

VERRE & CRÉATION

CONTEMPORARY GLASS NEWSLETTER N°77

DAMIEN FRANÇOIS À EBELTOFT
VERRE & CRÉATION A VINGT ANS !
ART, DESIGN : 2015 AUX SOURCES DU VERRE



SOUNDBALL AT THE CIAV. PAGE 2.

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<http://ciav-meisenthal.fr>

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www.caterinatognon.com



Glass painting, sculpture by Damien François exposed in Ebeltoft Glasmuseet.

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Clara Scrimini Gallery in Paris is taking us into 2015 with Martin Hlubucek, one of the most promising young Czech glass artists on the scene, whose simple lines are combined with sober or pastel colours. He studied in the Czech Republic first in Zelezny Brod, then at the Institute of Fine Arts in Ustí nad Labem, and is now experimenting with utility objects such as his series of vases he calls Buoys, inspired by the various shapes that can be seen floating in the waves, yet are firmly anchored to the sea bed. In contrast with the abstract optical principles of the central European School of optical glass, this set of pieces is simply a well-constructed exercise for this minimalist sculptor: "I see my Buoy vases as an original creative experiment that enables me to test out the aesthetic effect of certain shapes for my future glass-blowing work." Clara Scrimini has chosen her subject well for the New Year. After the Hungarian artist Gyorgy Gaspar in 2013, Polish artist Agnieszka Lesniak was the focus of this year's autumn exhibition, with her pared-down yet highly technical micro-architectural forms.
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DAMIEN FRANÇOIS. PORTRAIT. PAGE 5.

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His samples of "glass foam" are a prime illustration of this. Damien François makes them from batch, violently and calculatedly interrupting the firing process with his "crash cool" while the molten glass is still alive with gas bubbles. This experimentation has culminated in Point of Rupture, his end of year project in Bornholm, consisting of bottled samples. In "Répétition est un élément basique de la collection" he pins down and frames a multitude of experimental glass micromasses. What composes glass is already glass, a precept underlined in the circles of his Primaire sculptures which juxtapose the traditional fusing technique with the crashcool technique. "Before blowing or casting, we first create glass using basic materials that we heat" he explains. It is this experimental aspect, detached from the end result, that interests me." Damien François is not an expert in chemistry. More interested in climbing, which he discovered during his studies, Damien encountered glass quite by chance in Norway, going on to study it in Bredsten at the Engelsholm Hojskole College, Denmark, before completing his education alongside Mark Zirpel and Ben Wright from Pilchuck and entering the Bornholm glass and ceramics centre in Denmark, from which he graduated in 2010. He is assistant to Monica Guggisberg and Philippe Baldwin, a major source of inspiration to him, and to Xavier Le Normand while continuing his own research.

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GLASS IS TOMORROW II.

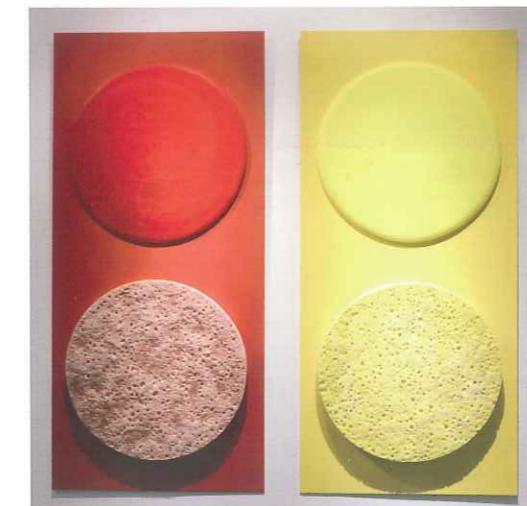
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De haut en bas : Répétition est un élément basique de la collection, Inciso et Primaire. Photos : Asbjørn Hollerud (ci-dessus) et Damien François.

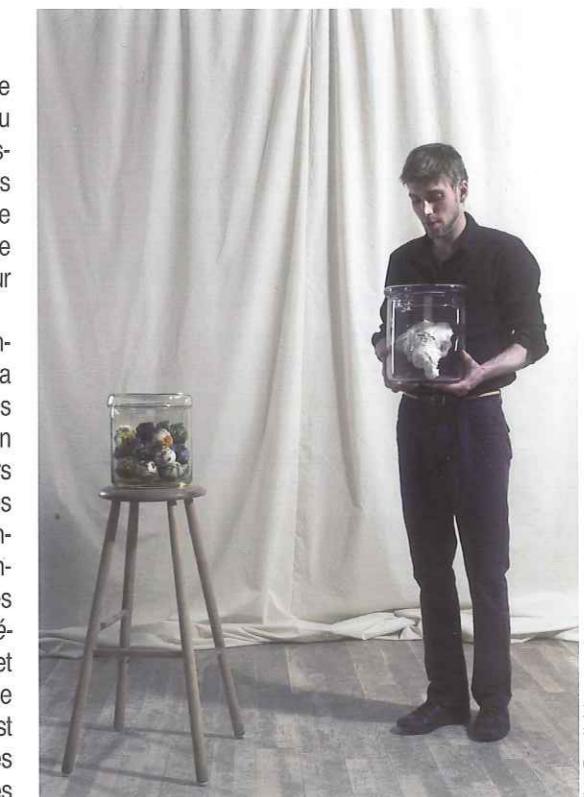


Photo : Timme Hovord



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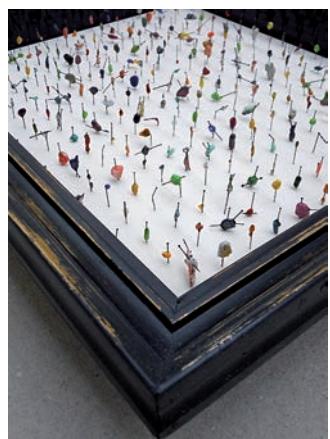
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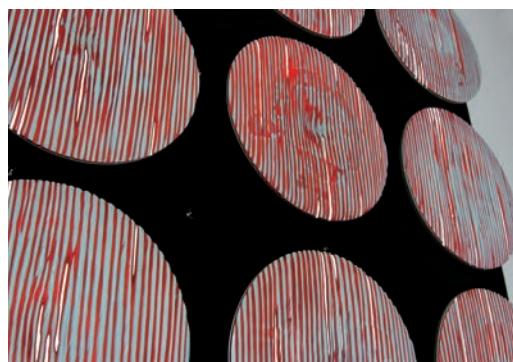
Sa « mousse de verre », présentée en échantillons, a frappé les esprits. Damien François la conçoit à partir du mélange vitrifiable en billes (batch), interrompant le processus de cuisson par un violent et minutieux « crashcool » alors que le futur plasma bouillonne encore de bulles de gaz. *Point of rupture*, son projet de fin d'année à Bornholm, est la synthèse de son apprentissage sous forme d'échantillons consignés dans des bocaux. Dans *Répétition* est un élément basique de la collection, il punaise et encadre des centaines de micromasses de verre expérimental. Ce qui compose le verre est déjà du verre, une intention précisée dans les cercles de ses sculptures *Primaire*, opposant l'un

fondu traditionnellement à son équivalent stoppé par un *crashcool*. « Avant de souffler ou de mouler, dit-il, déjà, au départ, on crée le verre à partir de matériaux de base que l'on chauffe. Ce côté expérimental, détaché de l'objet final, m'intéresse. »

Damien François n'est pas un chimiste averti. Plutôt passionné par l'escalade, dont il a fait plus jeune le fruit de ses études, il rencontre le verre par hasard en Norvège et l'étudie au Engelshom Højskole College, à Bredsten, au Danemark, avant de faire ses classes auprès de Mark Zirpel et Ben Wright à l'École du Verre américaine de Pilchuck et d'intégrer le Centre pour le verre et la céramique de Bornholm au Danemark dont il sort diplômé en 2010. Il est l'assistant de Monica Guggisberg et Philippe Baldwin, source majeure d'inspiration, et de Xavier Le Normand tout en continuant ses propres recherches. « Je ne travaille pas vraiment rigoureusement comme un scientifique, précise le plasticien, car c'est trop complexe à réaliser précisément, mais ces expériences me permettent de révéler d'autres états du verre peu connus visuellement. »

Mentionné *Emerging artist* de la Glass Art Society de Seattle, le Musée d'Ebeltoft lui consacre une exposition personnelle. Damien François qualifie ses interventions comme un processus « d'essais et d'inexactitudes » face à l'univers hyalin peuplé de « perplexité et d'incertitude ». Après la classification et l'échantillonage,

Damien François travaille le principe de la taille dans *Inciso*, considéré, non pas comme un décor, mais comme un facteur de transformation du matériau lui-même après avoir interrogé la peinture par manipulation chimique et thermique dans *Glass Painting*. Le Studio glass à la Française renaîtrait-il de ses expérimentations ? À suivre...



De haut en bas : *Répétition* est un élément basique de la collection, *Inciso* et *Primaire*. Photos : Asbjørn Hollerud (ci-dessus) et Damien François.

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