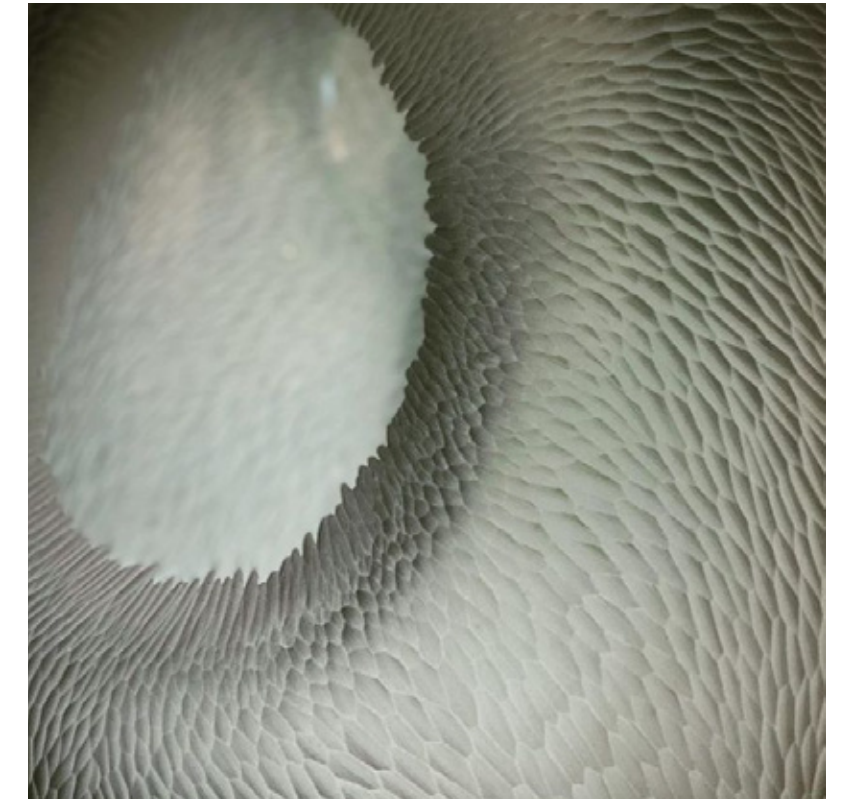


Image 10: Curve III (Detail), Kari Molstad



Image 11: Bon Bon Table Lamp - Violet (Unlit), Helle Mardahl



Image 12: Bon Bon Table Lamp - Violet (Lit), Helle Mardahl

Helle Mardahl is a designer that focuses on bright, candy coloured blown glass objects she calls Bon Bons. Her work “encompasses sculpture, installation, painting, fashion and interior design. Her work is marked by a sense of lavishness and extravagance combined with a sense of flamboyance.” Mardahl creates a sense of awe and wonderment with each piece. While each piece is unique and no two forms are identical, the colours and hardware on her pieces act as a way to create a sense of unity. In addition to her tableware, she also focuses a great deal on lighting. When lit, her Bon Bon pendant lights and table lamps emit a warm glow reminiscent of a fresh saltwater taffy. It is this transformation of colour and temperature that makes lighting so enticing with my collection. How can lighting be used to transform work into a completely different piece than before? How will my colour layers and carving lend to this experience? Beginning lighting also opens up a whole new design challenge - hardware. I took a great deal of inspiration from Helle Mardahl's hardware when seeking out my own. The braided cord becomes part of the piece in a way that a simple rubber coated wire cannot, and colour is once again a question begging to be answered.

About Lighting



WHORL I & II Lit

An initial hope I had for this collection was a way to incorporate lighting designs into my work. Once the final set of forms were developed, and I was satisfied with the number of pieces produced, I began to divide them into small groupings, allowing the forms and patterns to play off of one another and create tension. This left me with a number of pieces that needed intent, and lighting was a natural stepping stone for them.

As my body of work has developed over the years, and as I have grown with this method of colour application, so has my interest in exploring how surface texture changes as it is illuminated. These pieces take on a completely different feeling to them when lit from within. A piece that is mostly blues and greens with webs of pink across the surface takes on warm golden hues with ribbons of gold ruby running through it. The piece casts soft moving shadows across the space, as if the light was bouncing off of a body of water on a bright summer day. Lighting these pieces showcases the depth and layers of colour, movement, pattern, and texture in a way that can't be replicated. It is a way to interact with the interior and exterior of the piece in different settings. Lighting reveals the colour layers in a way that carving alone cannot achieve.



WHORL I & II Unlit



Detail: Surface of WHORL I Unlit



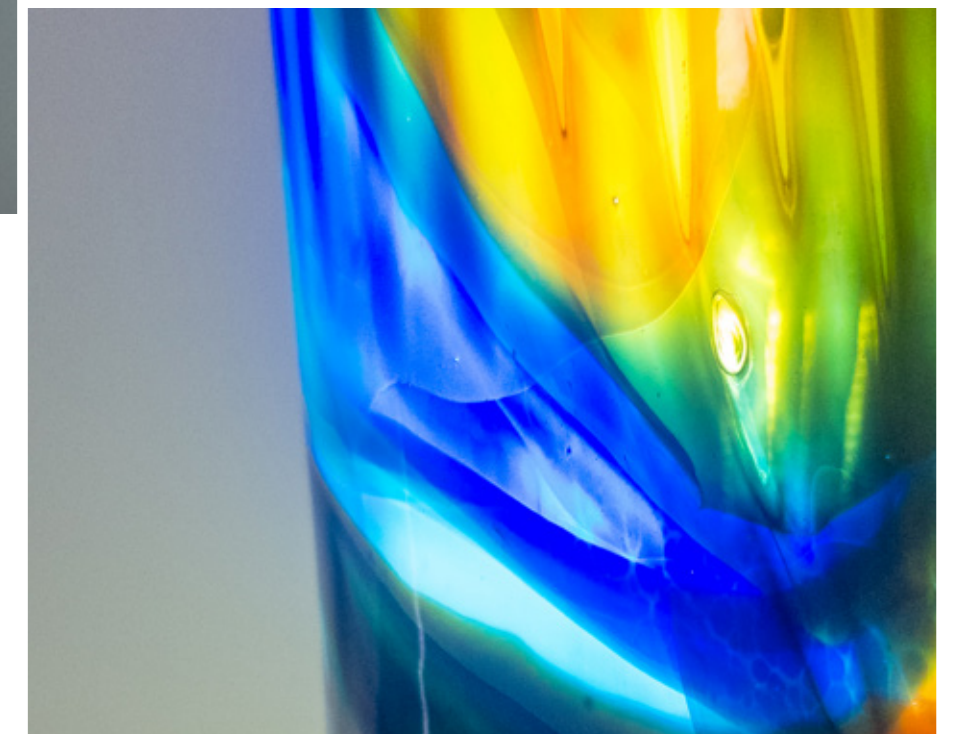
Detail: Surface of WHORL II Lit



HORIZON BLUE Unlit & Lit

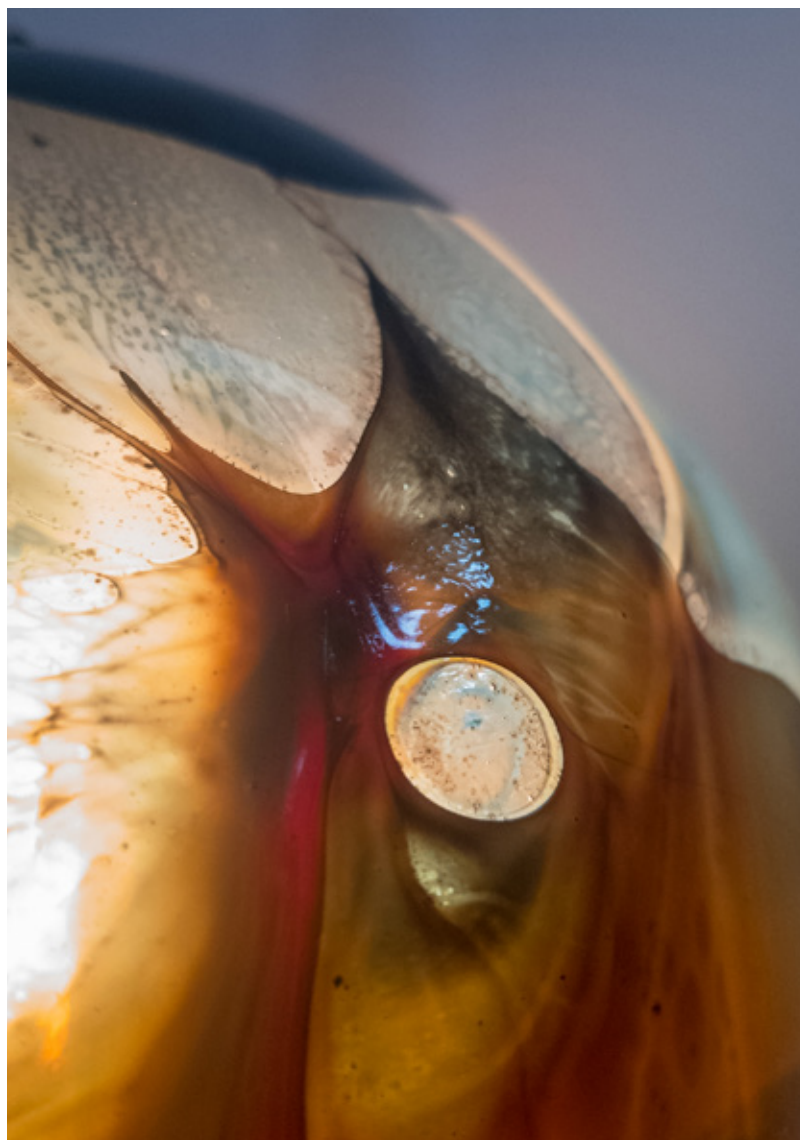


Detail: Surface of HORIZON BLUE Lit

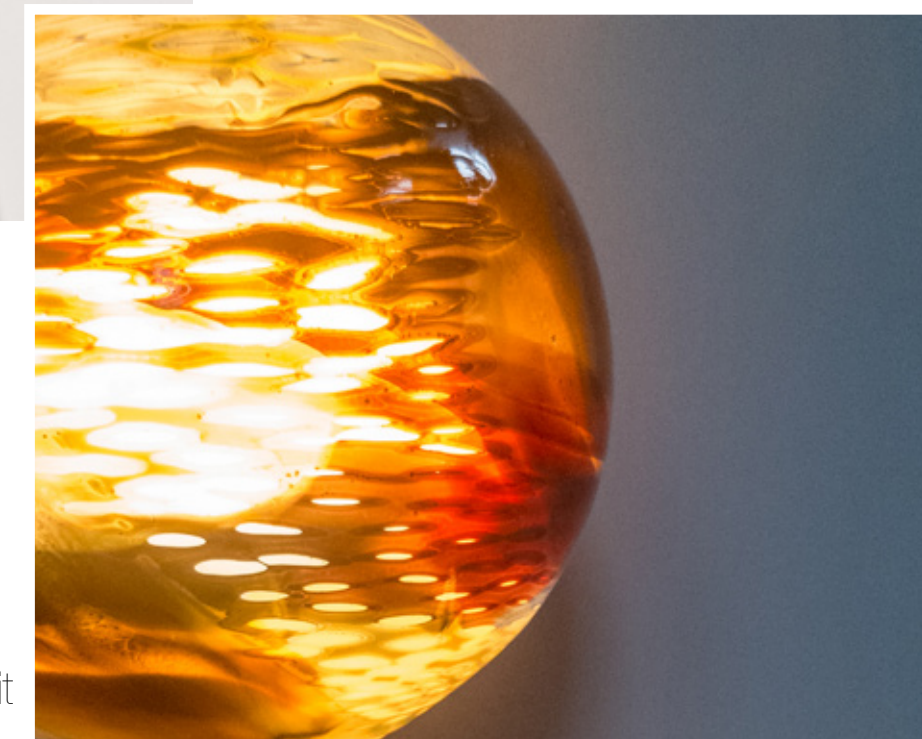




GARDEN Lit



Detail: Surface of GARDEN Unit



Detail: Surface of GARDEN Lit



Detail: Surface of STREAM I & II Lit



STREAM I & II Unlit



STREAM I Lit



INDIGO Unlit



INDIGO Lit



ESTUARINE Unlit & Lit



Detail: Surface of ESTUARINE Lit

Gallery



Detail: Engraving on ANENOME I Mini



ANENOME I & II Mini





Detail: Surface of BLUE POINT I



BLUE POINT I & II, BLUE POINT Mini



Detail: Surface of BLUE POINT I



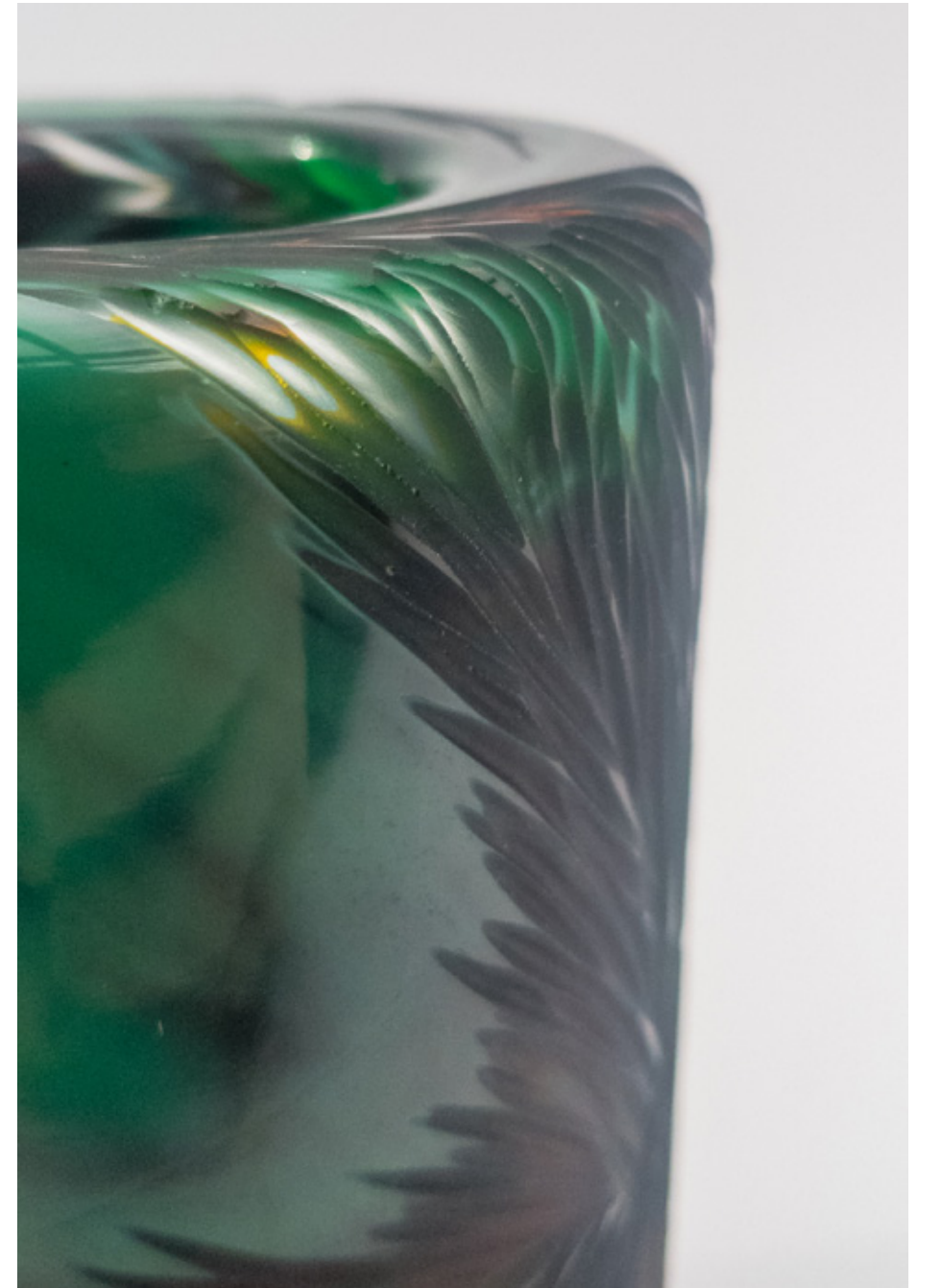
BLUE POINT I & II, BLUE POINT Mini



NEW BLUE



TIDAL I & II Mini

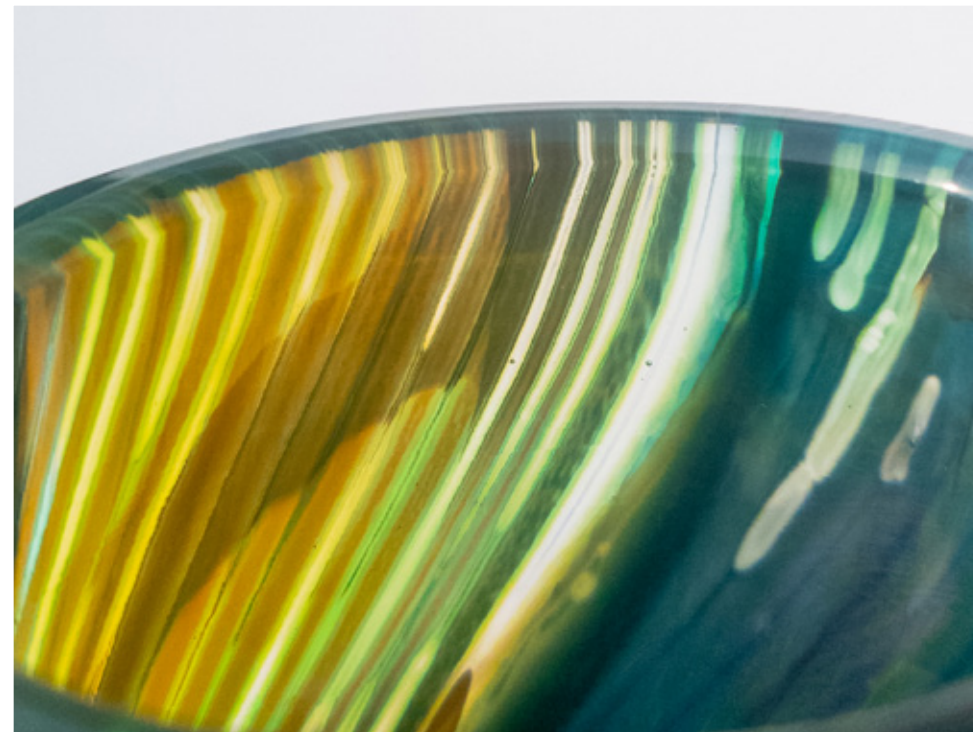


Detail: Engraving on TIDAL II Mini

CONFLUENCE I & II



CONFLUENCE I & II



Detail: Lip of CONFLUENCE I

BASIN Mini



BASIN Mini





POOLS

POOLS



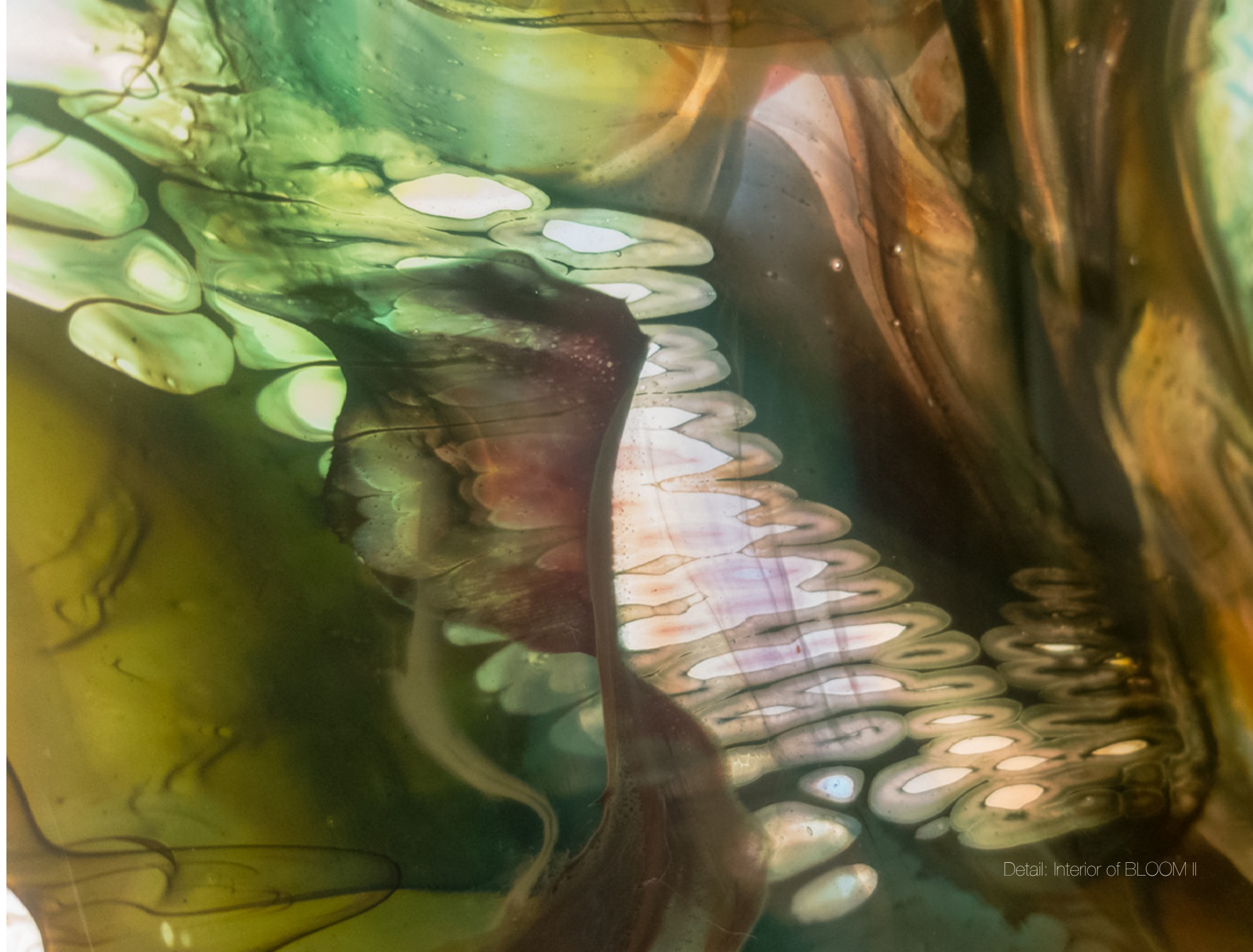
RIPPLE



BLOOM I & II



Detail: Engraving on BLOOM I



Detail: Interior of BLOOM II

SODALITE Mini



SODALITE Mini

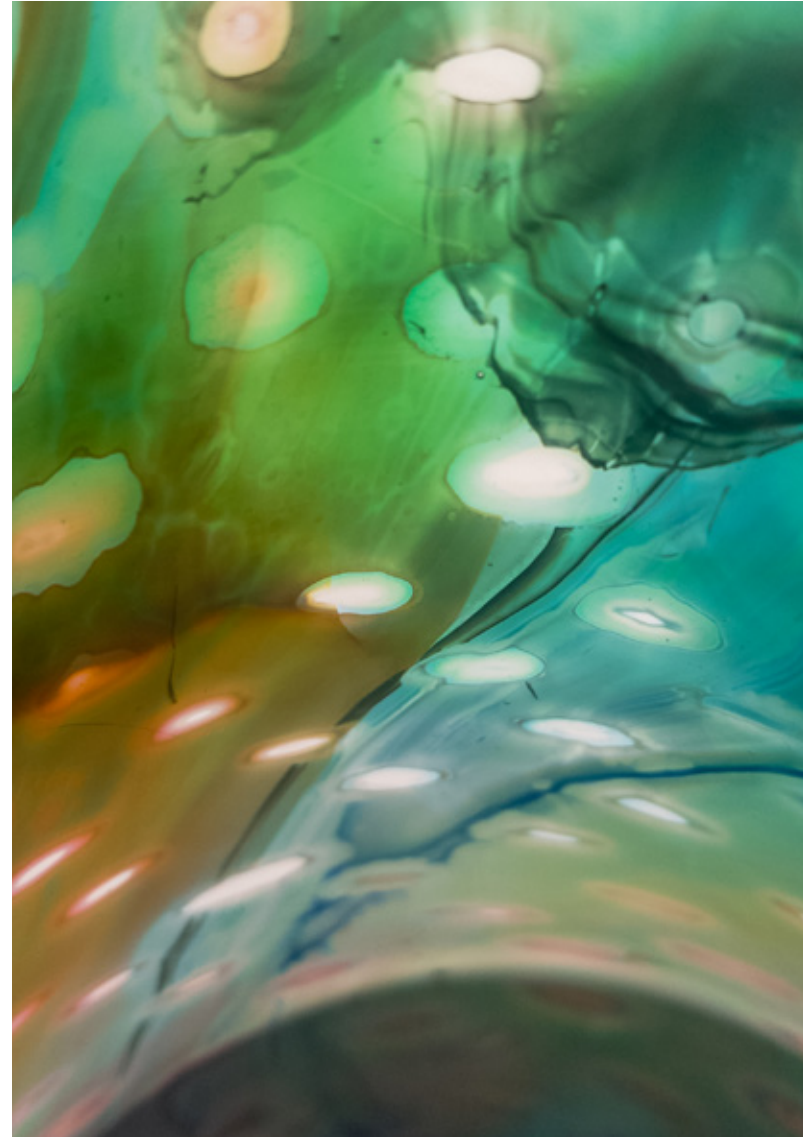


VIRIDIAN Mini



VIRIDIAN Mini

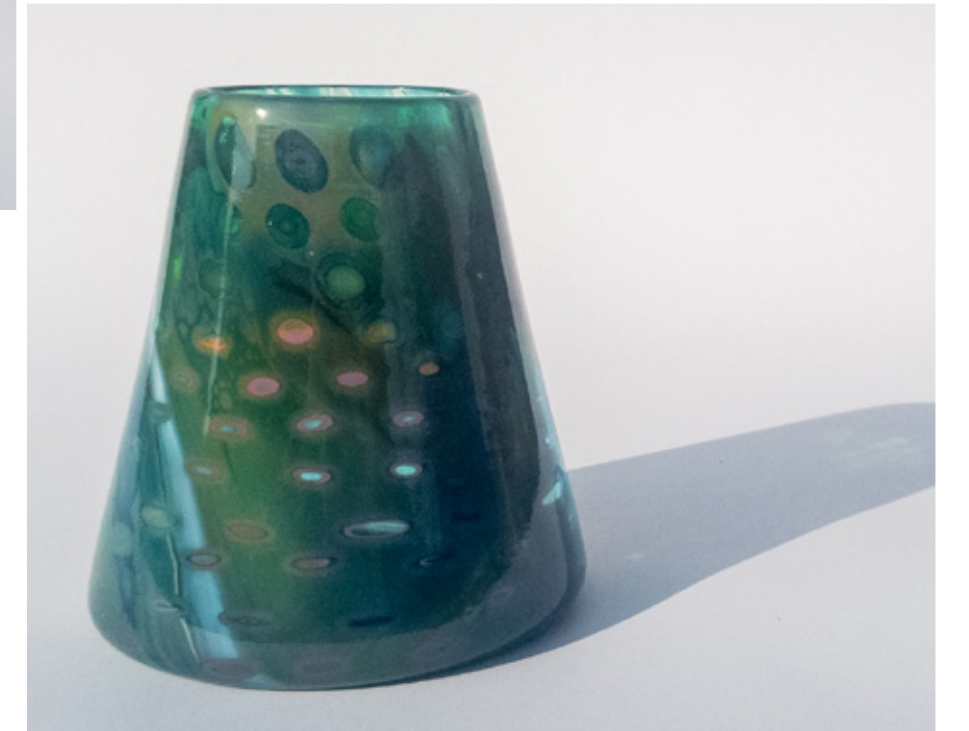




Detail: Exterior and Interior of CENOTE

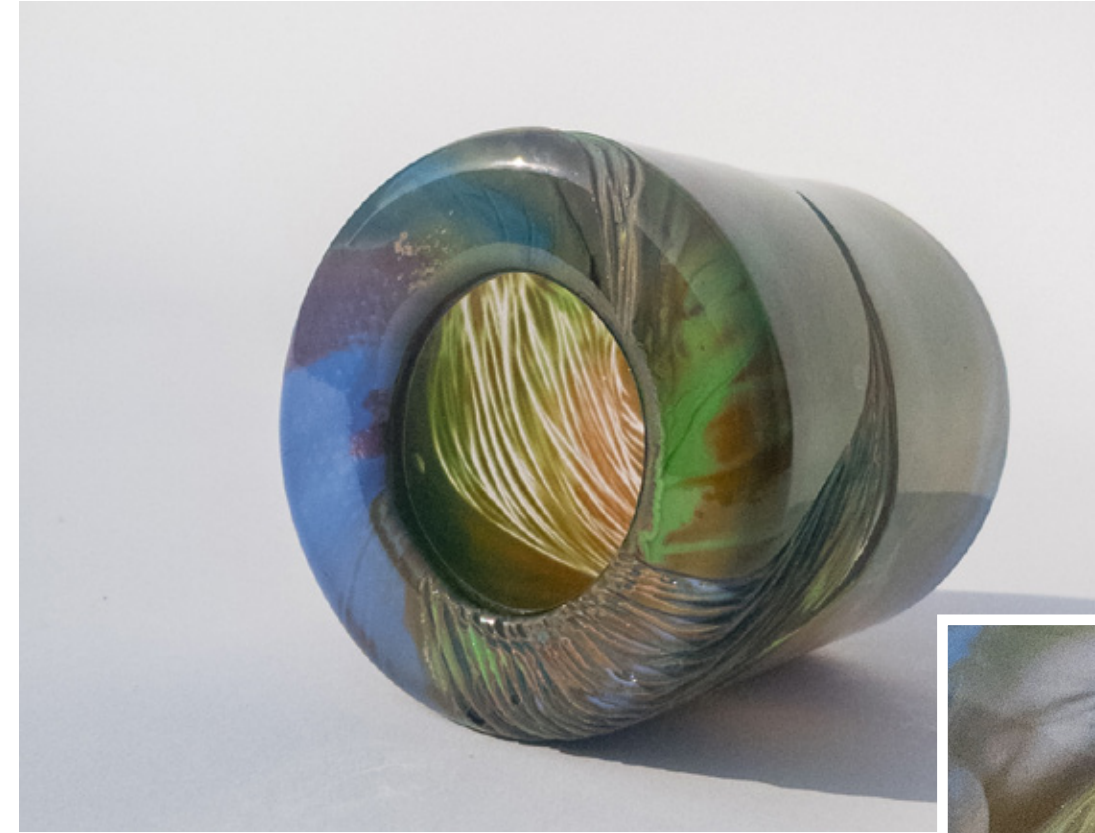


CENOTE

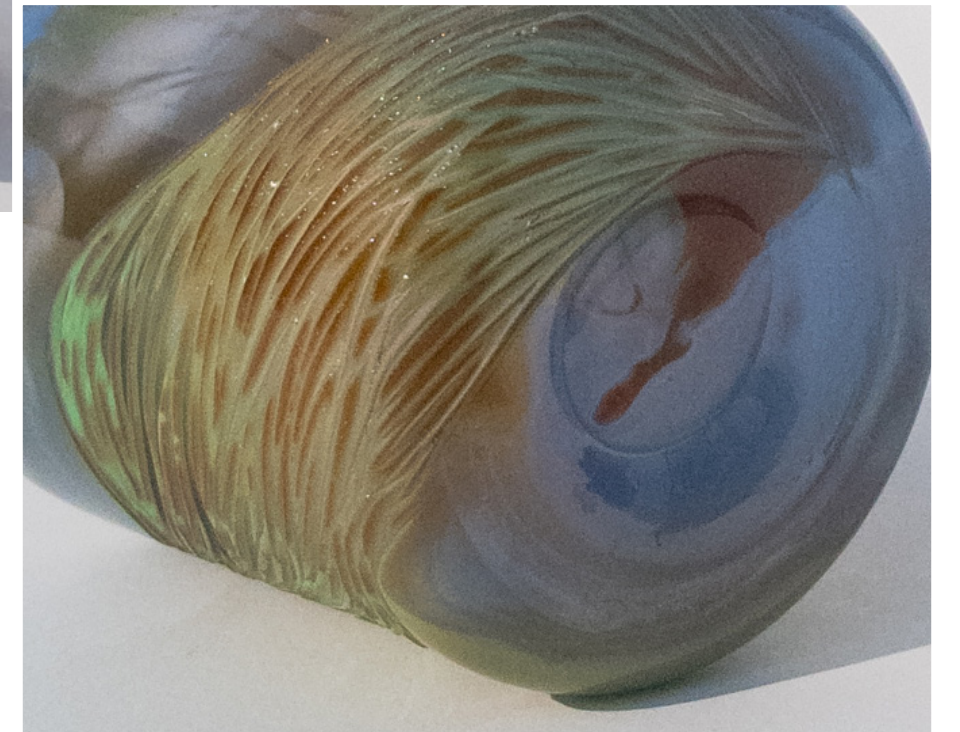




RIPARIAN Mini



Detail: Interior of RIPARIAN Mini



Detail: Bottom of RIPARIAN Mini



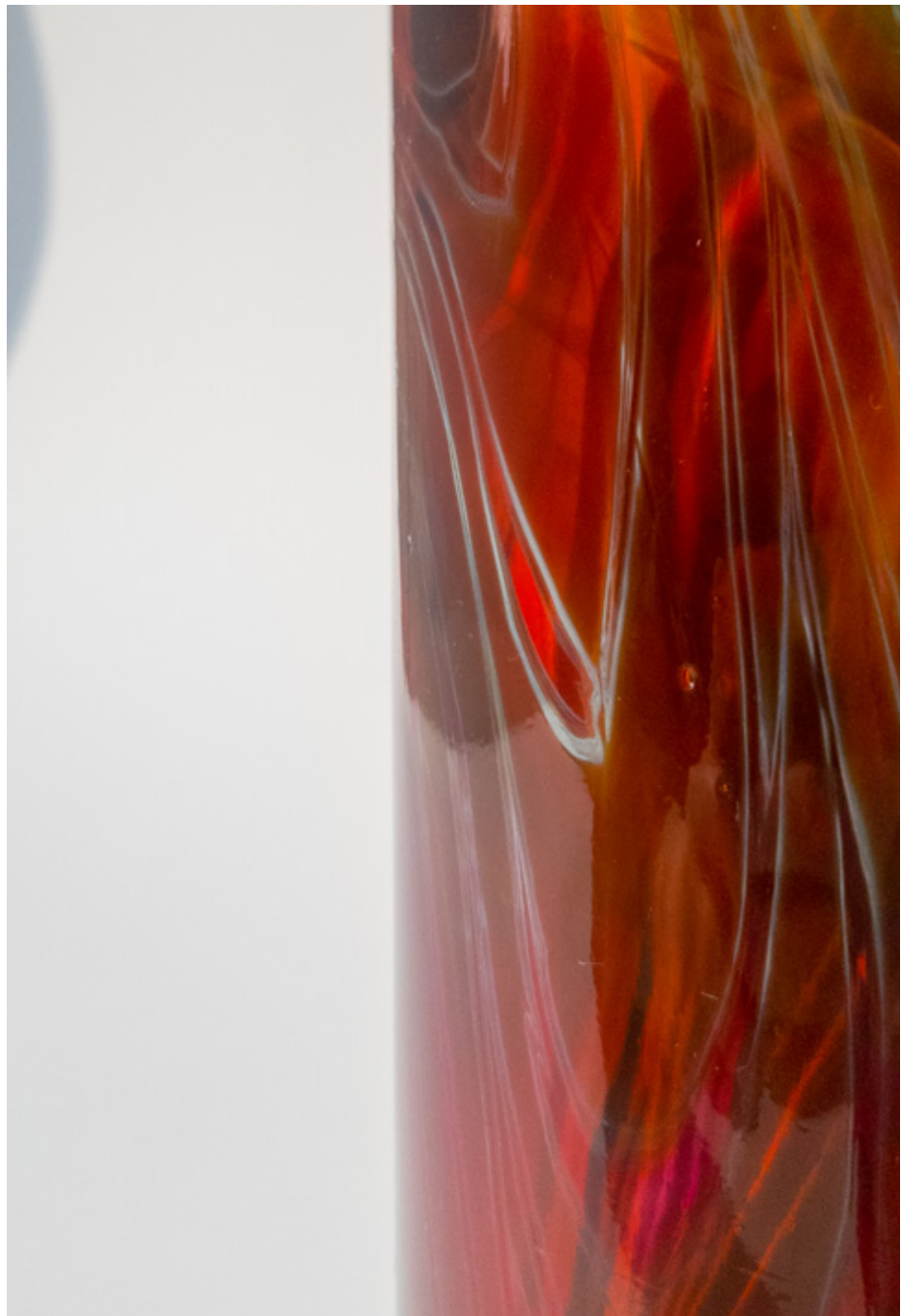
SHALLOWS I & II



Detail: Surfaces of SHALLOWS I & II



Detail: Surfaces of SHALLOWS I & II



Detail: Surface of SCARLET LAKE II

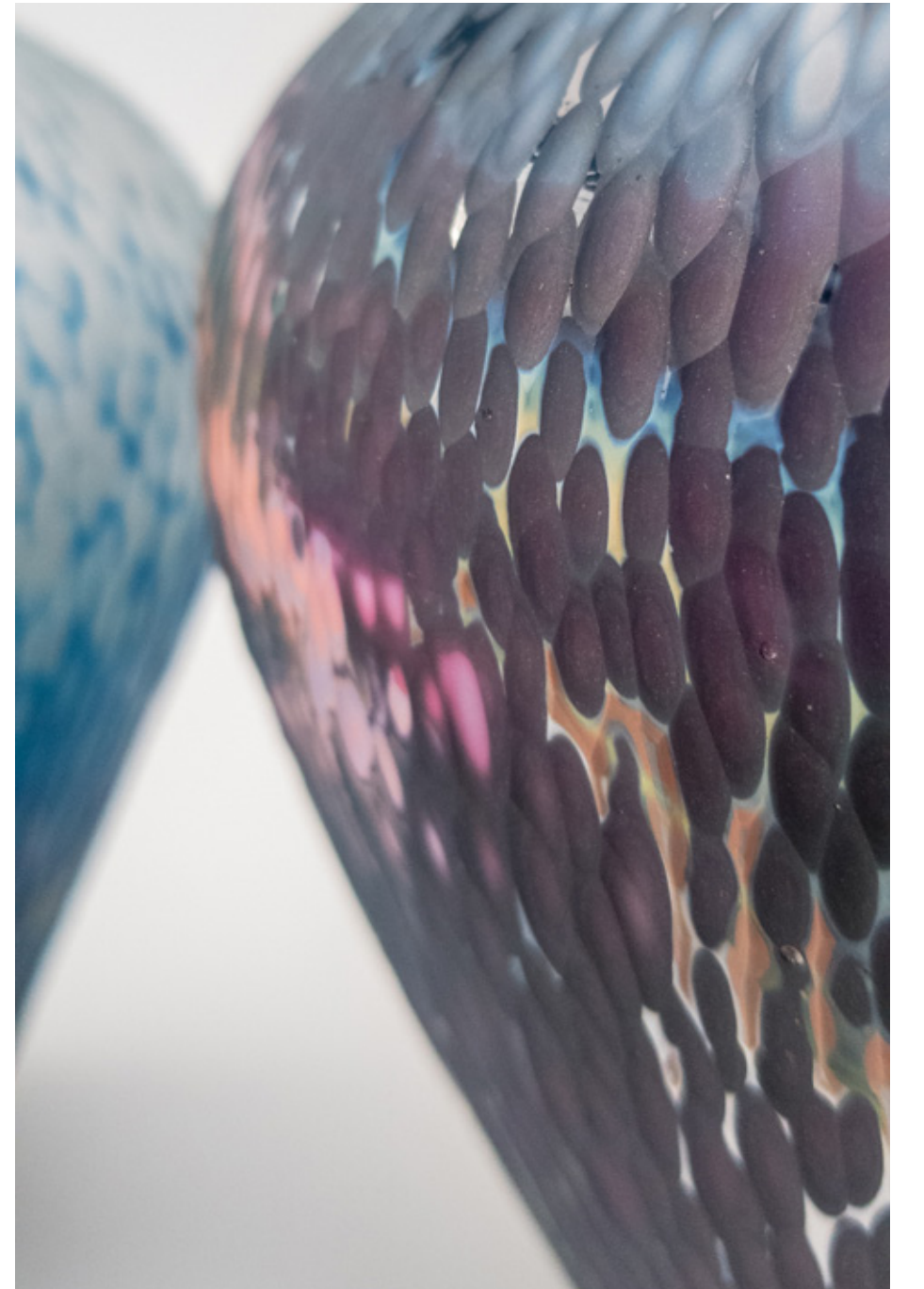


Detail: SCARLET LAKE I & II

SCARLET LAKE I & II



Detail: Interior of SCARLET LAKE I

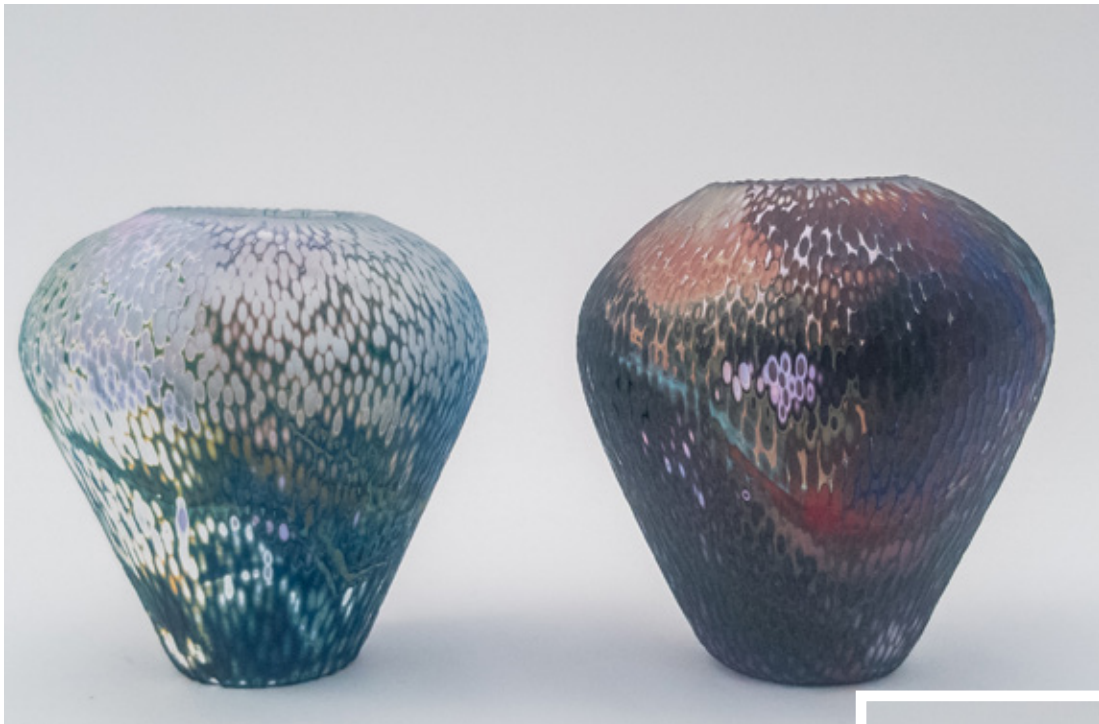


Detail: Engraved Surface of HEAVY MIST

MIST & HEAVY MIST



MIST & HEAVY MIST



Conclusion

After spending a year developing this collection, I have finished with more ideas for form and surface, and a desire to perfect everything. In the same breath, I feel like I am nowhere near finished. I hope to continue to develop a language of pattern, and explore the relationship between the interior and the exterior through the process of engraving. Transforming these pieces into lighting was incredibly rewarding. It became a way to further connect with the material in a way that will remain when they are no longer in my hands. It allowed the pieces to take on a completely different character. I want to continue to create work that invites a conversation, where the viewer shares their interpretation of the surface with me. These conversations often lead to new colour considerations, or how to approach carving. They are one of the most valued aspects of this collection.

I often feel like I am left with more questions than answers, and the need to seek them out. What are other ways to convey the notion of “purposiveness without a purpose”? How do I continue to satisfy my own imagination and intellect, while also creating work that feels inviting? With that being said, glass has acted as a bridge between my artistic endeavors, and most importantly, it is a process I never tire of.



Image List

Image 1: Leatrice Eiseman, The Complete Color Harmony Pantone Edition. 2017.

Image 2: Leatrice Eiseman, The Complete Color Harmony Pantone Edition. 2017.

Image 3: Tom Hegen, N°TSSIII0. United States, 2021. TomHegen.com

Image 4: Tom Hegen, N°TLISI_03. Chile, 2022. TomHegen.com

Image 5: Tom Hegen, N°TGPS07. Iceland, 2018. TomHegen.com

Image 6: Curt Hammerly, Purple Rain on Cubes. 2022. Instagram.com/p/CaV2PA2LYXJ

Image 7: Curt Hammerly, 16oz Brain 'Fire Coral' Mug. 2022. HammerlyCeramics.com

Image 8: Curt Hammerly, 23oz Brain 'Fire Coral' Mug. 2022. HammerlyCeramics.com

Image 9: Kari Molstad, Curve III. 2021. instagram.com/p/CTKNWZRKB8i

Image 10: Kari Molstad, Pond. 2018. KariMolstad.com

Image 11: Helle Mardahl, Bon Bon Table Lamp - Violet. 2022. HelleMardahl.com

Image 12: Helle Mardahl, Bon Bon Table Lamp - Violet. 2022. HelleMardahl.com

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