

# Glass in the Expanded Field

A project by Jerome Harrington

*Glass in the Expanded Field* is a project by Jerome Harrington, developed with staff and students of the Glass department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. The project employed Rosalind Krauss's notion of the Expanded Field to propose that the field of glass practice has been affected by a similar expansion and that Krauss's text and specifically her use of a series of diagrams to map this expansion, could be used to visualise and understand the nature of contemporary glass practice.

Glass as an area of activity is made up of an array of approaches and priorities, grouped together because of their common material, not because of their aesthetic or theoretical connections. This array is a broad one, and terms such as 'glass artist' too readily unite disparate practices and ascribe a putative similarity to the vase maker and the installation maker.

By visualising the field of contemporary practice, the project aims to raise the following questions: What is the relation of contemporary practitioners to the founding principles of Studio Glass? What are

the relations between various contemporary works? What is the difference between the vase maker and the installation maker? And how can the language of criticism, the systems of exhibition, or the numerous publications about glass as an area of activity deal, with this difference?

And finally, to paraphrase Krauss, and to redirect a question that she asked of sculpture as an area of activity: is the category of glass practice itself, having been forced to cover such a heterogeneity, in danger of collapsing?<sup>1</sup>



## Rosalind Krauss and the Expanded Field

In her essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979), Rosalind Krauss discusses the problems of defining the identity of sculpture in light of the impact of new modes of practice that emerged during the 1960s by artists such as Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, and Robert Irwin. Krauss discusses the inability of the term sculpture, or more importantly its language of criticism, to deal with the 'newness' of this work, and calls for a new approach to thinking about these works, one that recognises their shift into post-modernism.

In order to plot the expansion of the field and demonstrate the relation of these new works to earlier traditions of sculpture, Krauss employs a Klein Group or Piaget diagram, a structuralist device used in both mathematics and linguistics, which expands a given concept through the identification of the oppositional logic it entails. A simple example of this process in action, is the expansion of the opposition between the binary terms, masculine and feminine, to generate a number of new terms, related but with subtly different meanings. The first stage of this process comprises four terms: masculine, feminine, not-masculine, not-feminine, the two terms obtaining more complex ideas than the initiating binary might have suggested. The process can then be repeated, allowing a further expansion by combining each of the terms of the first stage, to create 'metaterms', for example the combination of the terms, 'masculine' and 'not-feminine', to generate the metaterms, 'macho' or 'real man'.<sup>2</sup>

The diagram therefore has an internal, core structure composed of the four terms placed at the corners of

a square, and an external structure, a diamond shape expanding from the internal structure, where the metaterms are situated.

Krauss's essay develops through the close interaction of her written text and her use of this diagram. In the essay, Krauss presents the diagram in three, successive stages, so that the reader can see the process of expansion.

In stage one, Krauss begins at the bottom of the diagram, where the contested term 'sculpture' is placed. In order to demonstrate what sculpture is in the present, Krauss first defines what sculpture was in the past, when it functioned historically as a marker of a specific site, marking the 'meaning or use of that place' in the form of a monument and its pedestal. Krauss then identifies a number of works that challenged this logic, particularly two works by Rodin, which marked the increasing centrality of the artist's subjectivity and the failure of these works as monuments (neither work was put up at its intended site).<sup>3</sup> For Krauss, these works marked the beginning of modernism, where sculpture is marked by a 'sitelessness or homelessness, an absolute loss of place'.<sup>4</sup>

By setting out sculpture's historical lineage and the subsequent failure of its logic (its failure as monument and marker of a specific site), Krauss is able to define sculpture in the early 1960s by what it was not, suspended between the binaries of 'not-landscape' and 'not-architecture'. She states that sculpture was 'what was on or in front of the building that was not the building, or what was in the landscape that was not the landscape'.<sup>5</sup> The identification of this pair of binaries concludes the first stage of her diagram.

Stage two involves the inversion of the binaries 'not-landscape' and 'not-architecture' to reveal the terms

'landscape' and 'architecture'. These four terms mark the four points that make up the diagram's internal structure.<sup>6</sup>

And in the third stage of the diagram's development, Krauss identifies three new modes of practice which she situates at the three outer points of the diagram, related to, but at a distance from sculpture, which she describes with the metaterms: 'marked sites', 'site-construction', and 'axiomatic structures'. Each of the metaterms is generated by pairing terms that are situated on the four points of the diagram's internal structure. For example, 'marked sites' is generated through the opposition of the terms 'landscape' and 'not-landscape' and is used to describe works such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1969), where there is a permanent or impermanent manipulation or marking of the site.<sup>7</sup> The term 'site construction' is generated through the opposition of 'landscape' and 'architecture', and refers to works such as *Partially Buried Woodshed* (1970) by Robert Smithson or *Parameters/Pavilions/Decoys* (1978) by Mary Miss. And finally the term 'axiomatic structures' is generated through the opposition of 'architecture' and 'not-architecture', to describe works such as *Slant Light Volume* (1971) by Robert Irwin, or *Video Corridor* (1970) by Bruce Nauman, works which explore the taken-for-granted features of an architectural experience.<sup>8</sup>

## Re-appropriating Krauss's diagram

The project began in March 2011 with a series of workshops with the students at the Glass department of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie with the aim of testing how Krauss's notion of an expanded field might be used to understand the nature of contemporary glass practice.

This involved the re-drawing of Krauss's diagram and using it to map 100 examples of work made since 2000 by a range of international practitioners.

The project started by considering how Krauss's diagram might be re-appropriated (see Figure No. 1). In the way that Krauss employed a historical definition of sculpture as the starting point of her diagram, 'Studio Glass' was our starting point.

The history of studio glass is a relatively short one. The event which is cited as the catalyst for the emergence of studio glass was an eight-day workshop conceived by Harvey Littleton (supported by Dominick Labino amongst others) at the Toledo Museum of Art in 1962.<sup>9</sup> The workshop had the aim of melting glass in a small furnace so that individual artists could use glass as an art medium for self-expression outside of an industrial context. These early pioneers sought to find the technical means for the individual artist to both conceive and to make the glass object.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to emphasise that Littleton was not the first artist to work with glass, others such as Jean Sala working in France<sup>11</sup>, Erwin Eisch in Germany need to be acknowledged.<sup>12</sup> However, Littleton's contribution could be described as the first conscious attempt to establish glass as a specific and focused area of activity; a field. This was marked from the beginning by the importance of developing and sharing information as a community, whether through workshop, conference or exhibition. It is during the 1960's and 1970's with the establishment of numerous institutions, publications, collections and exhibitions all focusing specifically on work made of glass, that studio glass as an independent area of creative activity became established.<sup>13</sup>

For the purposes of this project, Studio Glass was defined by four key principles which were established in this defining period of the 1960's and 1970's. This includes; the singular focus upon one material, the intimate relation between maker, process and object,<sup>14</sup> the prioritisation of skill or technique,<sup>15</sup> and the sculptural potential of glass often based nevertheless on traditional forms of the object (the vase, the bowl for example). Studio Glass was situated between the oppositions of 'not art' and 'not craft', in an attempt to identify it as a practice, by what it was not.

Particularly important was the consideration of the metaterms that mark the three outer points of the diagram. Three terms were proposed to describe the breadth of current practices and the relation of each to Studio Glass. These were: 'Prioritised craft skill' to describe work concerned primarily with technically led material or formal investigation; 'Artistic concept expressed through skilled making' to categorise work where craft and concept have a mutually dependent relation; and, 'Prioritised concept' to describe works which forefront conceptual strategies, challenge notions of craft or the permanence of the art object, or explore new modes of production or of relations to the material of glass, such as performance, video, installation or site-specific practices – a category where a relation to Studio Glass was likely to be least evident or even absent.

In order to map such a breadth of examples, two new axes (shown in red) were introduced to the diagram (see Figure No. 5). Overlaying the original structure of the diagram, these axes provided greater subtlety and accuracy when positioning the wide range of examples, in two important ways.



Figure No.1



Figure No.2

The first axis, which points away from the center of the diagram, allowed the relation of each individual work to Studio Glass to be measured. In this way the space around the diagram is used to demonstrate the connectedness or disconnectedness of each example to the founding principles of Studio Glass.

The second axis provided a scale which runs between each of the three metaterms (again marked in red) allowing the subtle positioning of each work not simply as either 'Prioritised concept' or 'Prioritised craft skill' for example, but occupying subtle positions between them.

The functioning of these axes becomes clearer through the consideration of the placement of a particular work. For example, Work No. 61 (*Reflecting Place 4*, Mary A. Phillips) has been situated at an equal distance between 'Artistic concept expressed through skilled making' and 'Prioritised concept', and situated at the greatest distance along the axis marked 'Distance from Studio Glass'.

The one hundred works plotted on the diagram have all been made since 2000. The list of works was initially compiled from a range of publications in the author's collection. This included monologues such as *Contemporary Glass* (2008) and *Glas(s) Gerrit Rietveld Academie* (2009), but also included surveys of contemporary glass practice, such as *New Glass Review* (2009).<sup>16</sup> This initial list was subsequently expanded by web searches with the aim to compile a list, which represented the widest breadth of contemporary practice.<sup>17</sup> In addition an artwork from each of the students involved in the project was also included in the selection, as were past and present staff of the glass department. A single work from each practitioner was

selected, the practitioners were then listed alphabetically and each marked numerically.

The mapping process began with each student individually plotting the position of the works on an acetate sheet on which an empty version of the diagram was printed (see Figure Nos. 2 and 3). Next, each of the individual acetate sheets were laid over one another so that points of agreement could be seen where entries aligned, and disagreements over the positioning of particular works would become apparent (see Figure No. 4). These points of disagreement were then resolved through further discussion and negotiation in the student-staff group.

Although it is inevitable that there will be disagreement from the reader (and most certainly from the artist whose work has been positioned) over the placement of particular works, this mapping process was designed to move initial judgements of an individual and subjective nature towards a communally agreed decision, so that a more objective positioning of any one work was reached.

### Speculations from a vantage point

The completed diagram functions as a vantage point, suggesting an overview of the field at this point in time (see Figure No. 5). What becomes visible are clusters of related activity demonstrated by the concentration or density of examples in one particular area, the relations between individual practices by their close proximity, but also the poles, outposts, and anomalies of the field. But what does this visualisation of the field begin to tell us about the nature of glass as an area of activity at this time?

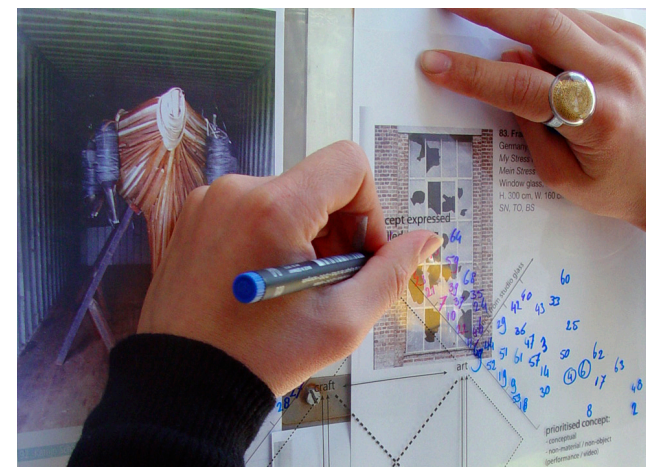


Figure No.3

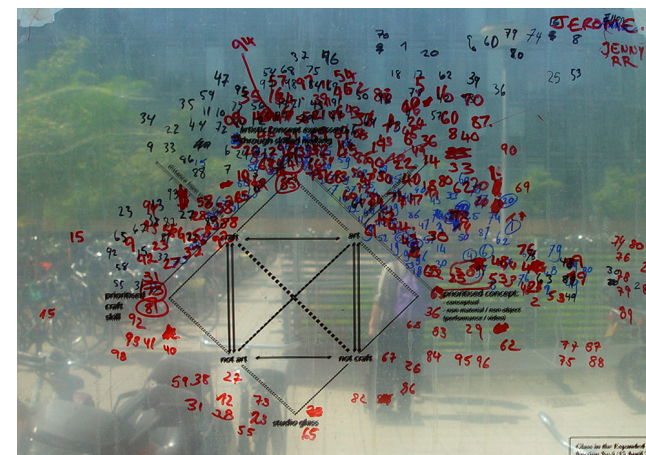


Figure No.4

# artistic concept expressed through skilled making

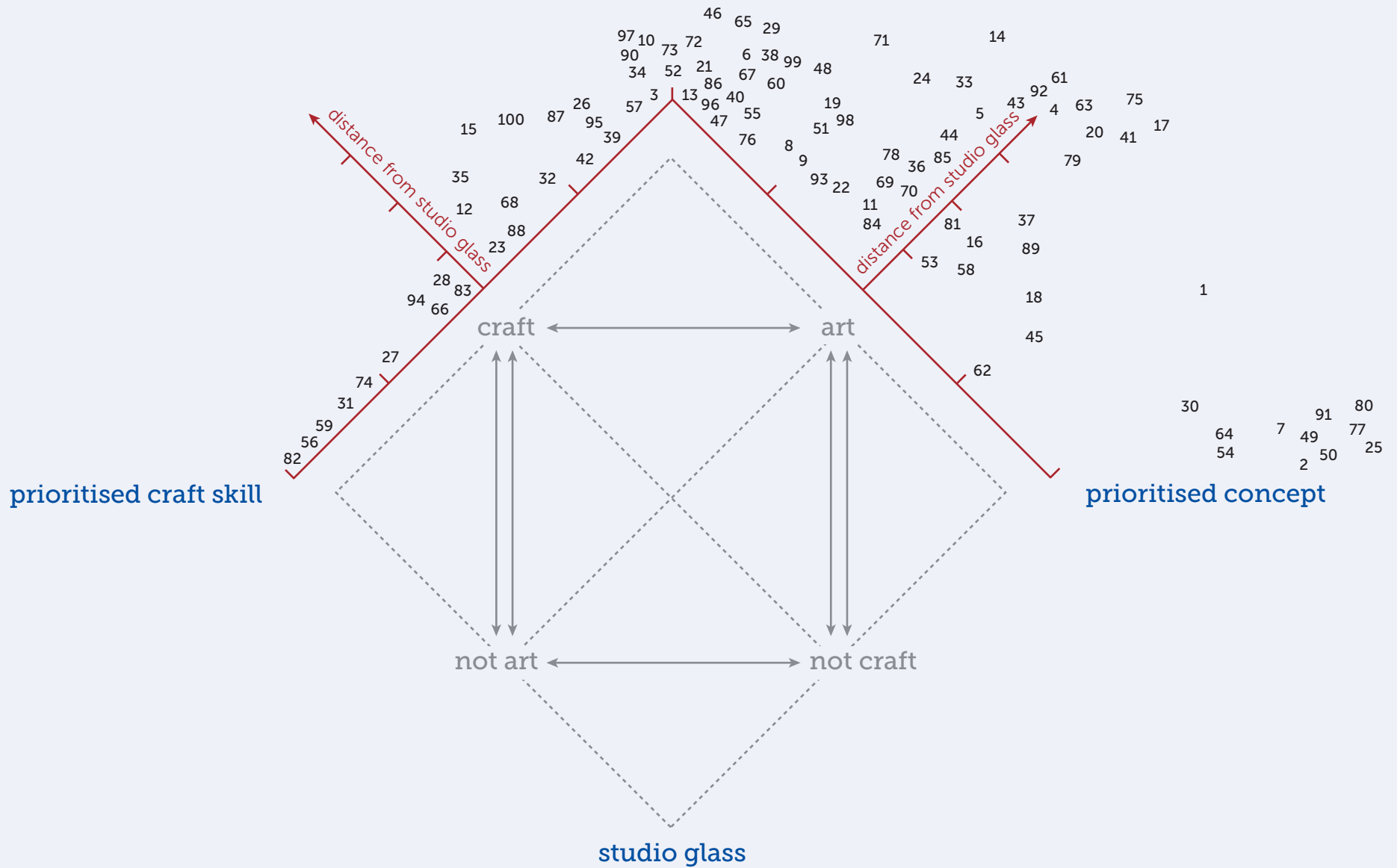


Figure No. 5 See page 7 for list of artists, title and date of works



## Key to diagrams

Artist	Title (date)
1 Marc Barreda	<i>Sea Glass</i> (2011)
2 Alexandra Ben-Abba	<i>Glass Haircut</i> (2010)
3 Annette Blair	<i>127,628 Cups of Tea</i> (2009)
4 Sarah Blood	<i>Object specific</i> (2009)
5 Sander Boeijink	<i>Untitled</i> (2006)
6 Christina Bothwell	<i>While You Are Sleeping</i> (2007)
7 Richard Box	<i>Shake Pole</i> (2006)
8 Heike Brachlow	<i>Waiting No.6</i> (2009)
9 Xandra Bremers	<i>I am You</i> (2011)
10 Lee Brogan	<i>Bombora</i> (2009)
11 Annie Cattrell	<i>Capacity</i> (2000–2007)
12 Dale Chilhuly	<i>Persian Chandelier</i> (2007)
13 Simsa Cho	<i>Uranium B</i> (2006)
14 Nick Crowe	<i>The Beheaded</i> (2006)
15 Vanessa Cutler	<i>Suburbia</i> (2009)
16 Marie de Bruyn	<i>The big white shape</i> (2010)
17 Melissa Dyne	<i>Glass: A site Specific Installation</i> (2008)
18 Deirdre Feeney	<i>I thought I saw you there again</i> (2009)
19 Lisa Gheradi	<i>Down to the Bone</i> (2003)
20 Anna Gray	<i>Untitled</i> (2011)
21 Katherine Gray	<i>Acqua Alta</i> (2009)
22 El Ultimo Grito	<i>Apartments</i> (2009)
23 Mieke Groot	<i>Untitled</i> (2002)
24 Anna Lena Grau	<i>Untitled</i> (2007)
25 Jerome Harrington	<i>The Glass Archive</i> (2005)
26 Joseph Harrington	<i>Ice Bar</i> (2006)
27 Jamie Harris	<i>Cut Out</i> (2007)
28 Derise Hemmes	<i>Inheritance 2</i> (2009)
29 Laura Heyworth	<i>Vacuumisopad</i> (2003)
30 Emma Hogarth	<i>3,600 Seconds</i> (2009)
31 Deborah Horrell	<i>Hover</i> (2009)
32 Martin Hlubucek	<i>Dekadence</i> (2009)
33 Esther Jiskoot	<i>Suntrap No.6</i> (2004)
34 Ditte Johansson	<i>Paused 3</i> (2009)
35 Menno Jonker	<i>Head Over Heals</i> (2002)
36 Dafna Kaffeman	<i>Persian Cyclamen</i> (2006)

Artist	Title (date)
37 Helena Kagebrand	<i>When my love swears that she is made of truth, I do believe her though I know she lies</i> (2008)
38 Mike Kelly	<i>Kandor 4</i> (2007)
39 Yasuko Kita	<i>Ancient Relics 2</i> (2009)
40 Pavel Kopriva	<i>Local Problem</i> (2001)
41 Carol Lee Mei Kuen	<i>Sending Love</i> (2007)
42 Karen LaMonte	<i>Dress Impression with Train</i> (2007)
43 Marianne Lammenson	<i>Untitled</i> (2007)
44 Mia Lerssi	<i>Cinderella is a slut</i> (2008)
45 Beth Lipman	<i>Bancketje</i> (2003)
46 Silvia Levenson	<i>Life is Beautiful</i> (2006)
47 Alena Matejkova	<i>The sea between us</i> (2009)
48 Katrin Maurer	<i>The Spectacle</i> (2006)
49 Josiah McElheny	<i>Conceptual Drawings for a Chandelier, 1965</i> (2005)
50 Kimberly McKinnis	<i>The Shape of an Emotion-II</i> (2010)
51 Richard Meitner	<i>Descending a stair case</i> (2009)
52 Ian Mowbray	<i>It Went Deathly Quiet Hours Ago</i> (2009)
53 Catherine Newell	<i>Palimpsest: Rough Draft</i> (2009)
54 Anna Norberg	<i>17 minutes</i> (2007)
55 Geir Nustad	<i>Who am I?</i> (2010)
56 Sean O'Neill	<i>Messipi</i> (2009)
57 Andy Paiko	<i>Spinning Wheel</i> (2009)
58 Dylan Palmer	<i>Sealed Air</i> (2009)
59 Inge Panneels	<i>Nest</i> (2005)
60 Jens Pfeifer	<i>Guns</i> (2003)
61 Mary A. Phillips	<i>Reflecting Place 4</i> (2009)
62 Angus M Powers	<i>Blind Glass Blowing</i> (2008)
63 Charlotte Potter	<i>Spinning my wheels</i> (2008)
64 Jocelyne Prince	<i>Spin Event Performance</i> (2008)
65 Caroline Prisse	<i>Olifant [Elephant], Trophy</i> (2001)
66 Janusz Pozniak	<i>Sanctuary</i> (2009)
67 Ana Quiroz	<i>Papa-ya-no</i> (2008)
68 Marie Retpen	<i>Still Life Melt Down – Silver and China</i> (2009)

Artist	Title (date)
69 Tobias Rehberger	<i>Outsiderin</i> (2002)
70 Louise Rice	<i>Safe as Houses 1</i> (2003)
71 Jenny Ritzenhof	<i>Untitled</i> (2011)
72 Michael Rogers	<i>Flight Remembered</i> (2008)
73 Layne Rowe	<i>Picking Daisies 2</i> (2010)
74 Richard Royal	<i>Optical Lens Series</i> (2009)
75 Tina Sarapu	<i>The Light and Silence in Sound</i> (2009)
76 Jeffery Sarmiento	<i>Encyclopedia 1–8</i> (2007)
77 Rui Sasaki	<i>Walking on Glass</i> (2010)
78 Ryoko Sato	<i>Loving Myself</i> (2007)
79 Katrijn Schatterman	<i>For my sailor</i> (2007)
80 Franz Schonbeck	<i>My Stress Is Gone Now</i> (2008)
81 Anjali Srinivasan	<i>Particulate Devil</i> (2008)
82 Ethan Stern	<i>Red Chew</i> (2008)
83 Alex Stisser	<i>Sleep Walkers</i> (2009)
84 Tavares Strachan	<i>Components for Absolute Symbiosis</i> (2006)
85 Martina Strusny	<i>One day</i> (2005)
86 Elizabeth Swinburne	<i>Golden Embrace</i> (2002)
87 C. Matthew Szosz	<i>Inflatable No.3</i> (2008)
88 Lino Tagliapietra	<i>Mandara</i> (2006)
89 Chris Taylor	<i>Real</i> (2002)
90 Hiromi Takizawa	<i>Gathering</i> (2009)
91 Barbara Amalie-Skovmand Thomsen	<i>We are between You and Me, Glass</i> (2008)
92 Ellen Urselmann	<i>Forgotten</i> (2003)
93 Ellen Vaartun	<i>Untitled</i> (2011)
94 Sylvie Vandenhoecke	<i>Field</i> (2006)
95 Vincent Van Ginneke	<i>Small Body Shapes</i> (2000)
96 Lieve Van Stappen	<i>Beggar</i> (2009)
97 Kate Williams	<i>Dounreay Nuclear Power Station</i> (2006)
98 Gareth Noel Williams	<i>Untitled</i> (2000)
99 Emma Woffenden	<i>Elephant Boy</i> (2009)
100 Jeff Zimmer	<i>Interventions in Landscape</i> (2008)

The diagram pictures the breadth of work that the field encompasses, visualising the spread of entries as a 'shape' (see Figure No. 6). Works No. 82 (*Red Chew*, Ethan Stern) and No. 80 (*My Stress is Gone Now*, Franz Schonbeck) mark the outposts of the field, making visible the polarity between the examples situated on the left and right hand side of the diagram. This polarity was described earlier as the difference between the vase maker and the installation maker.

However, it is quickly discernable that the 'shape' is noticeably asymmetrical, and in order to understand this asymmetry, it is useful to move from a consideration of the entire field, to examine specific areas in more detail.

On the left of the diagram, works have been situated in close proximity to the internal structure of the diagram (the core) suggesting that examples that have been categorised under 'Prioritised Craft Skill' have a much closer relation to Studio Glass. Exceptions to this rule are exemplified by No. 15 (*Suburbia*, Vanessa Cutler) which has been situated on the left-hand side of the diagram in order to mark the obvious importance of 'Prioritised Craft Skill', but at a distance from the core because it innovates with new technologies, suggesting potential new modes of 'Prioritised Craft Skill'.

The top of the diagram is where the greatest density of examples have been situated, located around the metaterm: 'Artistic concept expressed through skilled making'. This would suggest that the principal and dominant mode of operation for glass as an area of activity is work produced through a mutually dependent relation of skilled making and expression of concept.

## artistic concept expressed through skilled making

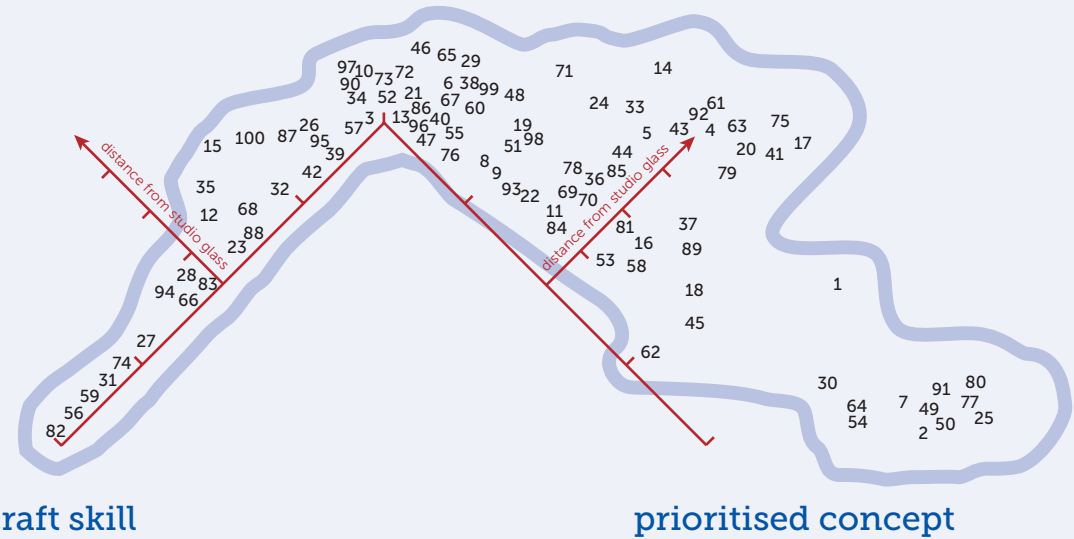


Figure No.6 Glass as an area of activity

## artistic concept expressed through skilled making

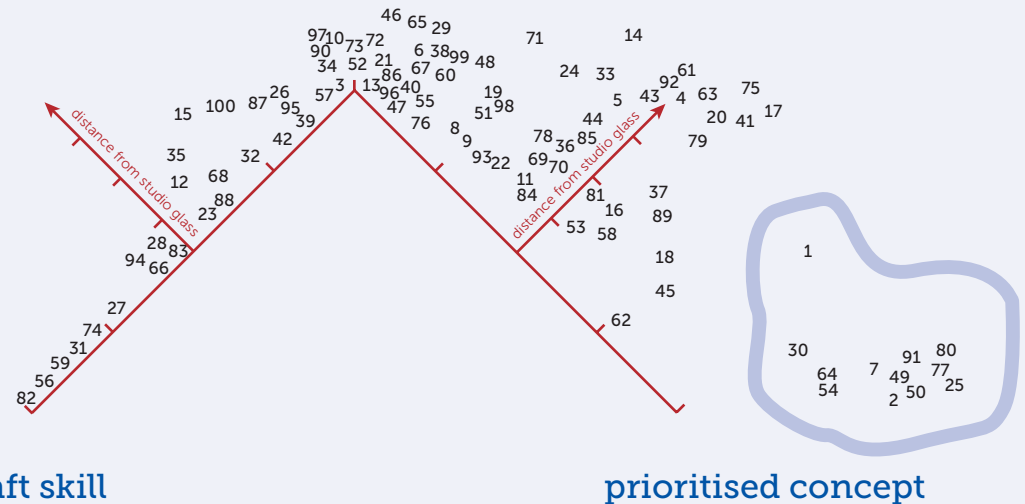


Figure No.7 The Outliers



From the top of the diagram and out towards the right-hand side, there is a general spreading out of entries, many placed at a significant distance from the core suggesting that they have little or no relation to the founding principles of Studio Glass. Interesting anomalies also occur in this area, which suggest that distance from the core does not necessarily denote the difference between radical or more traditional practices. For example, work No. 62 (*Blind Glass Blowing*, Angus M. Powers), fuses a radical intent while maintaining a close relation to Studio Glass.

Finally, it is noticeable that a cluster of works has been situated on the right-hand side of the diagram, at the furthest distance from the core (see Figure No. 7). The works in this cluster: experiment with new modes of production such as video<sup>18</sup> and performance;<sup>19</sup> explore culturally sited ideas of material but do not use the material itself;<sup>20</sup> challenge the permanence of the art object or notions of 'finish';<sup>21</sup> or, employ ambitious site-specific strategies.<sup>22</sup>

Within this cluster, a number of works that use performance provide a particularly good example of works with a distant, if not estranged relation to Studio Glass. Here, particular qualities of glass when hot are employed (its fluidity, its glow, the transition from fluid to solid, its temporality) but in order to explore concerns beyond the object or material, and by their very nature as performance, these works negate the production of a finished object.

## The Outliers

In the visual mapping of statistical data, an entry which is situated outside the majority (outside the mean), is known as an outlier. The outlier can be viewed in two ways, as a statistical anomaly produced by a mistake in the data, or as a case worthy of further consideration and explanation.

The works gathered in the cluster identified above, which is situated on the right-hand side of the diagram (see Figure No. 7) could be described as the outliers, works which sit outside the mean. And as a case worthy of further consideration and explanation, it prompts at this point a return to Krauss's text in order to consider further the relation of the outliers to the wider field. Through the consideration of this relation, the questions posed in the introduction are brought into sharp focus and a series of conclusions can be made. Two ideas raised by Krauss's text are particularly relevant towards this consideration.

## Differently structured possibilities

The initial provocation for Krauss's text was the simplifying effect of historicism on the interpretation and understanding of new works being produced in the 1960s. Her essay, in essence, is a call for the recognition of the change that has taken place (the move into postmodernism) and a proposal of a new language to deal with this change.

Referring to the simplifying effect of historicism upon the criticism of the new work in the 1960s, Krauss states:

'The new is made comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from forms of the past. Historicism works on the new and different to diminish newness and mitigate difference.'<sup>23</sup> She suggests that historicism is a simplification of the present, which fails to consider or recognise newness, and sees the development of a field as a continuous and stable trajectory without acknowledging the full complexity of that field's changing nature.

Krauss suggests this 'rage to historicize' results in the term sculpture being '[...] forced to cover such a heterogeneity that it is, itself, in danger of collapsing'.<sup>24</sup> Krauss uses the term heterogeneity (something composed of parts of different kinds) to suggest that there are fundamentally different kinds of practice that the term sculpture (the term's meaning and function) cannot fully accommodate. She suggests that by continuing to use the term sculpture to describe such a range of disparate and unrelated activity, the term itself is in danger of collapse, and that its overuse or inappropriate use leads to a meaninglessness, redundancy or exhaustion.

Krauss's solution to this problem is the identification of the 'differently structured possibilities', in the form of the three metaterms, which identify parts of the heterogeneous field. The result of identifying the three metaterms is that, 'Sculpture is rather only one term on the periphery of a field in which there are other, differently structured possibilities.'<sup>25</sup> By introducing the metaterms, Krauss not only identifies and names these differently structured possibilities, but also provides a more complex and specific language to approach the newness of this work, the potential of a specific intelligibility.

The many parallels between Krauss's text and the current identity of glass as an area of activity shown by the diagram generated by this project (Figure No. 5) warrant consideration. Glass as an area of activity, is a field that groups together a disparate array of approaches and priorities because of their common material, and in doing so, often overlooks the 'differently structured possibilities' it contains. In its inclusivity, glass as an area of activity too often elides difference by the simplification of material similarity, thereby ignoring the significant differences in content or intention.

The difference between Figures No. 6 and No. 7 visually demonstrates this problem. The former shows the field as it is too often described, in its entirety – a description which does not recognise its heterogeneity, while Figure No. 7 makes evident one of the many clusters of activity sited in the field, where an intelligibility specific to that area could be developed and applied.

Perhaps by continuing to use familiar terms such as Glass Artist, and the accepted and established forms of practice and criticism that accompany such descriptions, we are denying ourselves the opportunity to embrace and understand new developments. We are in danger, as Krauss states, of diminishing newness and mitigating difference.

The act of linking contemporary works only to the lineage of Studio Glass is a form of historicism, which fails to recognise that glass as an area of activity is a hybrid field, one informed by internal and external traditions and debates. The outliers for example, share a lineage that belongs as much to other forms of art-practice (performance, video, conceptual art) as to forms of Studio Glass.

There is a need to fully acknowledge the differently structured possibilities and subsequently deal with these differences in the practices of writing, curation, and exhibition and distribution, in a way that acknowledges these differences. What is at stake is the intelligibility of the breadth of approaches that constitute the field.

Is collapse the correct word to use to describe the contemporary nature of glass as a field of activity? The practices of the outliers continue to force terms such as glass artist into ever more difficult territory as a summary of all types of practice, leading to an exhaustion of the term. But, the diagram (see Figure No. 5) as a visualisation of the field, its edges undulating and protruding, depicts not a collapse but other metaphors of transformation: shattering, fluidity, spreading, melting, dissolving.

For example, the description of a dissolving field allows an explanation of strain at its edges, of separation and of disappearance. It also suggests that some works or even artists have spread further away and are no longer to be seen on the diagram. Such works or practices have not been plotted on the diagram because they are not represented in the sources used to provide the examples for this project (the journals, catalogues and websites used to compile the list of 100 works, and sources such as the systems of peer review which work on a material specific definition). In this way the diagram represents only the data that has been entered into it – it is a visual representation of the sources used.

## Postmodern practices

In the final paragraphs of her text, Krauss aims to define the nature of postmodern practice, and it is here that perhaps the most challenging question emerges for the field of glass as an area of activity. Krauss states:

'[...] within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium – sculpture – but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium – photography, books, lines on the walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself – might be used.'<sup>26</sup>

For an area that defines itself by a commonality of material, this statement would seem to suggest a particular problem. It highlights a conflict or contradiction at the heart of glass as an area of activity, a conflict between the material specificity of the field and the potential of the material for the exploration of a set of cultural terms – terms defined by Seth Kim-Cohen as the exploration of culture, language, knowledge and society.<sup>27</sup>

Once again, this conflict becomes most evident through the consideration of the outliers. Here the exploration of culture, language, knowledge, and society is prioritised (as recognised by the metaterm, prioritised concept), as carried out through a material-specific practice. Defined by its relation to a medium, the field of glass as an area of activity for the exploration of cultural terms, becomes conflicted and arguably limited.

The specific inclusivity of material also potentially limits the types of works or practices that can be included in the field. This is a particular problem with

postmodern practices, which, as Krauss states, will see the same artist occupying different positions in the expanded field at different times. She states:

'With regard to individual practice, it is easy to see that many of the artists in question have found themselves occupying, successively, different places within the expanded field.'<sup>28</sup>

Krauss's statement can be seen in many contemporary practices; however, within a material-specific field, something particular occurs. By occupying different positions, an artist's output will at times be included in glass as an area of activity and sometimes not. This process of inclusion or exclusion from the field is specific to a particular object or project, and is unable to consider a holistic view of an artist's practice.

An example of this movement from inclusion to exclusion, is the British based Danish artist Lise Autogena, who in the late 1990s was producing cast glass sculptures which explored light, architecture and new technology.<sup>29</sup> Ten years later, Autogena's practice dramatically increased in ambition and intent, and employed complex interdisciplinary working. For example, a project called *Sound Mirror* (2000) attempted to construct two large, concrete, acoustic mirrors, one located in England and the other in France, to enable a conversation between people on opposite sides of the English Channel.<sup>30</sup>

The effect of the change in, or development of Autogena's practice in terms of medium, her occupation of a different position in Krauss's sense, is the movement of her practice from inclusion in the field of glass as

an area of activity, to its exclusion. In a field not tied to a material specificity, such as contemporary art, the thought of no longer examining an artist's practice due to a change in media – a change having nothing to do with the quality of ideas or intention – would be unthinkable. In this way glass as an area of activity is limited by its material constraint.

This example of a practice moving from a position of inclusion in the field to its exclusion would suggest that the diagram has an edge or threshold. Many of the practitioners whose works have been situated on the diagram at the furthest distance from studio glass (particularly the work of the outliers) would have an experience of this threshold – an experience of inclusion and exclusion, at times by choice and at times because of the material-specific definition of the field.

It is at this threshold that the conflict or contradiction at the heart of glass as an area of activity can be seen most clearly. The field's material-specific definition forms a hard edge, which both defines and protects glass as an area of activity through a stated difference from other fields.

In *Thinking Through Craft*, Glenn Adamson discusses how a field gains a clear sense of itself through such oppositional relation to other fields. Discussing craft's relation to art, Adamson forwards a positive conception of craft, where craft's identity and its possibilities are defined through a form of opposition to art, suggesting that: '[...] the limits embodied by craft are not only psychologically comforting, but also conceptually useful'.<sup>31</sup>

Adamson's discussion of the forming of a position through opposition, of gaining clarity by being other, seems to describe aspects of the Outliers. The Outliers demonstrate the most complex relation to Studio Glass,

an acute awareness of its history and context, using it as inspiration or frustration for contemporary work, but often from a critical or provocational stance – a position which is in itself distinctly postmodern, an attitude towards history which is anti-heritage. In this respect, it could be argued that many of the outliers aren't fully intelligible without their relation, or opposition, to studio glass.

However, I would argue that many of the outliers are not just about opposition, but offer much more and could be described as occupying two contexts. First, their works are part of the field of glass as an area of activity where they challenge and expand the nature of the field. Secondly, the best of these works move beyond a simply oppositional stance and transcend the field's systems of exhibition, commission, or criticism, whereby the context of glass as an area of activity falls away, and the works stand in their own right, as works of art.



## A note to the reader

This project and the resulting text is the product of a seemingly simple and straightforward question: how do you describe what you do? How we answer this question is vitally important, and the implications of our answer are far-reaching, affecting the opportunities we gain and the audiences we reach, and ultimately feeding back and shaping the field in which we produce work.

But any answer is certainly not as simple as the question, particularly so in the field of glass as an area of activity where terms such as glass artist have been stretched to exhaustion. But what would your answer be? Should you mention the birth of Studio Glass, and the fact that you have studied in a glass department? Or, should you say that you are an artist, that you make sculpture, installation, or performance, and not mention glass?

As the reader, where would you position your work on the diagram? Who are your closest neighbours? And what relation do you really have with the 100 works that surround you?

It is my hope, that, by situating yourself on the diagram, allied with the relevance of Krauss's text, you will be able to answer these questions with clarity and knowledge, clearly stating your relation to the field, whether antagonistic, frustrated, or estranged...

**Jerome Harrington**

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The ambition of this project was to raise questions, and in this spirit feedback is welcomed, please feel to comment:

[www.glassintheexpandedfield.blogspot.com](http://www.glassintheexpandedfield.blogspot.com)

## Endnotes

- 1 Rosalind E. Krauss (1977), 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1985, pp. 276–90, p. 279.
- 2 Louis Hébert (2006), *The Semiotic Square*, [www.signosemio.com/greimas/a\\_carresemiotique.asp](http://www.signosemio.com/greimas/a_carresemiotique.asp) [accessed 26 September 2011].
- 3 The two works by Rodin are *Gates of Hell* and the statue of *Balzac*.
- 4 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 280.
- 5 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 282.
- 6 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 283. Krauss states: 'For, if those terms are the expression of a logical opposition stated as a pair of negatives, they can be transformed by a simple inversion into the same polar opposites but expressed positively.'
- 7 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 287.
- 8 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 287.
- 9 Corning Museum of Glass, *The Beginning of the Studio Movement*, [www.cmog.org/dynamic.aspx?id=1792#.TycIDGDp7gl](http://www.cmog.org/dynamic.aspx?id=1792#.TycIDGDp7gl) [accessed 3 February 2012].
- 10 Susanne K. Frantz, *Contemporary Glass: A World Survey* from the Corning Museum of Glass, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989. pp. 48–49.
- 11 Franz, *Contemporary Glass*, p. 47.
- 12 Franz, *Contemporary Glass*, p. 54.
- 13 For example, the establishment of glass departments in universities and art schools began at the University of Wisconsin in 1962, the Royal College of Art in 1964, and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in 1965 (to cite a few examples). Other organisational structures which helped promote and establish the field of glass practice were established in the 1970's, such as The Glass Art Society in 1971, conferences such as 'Glass art today: Art or Craft?' in 1972, or exhibitions which attempted to survey studio glass as a worldwide phenomena, such as the 1979 Corning Museum of Glass exhibition, 'New Glass: A World Wide Survey. Franz, *Contemporary Glass*, p. 129–159.
- 14 Franz, *Contemporary Glass*, p. 48. '[...] the importance Littleton placed on work being designed and made by the same person...'
- 15 The prioritisation of skill or technique isn't a concern in the initial stages, but one that seems to gradually emerge to the situation where an artist might become known for their focus and mastery of a particular process or technique. The Corning Museum of Glass's website states: 'American studio glass artists gradually shifted their attention to technique in the late 1960s, looking for guidance to Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and especially to Italy, countries famous for their glass working expertise.' [www.cmog.org/dynamic.aspx?id=1792#.TyyMcWDp7gl](http://www.cmog.org/dynamic.aspx?id=1792#.TyyMcWDp7gl) [accessed 3 February 2012].
- 16 Full list of books and other publications used: Blanche Craig (ed.) *Contemporary Glass* (2008), Black dog publishing, London  
Titus M. Eliens and Caroline Pnisse (eds.) *Glas Gerrit Rietveld Academie Amsterdam 1969–2009* (2009), Waanders Uitgevers – Zwolle  
*New Glass Review 30*. The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York (2009)  
*New Glass*, Fall 2009 (3/09)
- 17 Full list of websites used:  
Matters of Perception conference: [www.europeanglass.wordpress.com](http://www.europeanglass.wordpress.com)  
How is this glass? [www.howisthisglass.blogspot.com](http://www.howisthisglass.blogspot.com)  
Crafts Council exhibition, Breath Taking: [www.breath-taking.org.uk](http://www.breath-taking.org.uk)  
Josiah McElheny: [blog.art21.org/2008/05/29/josiah-mcelheny-conceptual-drawings-for-a-chandelier-1965](http://blog.art21.org/2008/05/29/josiah-mcelheny-conceptual-drawings-for-a-chandelier-1965)  
Kate Williams: [www.katewilliams.org](http://www.katewilliams.org)
- 18 Video: Work No. 30 (*3,660 Seconds*, Emma Hogarth), Work No. 49 (*Conceptual Drawings for a Chandelier*, 1965, Josiah McElheny), Work No. 50 (*The Shape of Emotion 2*, Kimberly McKinnis), Work No. 91 (*We are between You and Me, Glass*, Barbara Amalie Skovmand Thomsen).
- 19 Performance: Work No. 2 (*Glass Haircut*, Alexandra Ben-Abba), Work No. 54 (17 minutes, Anna Norberg), Work No. 64 (*Spin Event Performance*, Jocelyne Prince), Work No. 77 (*Walking on Glass*, Rui Sasaki).
- 20 Culturally sited ideas of material: Work No. 25 (*The Glass Archive*, Jerome Harrington).
- 21 Challenge notions of finish/permanence of art object: Work No. 80 (*My Stress Is Gone Now*, Franz Schonbeck).
- 22 Ambitious site-specific strategies: Work No. 1 (*Sea Glass*, Marc Barreda), Work No. 7 (*Shake Pole*, Richard Box).
- 23 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 277.
- 24 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 279.
- 25 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 284.
- 26 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 288.
- 27 Seth Kim-Cohen, *Sculpture in the Reduced Field: Robert Morris and Minimalism Beyond Phenomenology*, [www.kimcohen.com/seth\\_texts/Sculpture%20In%20The%20Reduced%20Field.pdf](http://www.kimcohen.com/seth_texts/Sculpture%20In%20The%20Reduced%20Field.pdf) [accessed 27 September 2011] Kim-Cohen suggests that cultural situation refers to the investigation of 'culture, language, knowledge, and society'. Stating that: 'Krauss locates the Modern-Postmodern rupture in the difference between a concern with a medium's material versus a concern with its terms; a difference between *physis* and *nomos*, between matter and discourse.' p. 18.
- 28 Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 288.
- 29 Crafts Council Gallery, Louise Taylor and Andrew Lockhart, *Glass, Light and Space: new proposals for the use of glass in architecture*. London: Crafts Council, 1997, pp. 16–17.
- 30 Lise Autogena, *The Sound Mirrors Project*, [www.soundmirrors.org](http://www.soundmirrors.org) [accessed 27 September 2011].
- 31 Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers in association with the Victoria & Albert Museum, 2007, p. 5.