



Nicole Ayliffe, Optical landscape Autumn leaf 1 in Seasonal landscapes. Picture: Supplied

Glass based on nature has a sense of monumentality

Craft review

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NICOLE Ayliffe: Seasonal Landscapes. Beaver Galleries. Until March 22, 2020.

Nicole Ayliffe, an artist based in South Australia, has had two previous solo exhibitions at the Beaver Galleries - *Moments in Time* in 2007 and *Studio Glass* in 2017. In both these past exhibitions Ayliffe explored the relationship between form, light and image. *Moments in time* was inspired by the domestic patterns in her grandparents' home. The artist emphasised these patterned designs by encasing them in solid glass forms. In the works in the *Studio Glass* (2017) and 2020 *Seasonal Landscapes* (2020) exhibitions, the images and the forms have become more interactive and interrelated.

Ayliffe has developed a series of spherical and cylindrical forms in glass that suit her purpose well. These glass forms have a strong sense of monumentality that draws attention to the material qualities of the glass. This solidity is counterbalanced by the translucency of their multiple surfaces. Ayliffe's technique of interlaying one form within another suggests the illusion of spatial complexity as their translucent surfaces act as a lens magnifying and multiplying the images. The outer glass casing of many of the vessels encloses an inner bubble of glass. In certain cylindrical and spherical works this acts like a force of light within the form. In other works as in *Leaf 1* from the *Optical*

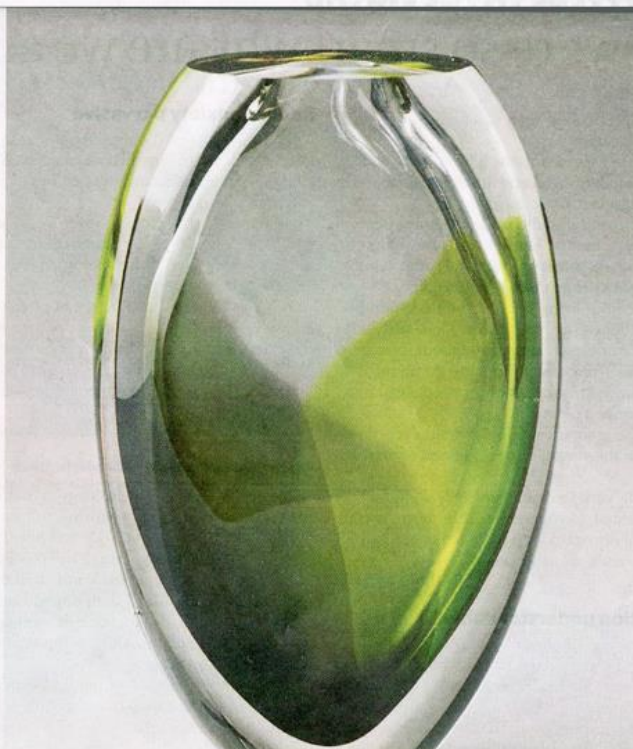
landscape series, the small bubble of glass is held in suspension within its glass sphere.

Colour features extensively and is used sensitively to enhance and develop the decorative nature of surface patterns as well as create beautiful painterly swathes of interior colour.

The artist is sensitive to the rhythms of nature, noting how her inspiration comes from exploring coastal seashores. The shoreline verges of reeds and grasses provide the inspiration for the designs that the artist recreates on her glass surfaces either in rhythmic linear patterns or in irregular flowing lines.

In the long conical glass form *Optical landscape - Reed 1*, Ayliffe converts the irregular rhythms of the reeds to a formal pattern of linear marks suggesting weaving - a by-product of grasses and reeds. In *Optical landscape - Coastal grass 2*, the grasses are represented by engraved linear patterns that enhance its spherical form in a sensitive and poetic way. When looking into the centre of this glass vessel the network of plants appears as if growing like a life force from its central core. Forest trees are also depicted in images engraved in the glass (*Optical landscape - Forest 2*) and in the *Line* series the coloured glass stringers drawn around the glass vessels suggest the linear patterns of their bark.

In *Autumn leaf 1* and *Leaf 2* from the *Optical landscape* series, the images of the skeletal remains of leaves are delicately



Nicole Ayliffe, Spring landscape 1 (detail), in Seasonal Landscapes. Picture: Supplied

curved around the form of the glass making an arresting graphic statement.

In Ayliffe's latest works based on the natural seasons, the artist has created a more minimal version of the *Optical landscape* series. Eschewing the complexity of the latter, the tapered vessels are fluid and tactile. They evoke seasonal landscapes through their gentle curving forms and

soft seasonal colours. Each of these vessels appears to be infused with a colour vapour that evokes the fresh green of spring, the blue skies of summer or the dying leaves and flowers of autumn. The gentle forms of *Summer landscape 2* and *Autumn landscape 2* appeared, within their interior spaces, to be holding the blues of summer skies and the promising benevolence of soft autumn days.