



Jeremy Lepisto's *Shed 1 (Contour Series)* in *Contour* at Beaver Galleries.

## Show draws attention to everyday life

### CRAFT REVIEW

#### CONTOUR

Studio glass by Jeremy Lepisto. Beaver Galleries. On until April 29.

REVIEWED BY Kerry-Anne Cousins

Jeremy Lepisto's career in glass has encompassed both its creative and its technical aspects – possibly because his interests include both sculpture and engineering. He was born in the US in 1974 and graduated from the New York College of Ceramics in 1997 majoring in metal and glass. Like most glass artists, he became peripatetic. His high level of technical proficiency in all aspects of glassmaking enabled him to lecture and work in glass studios in prestigious institutions in the US, Britain and Australia.

After locating to Australia in 2009, he was artist-in-residence in that year (and in 2011) at the Canberra Glassworks. He was technical officer at the Canberra Glassworks (2013-14) and Canberra School of Art (2015-17). Lepisto is now a studio artist and a PhD candidate in sculpture at the Australian National University.

His work from 2009, when he moved to Canberra, has reflected the impact of leaving familiar surroundings for a new environment and the consideration of the effect this would have on his art. In the succeeding years, he has continued to explore the concept of transportation as a metaphor for dislocation. The artist's first solo exhibition at the Beaver Galleries in Canberra in 2011 displayed his interest in this process of dislocation in the *Crate* and the *Shipments* series. The images he used in glass were of his studio in Portland, Oregon, as well as new imagery from Australia – its farmhouses, water tanks and wheat silos. In 2013, in an exhibition at Beaver Galleries,



Jeremy Lepisto, *Enveloped 2 (Stack Series)* (left) and *Enveloped 3 (Stack Series)*. Fabricated steel is fashioned into geometric shapes.

Lepisto showed his *Compile* series, where he eschewed glass in favour of fabricated steel in a series of abstract geometric forms based on the architecture of industrial complexes.

In the six works from the *Stack* series in his current exhibition, Lepisto uses fabricated steel again for his sculptural forms but in a co-relationship with glass. He has fashioned the steel with skilled precision into black geometric roof-like shapes that act as plinths. Into them are inserted glass vessels formed like industrial chimneys in colours of smoky blues and mauves. These glass "chimneys" have photographic-like images of suburban and industrial landscapes enhanced by sandblasting and enamelling their surfaces. In *Enveloped no.1*, the image of a suburban house ringed with trees also includes the ubiquitous suburban network of wires and telegraph poles. In other works from the *Enveloped* series (nos. 2-6), the images are of construction sites as well as the roof-lines of high-rise buildings crowned with industrial cranes.

In the *Contour* series (*Shed 1, II* and *Factory I, II*) the four horizontal free-standing panels (19cm by 69cm by 5cm) are

in glass. They are all slightly curved with irregular top edges emphasised in black. The irregular shape and contour of each of the panels references the images delineated on the surface below. The colour of the glass is yellow, blue or grey with an attractive, slightly grainy surface.

Lepisto rubs the surface of the glass with

### *He explores the concept of transportation as a metaphor for dislocation.*

black powder before multiple firings. In this series, the images are more like architectural drawings concentrating on lines of construction and perspective. They are clear and concise in contrast to the more elusive images of the *Enveloped* series where the images are subject to the round form of the glass vessels. The images depict long lines of factory sheds, the urban semi-industrial landscape of trucks, telegraph poles and communication structures that

are in a symbiotic relationship with human figures who are part of this industrial process. The figures either dominate the image as in the factory interior *Shed 1 no.7*, where the male figure is working at a bench against an industrial backdrop, or they are depicted surveying the outside landscape from an interior building space (*Shed 2 no.4*).

There is no sense the artist is conveying a strong political view about the relationship between humans and machinery. Rather, they are both seen as part of a process. Men (and they are all men) are shown as being part of the process, involved in using and creating these machines in the urban and industrial landscapes. If indeed the artist has a statement to make, it is that most of us live in highly urbanised landscapes – we are served by highly mechanised machinery and use goods and utilities that are also the result of industrial processes and transportation.

These processes are the way our society functions. Lepisto draws our attention to these everyday aspects of our lives and considers them in a thoughtful way as not only worthy of recording but also worthy of our consideration.