

Creative partnership of glass fluidity



KERRY-ANNE COUSINS

Benjamin Edols and Kathy Elliott - studio glass.

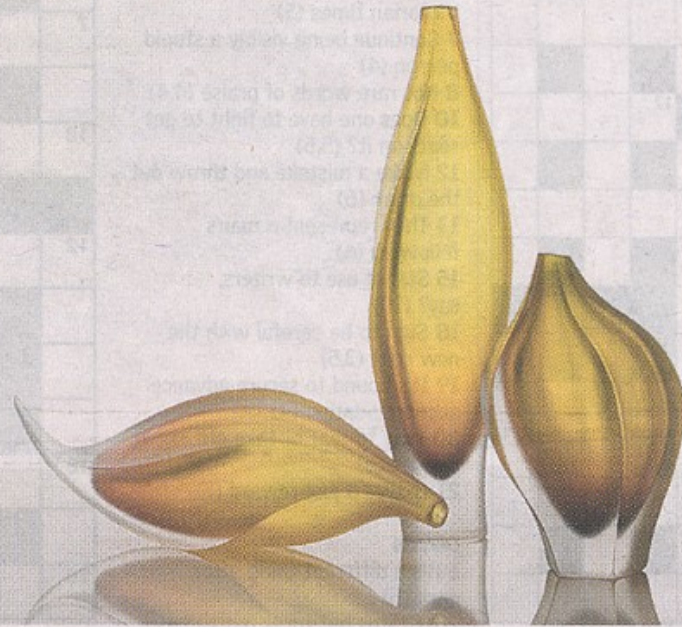
Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin.
Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5pm. Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm. Until November 24.

Ben Edols and Kathy Elliott have been in a highly successful creative partnership since their first joint exhibition in 1993 at DeVera Gallery in San Francisco.

They are both graduates of the Canberra School of Art Glass workshop where they worked under Klaus Moje.

Their latest body of work demonstrates the ability to create a seemingly wholly integrated aesthetic concept. Each work is the result of a two-part process. Edols is responsible for the hot glass (the blowing of the glass form) and Elliott specialises in the cold glass techniques of carving, grinding and polishing.

The artists have perfected a



Benjamin Edols and Kathy Elliott's *Amber 'pod', 'stem' and 'sprout' vessels*, blown and cut glass.

repertoire of work that is inspired by plant forms and patterns in nature.

The leaf forms that are the most sculptural works in the show replicate the fallen slightly curling palms that are found near their studio in Brookvale on the northern beaches of Sydney. There are two wall-mounted leaf forms, but other leaf works are displayed as horizontal elongated sculptural

forms that beautifully twist on the plinth to catch the light. These leaf forms are large – most are more than 100cm in length. It is exhilarating to see the free-flowing fluidity of these glass forms that reflect such rich colour and light. It made me rather wish that other forms in the exhibition captured by their metal supports could be liberated in the same way.

The tear-shaped vessels have

finely elongated necks. They either stand upright, as in the beautiful work called *Red, black and white 'sway' bottle*, or are elongated with necks at both ends and supported on stands. Another group includes small amber and blue vase forms with strongly articulated ribs and asymmetrical necks that almost seem to capture light within them.

Another characteristic of Edols' and Elliott's work is the

multilayering of translucent glass so that within each vessel there is another inner form that gives it a richness of colour and a visual complexity. In the leaf forms the layering becomes a rich interplay between form, colour and line. One of the most eye-catching works with its rich and luscious tortoiseshell appearance is entitled *Autumn leaf, 'window' series*. The title is apt as a window of clear glass opens into the inner being of the form to reveal a complex structure decorated by Venetian-style cane work.

Both these artists work with great skill. Elliott has been able to cold-work the surface of Edols forms to enhance them in such a sensitive way that the designs seem to grow organically.

I often come across examples of work by Edols and Elliott in galleries with a pleasurable sense of recognition. One such encounter was in the Victorian and Albert Museum in London. They have achieved considerable success both in Australia and abroad for their highly sophisticated glassmaking skills in creating works that celebrate the fluidity and light effect of glass in a disciplined yet sensuous and intuitive way.