

Glass spheres tease with Grace



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Review

Landscape. By Holly Grace, at Beaver Galleries, 81 Denison Street, Deakin, until May 21, daily 10am to 5pm.

HOLLY GRACE has been studying and working in glass and it appears that it has taken her some time to find her metier.

She has been experimenting with frits, metallic leaf, and powders to create the surface decoration on glass forms. We can see the wintry, snowy scenes, with branches and twigs laden with snow, fir trees and snow on the roofs of buildings taken from her own photographs of the Scandinavian landscape.

Grace is showing a limited number of forms – tall, slender leaf forms, simple, squared bottles, and small spherical forms that she titles Bonsai.

Leaf Forms with Tree Pattern (Catalogue No. 22), made up of three pieces, is imbued with the qualities of glass – the clarity and purity of clear glass, which is ornamented with delicate tracery of the pattern of trees. There is an ambiguity here too, as the pattern could be the veins and markings on the leaves themselves.

They have a lightness of touch and the gentle qualities of clear glass. I find these more successful than other leaf forms displayed in coloured glass.



SPHERICAL: Bonsai, blown and sandcarved glass.

The Bonsai forms are small, blown, spherical and ovoid forms, and while they are delicate and feminine, they are experimental and insubstantial.

By far the most successful works in the exhibition are the squared, squat landscape bottles. Both surfaces of the bottles have been sandblasted so that when one looks through them, there is depth to the ornamentation. In a group of Alabaster

landscape bottles (Catalogue Nos. 23, 24, 25), a flash of white evokes the Danish winter.

A large group of 12 Landscape Bottles (Catalogue No. 28) is listed individually, priced and identified separately. As a group, they do not sit well together and, I believe, should be broken into groups of two. One group is in amber, the other in greys and greens. The Bernstein grey and Bernstein eel

green bottles are ethereal. The snowy, sleety surface appears to swirl, unveiling the roof of a building, trees, and possibly a human. Grace appears to be teasing us with her visual games.

Grace has exploited and explored the translucent qualities of glass, working with the light to reveal subtle shadows, tones and colours within the body of her forms and I look forward to seeing more.