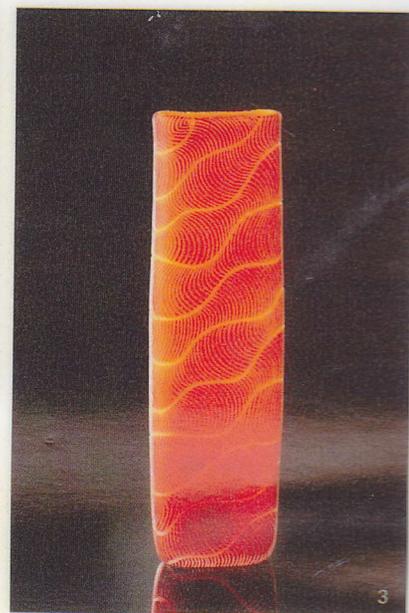


Art of the Matter

Though some may bemoan the state of the Hong Kong art scene, there is often a lot more going on than we tend to assume. Along with museums, auctions, universities and galleries, it seems that now even the corporate sector is beginning to sit up and take note of the art world. *hinge* tracked down a number of prominent Hong Kong art galleries to see what they're about, what they're up to, and how they feel about the corporate world going arty - as well as getting a view or two from the other side of the fence.



**GAFFER
STUDIO
GLASS**

If you've never given much thought to glass as a high art form, a space filler or a centrepiece, it may be time to visit Jules Lambe's Gaffer Studio Glass for an education. Showcasing bright, strategically placed treasures, the space is large, light and airy and according to its owner, is currently the only gallery in the region to specialise in unique studio glass pieces. Introduced to the art form by her mother (also a collector), Lambe has long had a great respect for the artists that she now exhibits. "A glass blower has a seven year apprenticeship before they can comfortably make something - just to get the basics. A lot work for 15 years before they hit on an idea," she says. "I can slap paint on a canvas overnight, and though it doesn't make it a form of art, I wouldn't be able to do this with glass in a couple of years."

The glass art scene is one fuelled by names and reputations. "Buyers want the equivalent of Picasso in art," explains Lambe, meaning those with work in museums such as London's Victoria & Albert or New York's Corning Museum of Glass. As a result Gaffer exhibits the big names in the industry - Ben and Kathy Edols, Jerry King, Jane Bruce - as well as promoting the occasional newcomer. The Gaffer Studio client base is turning slowly corporate, though Lambe admits that the process will take time. She notes that many interior designers who have wandered through are now seeing the potential for alcoves where they would once have left blank wall. The studio has done a few proposals for developments, though Lambe admits that many corporations don't yet understand the expense of a medium led by artists who may only create eight pieces a year.

Coming Soon: 10 November to 10 December will see an exhibition by world-class Australian gaffers - Mark Thiele and Matthew Larwood. Thiele, who emulates the colours and patterns of the Outback, uses various techniques to achieve warm, opaque, textured pieces. Larwood is better known for his control of large, free blown glass, and will be showcasing the smooth, translucent, geometrical products of traditional Venetian techniques.

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