

concerto

the czech art of glass

Classico

GALERI PETRONAS, KUALA LUMPUR, 2. 5. – 11. 6. 2017



Embassy of the Czech Republic
in Kuala Lumpur

GALERI PETRONAS



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EMBASSY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC & GALERI PETRONAS
PRESENTS

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Glassico

Czech glassmaking is legendary, a summation of the harmonies which emerge from the glassmaker's heart, head and hands and the synergy of craftsmanship and creativity. These combine to form a harmony similar to that found in musical concertos, and the Concerto Glassico exhibition reveals the secrets of the glassmaker's art and craft.

This exhibition has been inspired by GLASS DIALOGUES,
publication of leading Czech art glass photographer Miroslav Vojtěchovský.

The publication GLASS DIALOGUES
is a photographic encounter with artists, prominent figures in Czech glassmaking,
who have influenced the development of the art of glass by their thinking,
personal qualities, activities and by the results of their work, and have contributed
to the distinctiveness and high standard of Czech glassmaking.

We are happy to present in our gallery a part of unique works by Czech glassmaking masters.

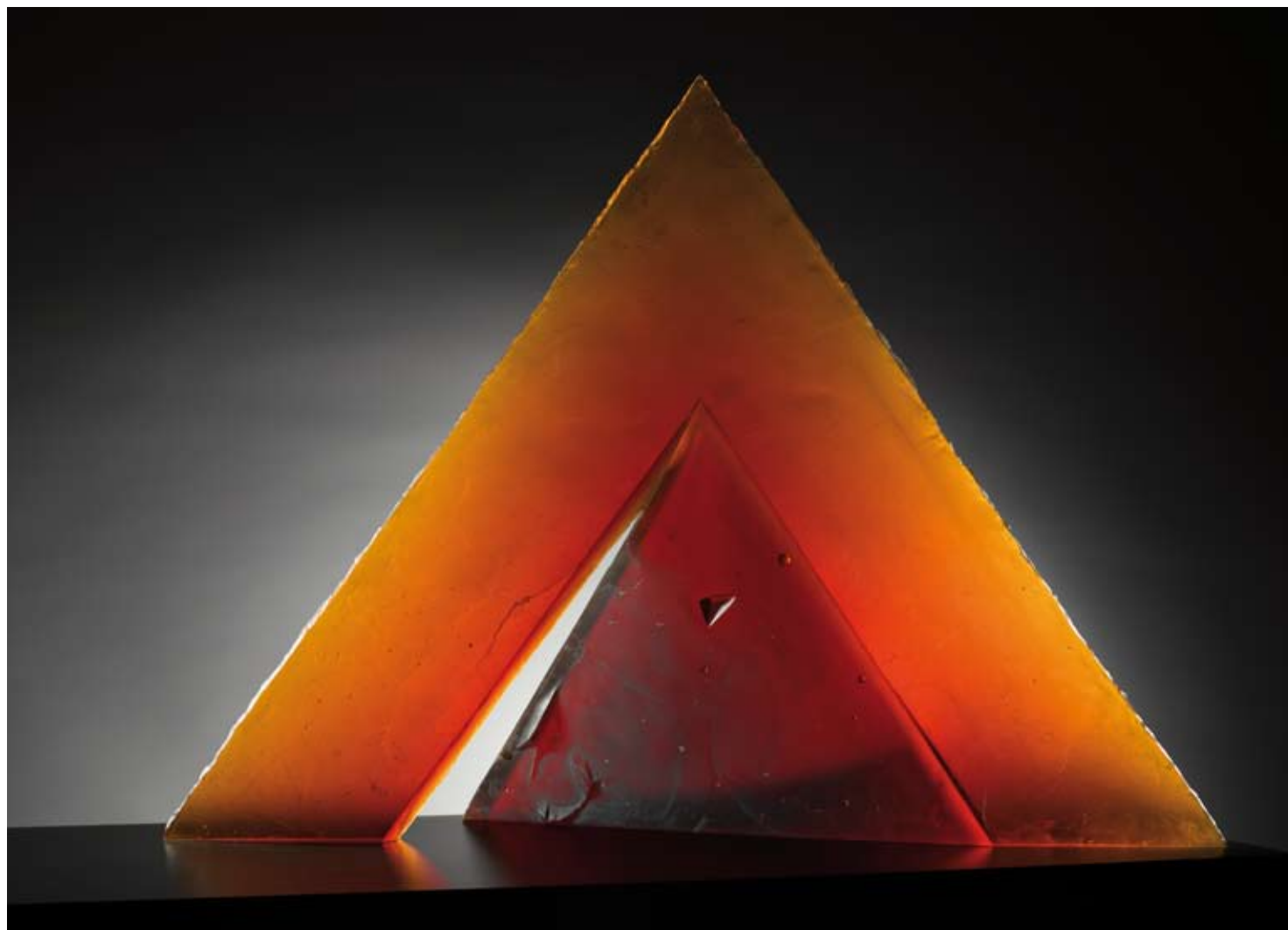
Stanislav Libenský & Jaroslava Brychtová

1921 – 2002

1925

An extraordinarily fortunate fusion of artistic talents, each complementing the other. While Professor Libenský's drawings were masterly, he was at the same time a conceptual creator. Jaroslava Brychtová, descended from the family of the renowned glassmaking educator Jaroslav Brychta, excelled in developing the graphic ideas of her second husband into sculptural compositions. Thanks to this creative range, together they produced a set of works unparalleled in glassmaking globally. Proceeding from Stanislav Libenský's fascinating set of extremely thin-walled vases, connecting the singularity of the drawing with the brilliantly mastered combination of the etching technique and work with enamels from the second half of 1940s, to the fused sculptures of "zoomorphic stones" set in the partition of the Brussels pavilion, they became co-authors of the "Czech glass miracle" at Expo 1958, an even more distinctive follow-up to Ludvika Smrčková's success at the Paris international exhibition of decorative and industrial arts in 1925.

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OPEN PYRAMIDE | MELTED GLASS, POLISHED | 2003

Vladimír Kopecký

1931

„...And don't forget that there also exists something like intellectual kitsch...," he remarked, thus adding the duplicity of fake intellectuality and the social thrashing-out of catchy, but just as hollow fashionable phrases to the "bundle" of all the common forms of cheap pandering. Vladimír Kopecký thus got to the very marrow of his thoughtful and moderately unpretentious creation: ordinary glass panels covered with simple geometrical shapes, multiplied and combined into an illusion of almost infinite space...

No wonder that the quiet period up to the time of Rothkovsky's contemplative creation was necessarily followed by an era of sudden explosions of creative forces, when Vladimír Kopecký charted, using Jackson Pollock's method, the process of creating his works of art...

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TOWER | FLAT GLASS, POLISHED | 1980

Vladimír Procházka

1947

A long time before I met Vladimír Procházka in person, I had been photographing his resourceful architectural installations, be it the luminous object in Prague Loretto, or the geometrical object composed of light-conducting rods passing from the façade into the lobby of the KOVO Palace in the district of Holešovice. Later on, when he found his way to my studio, he surprised me by perspicuous explanation of each of the sculptures he was bringing. His seemingly abstract glass objects always had a verbally explainable basis, or even a small story. While artists of the interwar avant-garde resorted to stylisation, breaking the bond between reality and its image mainly in order to be constantly confronted with the reality they were portraying, Vladimír Procházka enjoys the possibility of revealing these connections, and I think that he is even amused when viewers acquainted with his procedures themselves try to discover the thought context.

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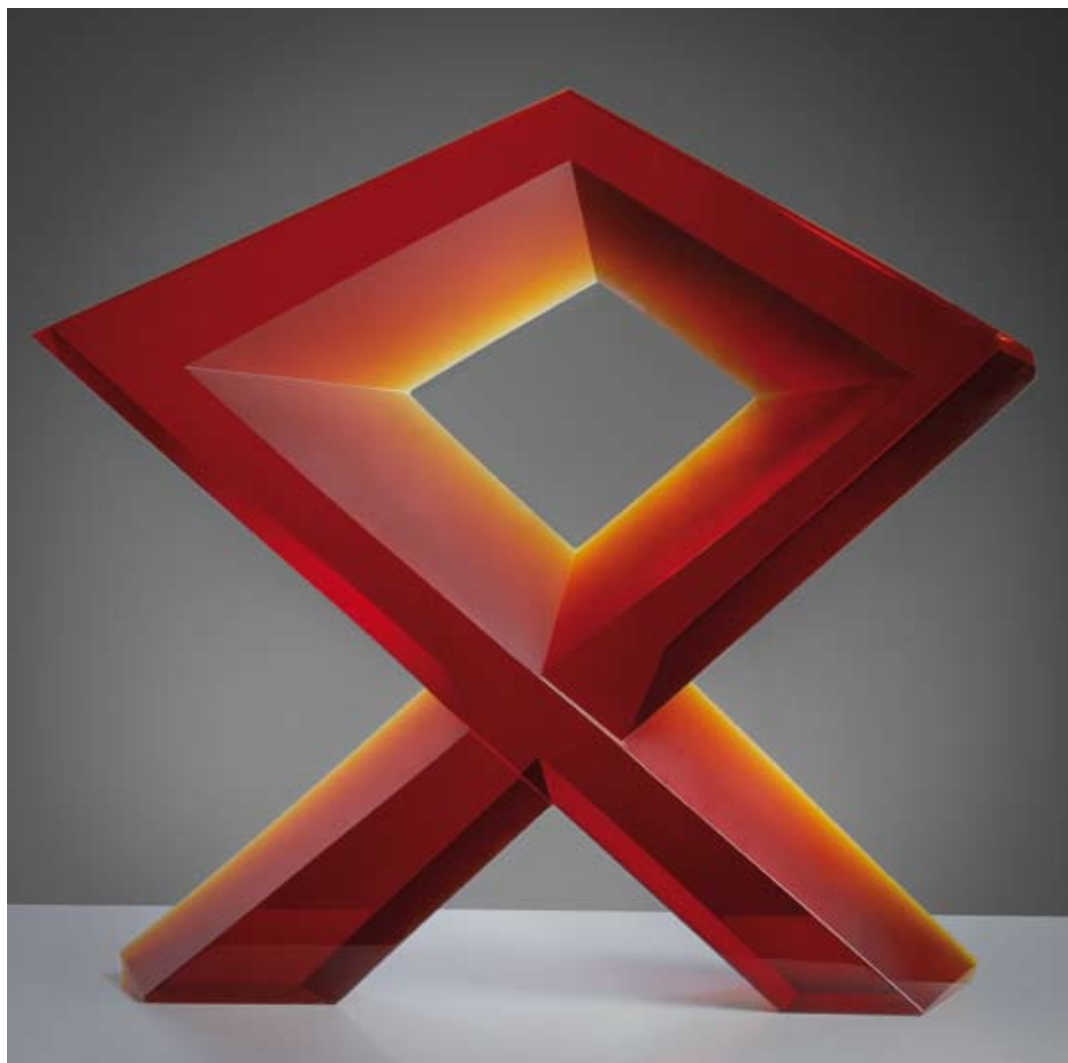
MELTING ICEBERG | MELTED GLASS, POLISHED | 2003

Jaroslav Svoboda

1938

Unlike many other glass artists, Jaroslav Svoboda did not continue his studies after graduation from the Secondary Vocational School in Železný Brod at the Applied Arts College in Prague, but studied history at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University. His view was in many respects different, and not uninteresting; and as regards honesty of approach to the glassmaking craft, with which became acquainted in the glass-cutting workshop of his father, he ranks among the most versatile and hardworking Czech glass artists. Already as manager of the Škrdlovice glassworks he took great care of its development, while paying equal attention to the artistic quality of its output - and so he often invited to cooperation leading glass artists whom he was meeting at glass symposia. In the 1990s he started building AG Svoboda Glassworks in Karlov near Škrdlovice, thus making true the dream.

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SOHO | MOLD - MELTED AND CUT GLASS | 2010

Marian Karel

1944

What I admire most about Marian is precisely his ability to pass from one sculpting material to another and still stay himself. Some time ago, he needed just several sheets of glass for creating, in the park on the Kampa Island in Prague, fictitious three-dimensional bodies transformed by daylight depending on which direction it was coming from. Soon afterwards he created a giant, minimalistic, almost puristically clean metal sculpture, followed by a surprise in the form of a thoughtfully calm "Illusive Cube", emerging from an optic play of the skilfully arranged flat composition of glass sheets.

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THE THEORY OF FORMS BY PLATO | STOPSOL SUPERSILVER CLEAR TEMPERED | 2015

Oldřich Plíva

1946

He came to my mini-studio at the beginning of the 1970s together with Marian Karel, and apart from very similar work programmes – namely exploring the optical properties of the glass mass, transformed into architecture of basic geometric shapes – they had in common one quality which could not go unnoticed: they did not say a single serious word, tried to turn everything into humour, though their work was very serious in its essence, and inspired with philosophical contemplations. They were a few years older than me, but in fact we are of the same generation; and in the 1970s they were the first artists of glass with whom I could converse at the level of friendship, while always feeling that each of our debates enriched me: knowledge from different sources of schooling was bringing fruit. This is where the signals were coming from that it was necessary to talk with people working with different media, to cross the borders between different disciplines.

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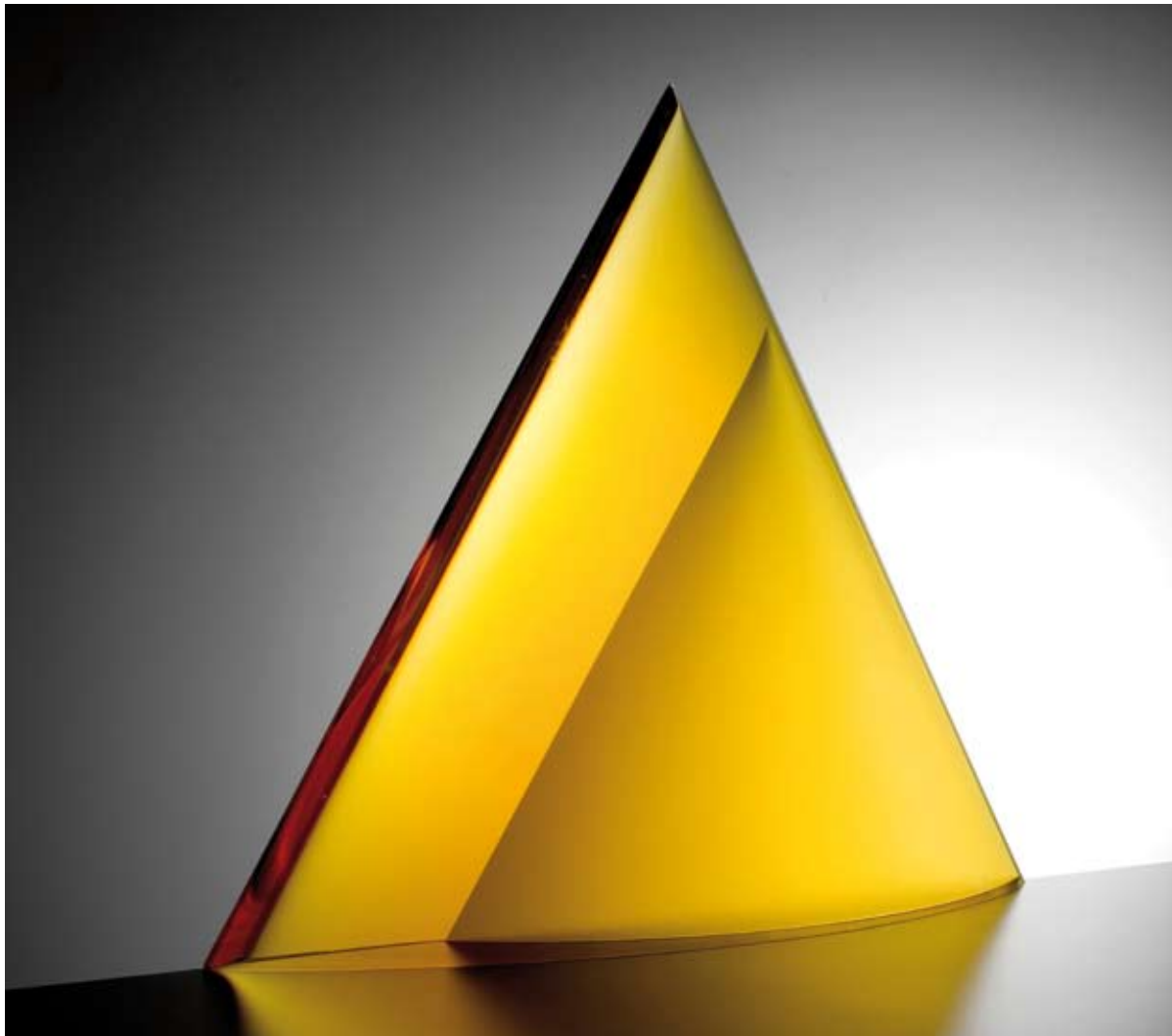
BOBÁNEK | CUT, POLISH CRYSTAL GLASS | 2015

Petr Hora

1949

However impossible it might seem that the “minimalism” could ever be exceeded, Petr Hora is doing exactly that, moreover further accentuating the applied principle of colour contrast. The theory of Johannes Itten, the leading teacher of the legendary Bauhaus school, defines seven colour contrasts in light and shadow, and Petr Hora demonstrates by his works how the colour palette can be lit up by thickening and, on the contrary, the thinning of the material. Through the thickness (or thinness) of the material Hora modulates the gradation of light coming from a single source, no matter whether natural, such as sunshine, or artificial, and intensifies the drama of the colour play by unusually precise perfection.

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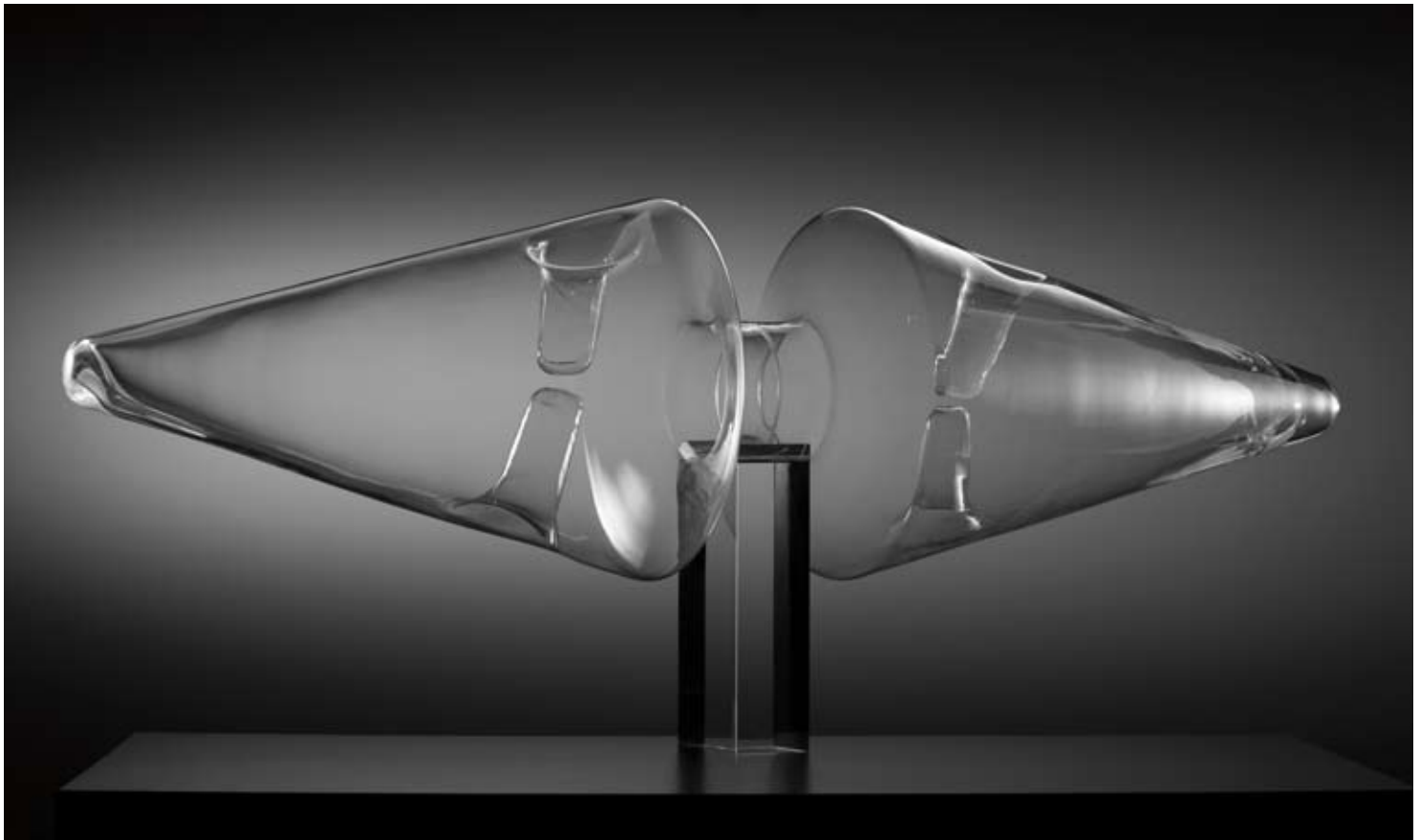
TRIBIT| CAST, CUT, POLISHED AND ACCIDPOLISHED GLASS | 2016

Pavel Hlava

1924 – 2003

"You make the photos of our objects too distinctive, while what we need more are photographs of a documentary nature, for a gallery or even better, for a museum...", Mr Hlava told me once, which quite annoyed me. I always strove to present even an ordinary drinking glass as the small work of a sculptor, to photograph a glass sculpture as not a dumb piece but as an expressive object. But later on, by then more level-headed, I had to admit that there's some sense in what he'd said. A photographer should seek to express the ideas with which the glassmaker creates his work, and therefore he needs to listen to the maker's views much more carefully. Through the photograph he can thus at least try to visualise the latent semantic levels for the viewer's cursory glance, and if possible, to express even what was not intended by the glassmaker but offered itself to the camera lens in special studio lighting. He taught me a valuable lesson...

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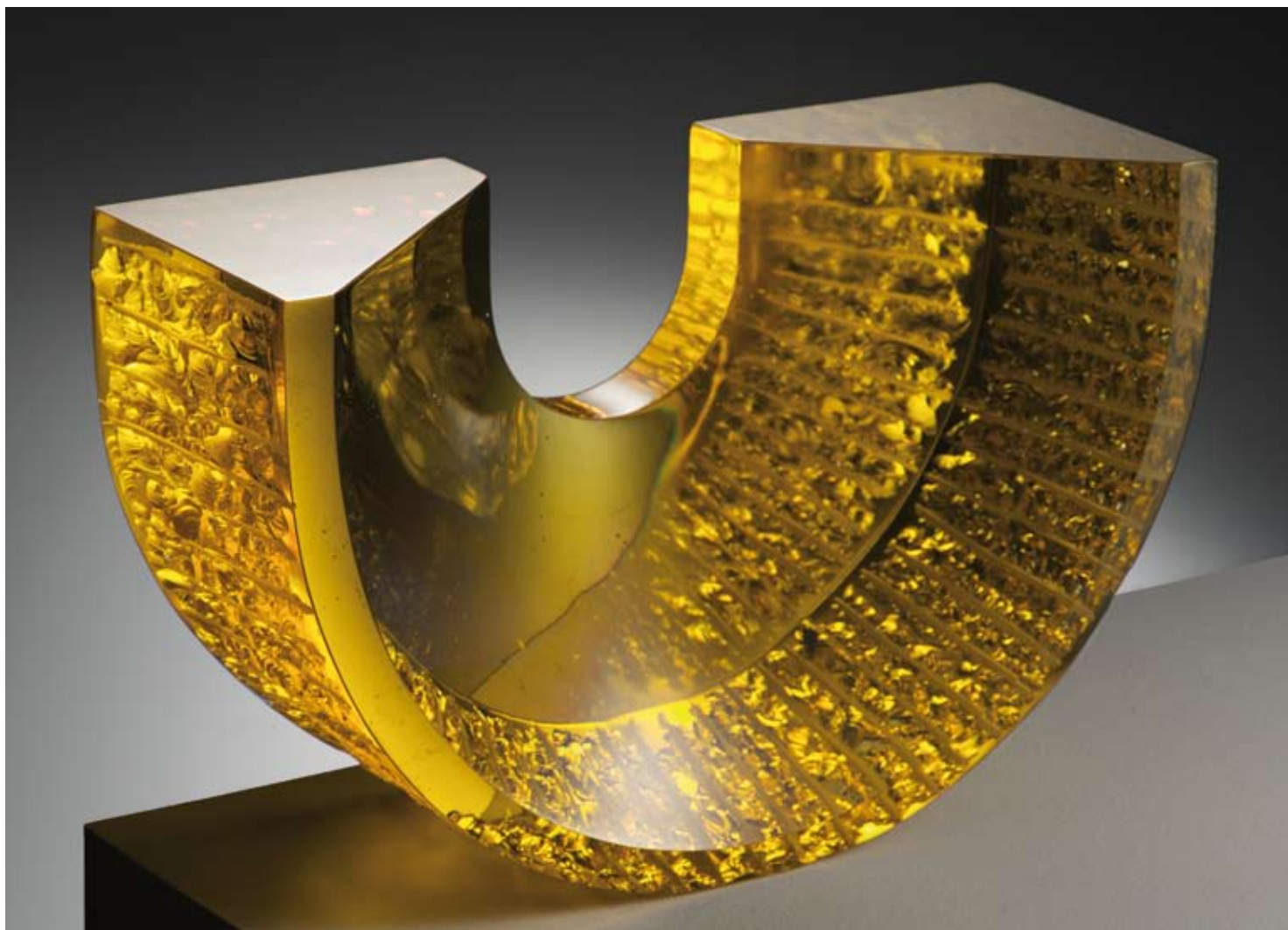
CONNECTION | BLOWN COLORLESS GLASS WITH PRICKS, CUT, POLISHED AND GLUED | 1975

Vladimir Klein

1950

An encounter with Vladimír Klein bears a stamp of singularity, just as does his artistic output. He is a 'solitaire', an artist whose creation directly proceeds from new artistic ideas and trends shaped at the turn of the 1950s and 60s, in a dialogue of the Czech glassmaking with the world artistic events. Klein's singular creation, close to free sculptural expression, confidently enters the modern architectural space and uplifts it by its uniqueness. Klein belongs to the generation of glass designers who absolutely understand glass, know what they can expect of it, and what they can achieve by its perfect processing in the world of limitless fantasy. Every encounter with Vladimír Klein's work is a confirmation of its singularity, excitability and originality, its quality of a product not only inspired by the artist's Muse but also masterfully handled from the technical viewpoint as well as in terms of the thought content, in a perfect symbiosis.

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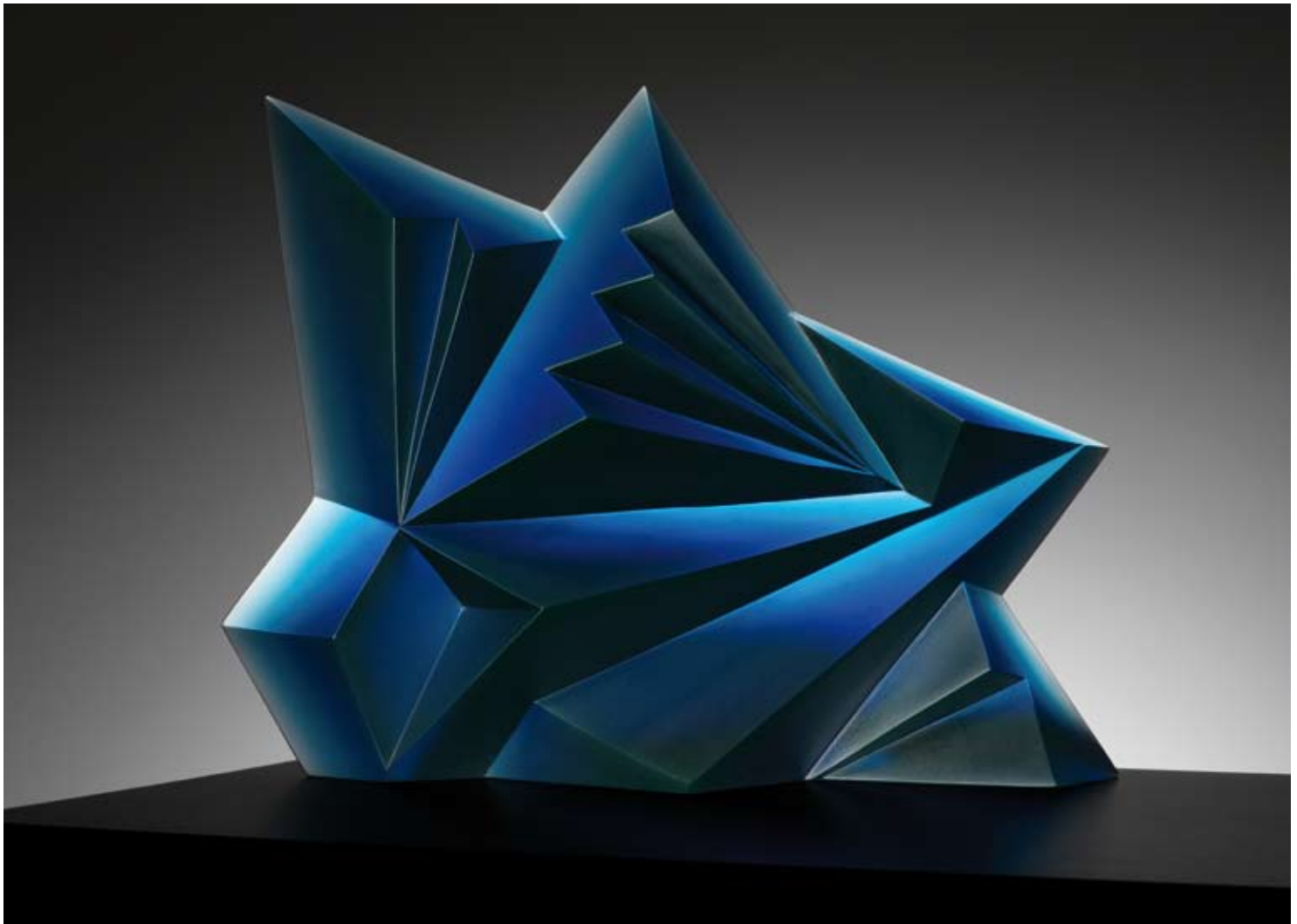
ASAHI/RISSING SUN | KILN CASTED, CUT, POLISHED AND CHIPPED OPTICAL GLASS | 2016

František Janák

1951

I got to know František when he was still a student in the studio of Professor Libenský at the Applied Arts College in Prague. It was interesting to observe his approach to work in which the influence of the renowned and historically significant Secondary Vocational School of glassmaking in Kamenický Šenov mingled together with the star-studded environment of the Prague college. František of course clear-sightedly drew only the good elements from both, while firmly standing on his own feet. This was getting evident particularly when he started himself teaching at the same vocational school where he had been learning the principles of the glassmaking craft. That was when he grasped the importance of adhering to the elementary rules of honest attitude to studies and creation. His faith in the goodness of honest approach clearly carried him over the barriers of fashionable and passing trends to the mystery of creation, and made him a successful pedagogue in his country and abroad.

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ICEBERG III. | MOLD MELTED, CUT AND HAND LAPPED | 2016

Jiří Pačinek

1972

When I entered the nicely renovated historical building in Kunratice. I was surprised not only by the charming interior of the glassworks, but above all by the incredibly friendly and relaxed atmosphere of the workplace where hard manly work was done by sensitive hands with imagination and perceptive soul.

Jiří Pačinek is a hearty man, said my friend when sending me after the glass magician to the traditionally glassmaking district in North Bohemia, and I bore him out from the first moment. Only a great personality can create an atmosphere so pleasant and conducive to work. The glassmaker who fell in love with his future profession thanks to the extraordinary performance of a brilliant Czech actor and man with a sensitive soul in an ordinary television serial is such personality.

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RUDĚNA | HAND MADE AND BLOW CRYSTAL GLASS | 2016

Tomáš Hlavička

1950

Combining glass panes with structures made of precious-metal laminas is still the main working technique of Tomáš Hlavička. Attention is concentrated inside the object. Within this illusive space, enclosed in a glass block, the author develops an effective magic created by a tangle of lines, shapes, shines and colours of the gold and silver laminas. The impressiveness of the works lies precisely in the contrast between the austere form and the spontaneity or precise composition of the complicated structures with which it is filled. In the first place, they express enchantment by the wealth of structural decorations that can be found all around. The bowl-shaped and parallelepiped objects carry glances of deep pools with algae, tangled shrubbery, water vortexes, fluttering of grass stalks on a meadow, shines of fish scales etc. Hlavička's works transform ordinary motifs into rare relics, mysterious objects with an internal world of their own.

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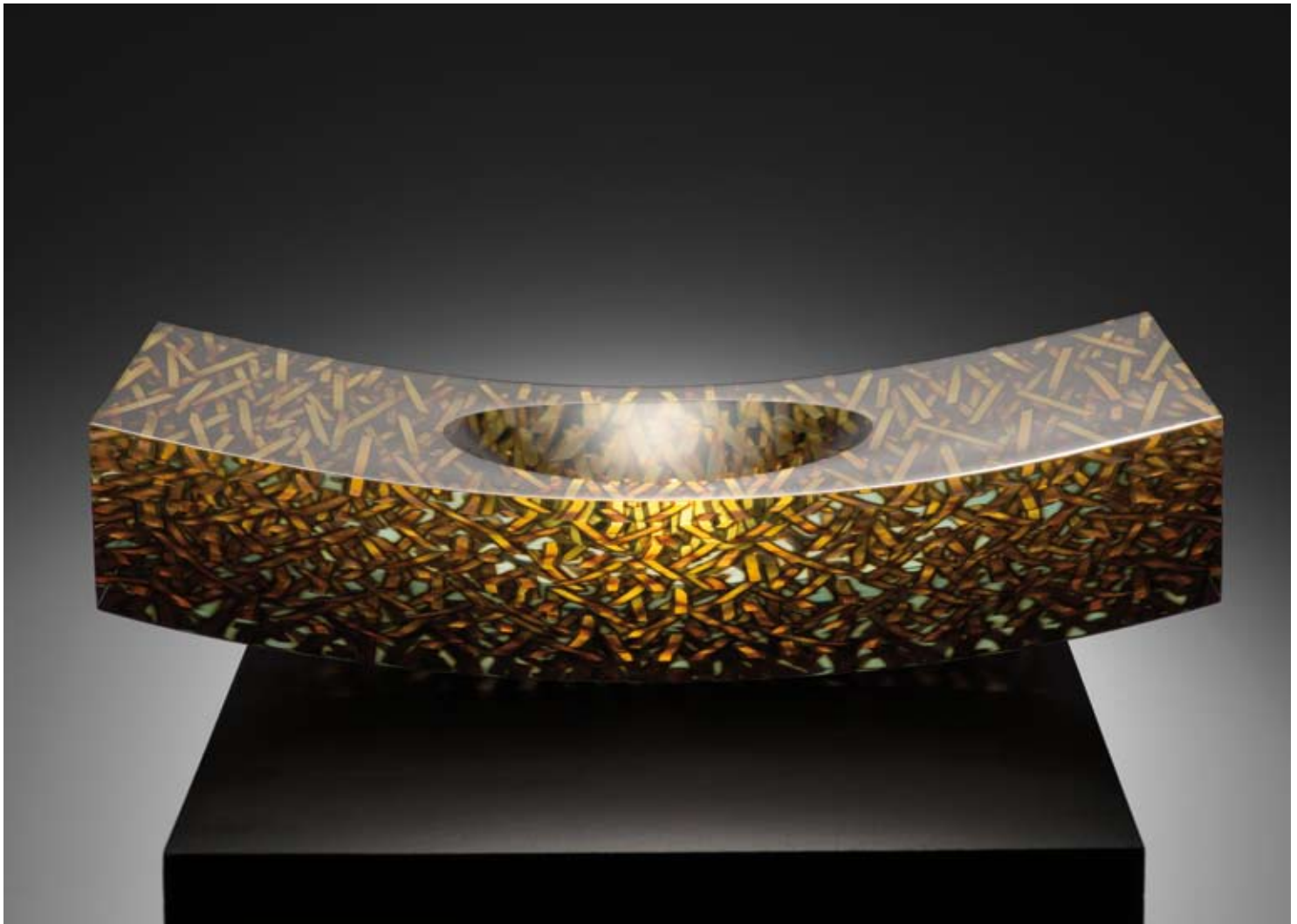


PLATE | FUSED FLOAT GLASS WITH SILVER STRIPS, CUT AND POLISHED | 2016

