



# Contemporary Glass

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# Tanja Pak

Born into a family of glass-blowers but influenced as much by industrial techniques and factory production processes, each element of Tanja Pak's artistic practice, from her large-scale installations to her functional designs for domestic use, reveals her mastery over the material. Pak's work in glass focuses on its most ethereal qualities, seemingly defying its own materiality.

There has long been a tradition of glass production in Slovenia, ever since the Venetians introduced glass-blowing to the country in the seventeenth century (commercial glass production has since become a major source of trade for the country). Yet Pak was the first Slovenian artist to use cast glass as a material for large-scale sculpture. In 1998 she responded to the architecture of Ljubljana Castle by producing a series of site-specific sculptures. Working with other glass

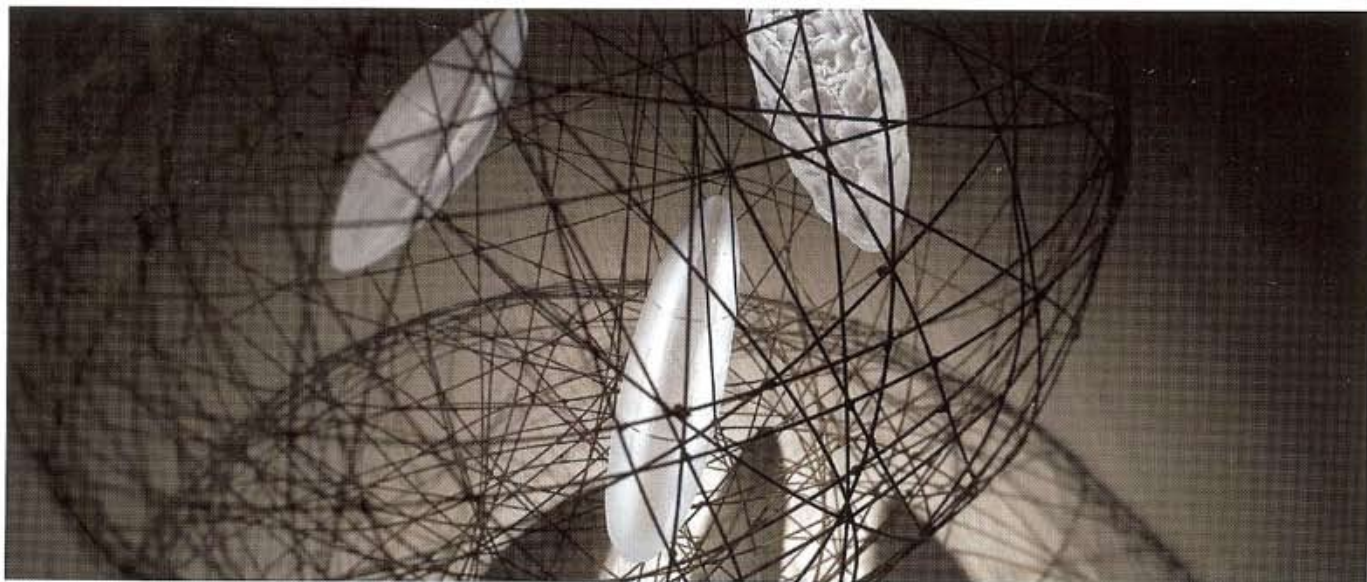
specialists as well as light and audio technicians, she created *Voyage*, a series of glass rings suspended in a row from a barrel vaulted ceiling, a blue laser beam shot through the installation, representing what the artist describes as 'an infinite journey'.

In 2004 Pak installed *Traces* in the church of St Vit, Dravograd, KGLU Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia. The installation comprises a sequence of three sculptural interventions lining the nave of the church towards the altar in the apse. Using a combination of glass, metal and sand together with sophisticated lighting arrangements, each element of the installation creates a different atmospheric focus enhancing the contemplative effect of the venue.

For *Ponte dei Sospiri Lux Europae*, 2002, installed under a bridge in Copenhagen, Denmark, Pak referenced the famous Bridge

of Sighs in Venice. Incorporating light and sound, the installation is made up of 220 glowing 'drops' of blown glass casting a serene reflection in the middle of a lake.

As well as exhibiting her work in glass in International Biennials and exhibitions, Pak works as a professor at The Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana and runs Glesia Gallery in the same city in her native Slovenia. After studying industrial design at the Academy of Fine Arts also in Ljubljana, she went on to obtain a masters degree ceramics and glass from The Royal College of Art, London in 1996. She received Pilchuck scholarship in 1999 and in 2001 became a fellow at The Creative Glass Center of America in Pensilvania, America.



1 *Dreaming Away*, 2006

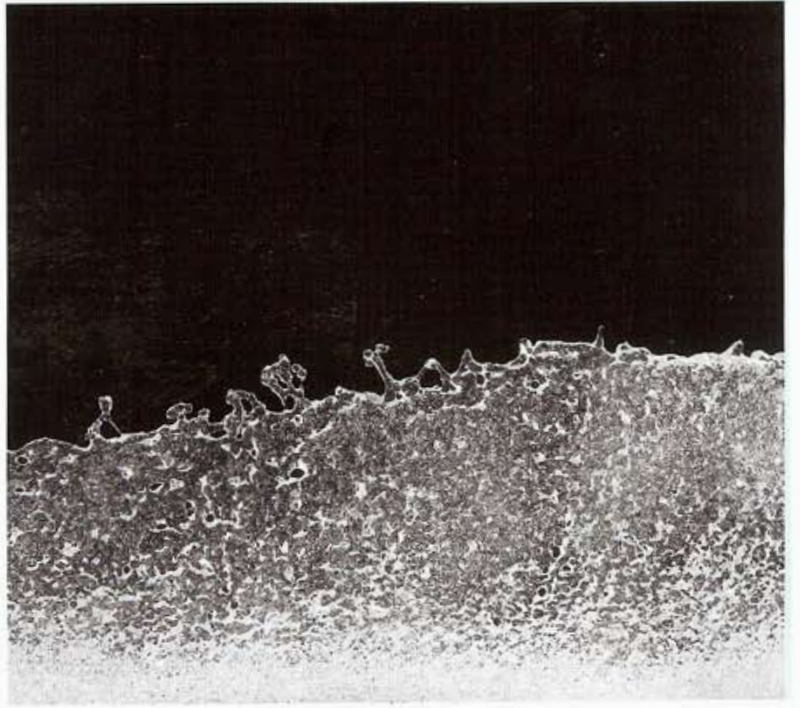
Cast crystal glass, metal, 55 to 75 cm (three different spheres). Photograph by Peter Koštrun.

2 *Traces*, 2004

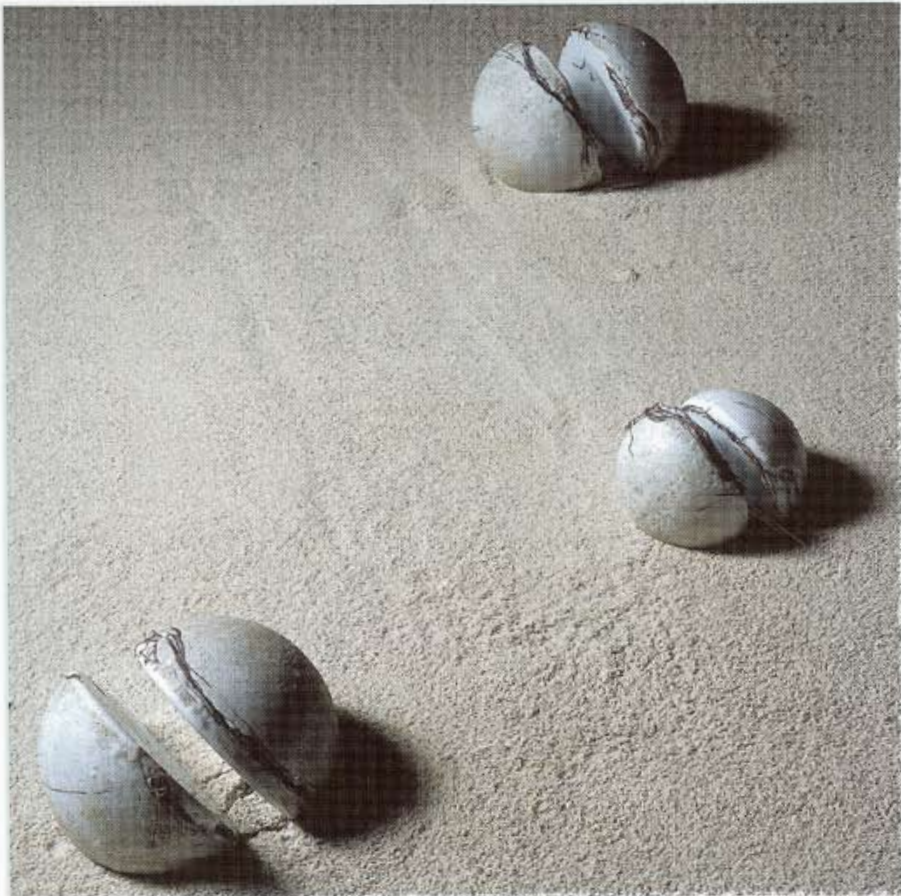
Site-specific installation using glass, metal, sand and light. Photograph by Boris Gaberščik.

3 *Traces*, 2004

Site-specific installation using glass, metal, sand and light. Photograph by Boris Gaberščik.



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3



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4 *Ponte dei Sospiri*,  
*Lux Europae*, 2002  
Site-specific installation  
using blown glass (220  
drops), metal, light  
and sound.  
Photograph by Bent Ryberg.



5

5 *Traces*, 2004  
Site-specific installation  
using glass, metal,  
sand and light.  
Photograph by  
Boris Gaberščik.

## Contemporary Glass

Glass art and design is currently enjoying unprecedented popularity as both makers and artists are developing increasingly innovative works and challenging the medium's technical and conceptual boundaries to a greater degree than ever before.

*Contemporary Glass* profiles an inspiring collection of over 60 such international glassmakers working today, including works by Beth Lipman, Dale Chihuly, Ione Thorkelsson, Mike Kelley, Kiki Smith, Minako Shirakura, Olafur Eliasson, Tanya Pak, Tobias Rehberger and many more.

This volume also features essays by Andrew Page, editor of *Glass Quarterly*, Michael Petry, artist and Director of MOCA, London, and Heike Brachlow, MPhil research student at the Royal College of Art, which invariably focus on the history of the studio glass revolution, the deployment of colour, light and transparency in glass and the increasingly complex relationship between the 'artist' and the 'craftsman' and its subsequent implications for perceptions of the medium.

*Contemporary Glass* is an essential guide to an arts and craft scene that is both departing from, and building on its origins, while formulating new directions within which practitioners can work.

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