

Liquid nature captured in glass

Art glass design by Ola Höglund and Marie Simberg-Höglund is totally unique. It explores the fluid brilliance of the crystal glass and reflects the movement and beauty of the natural environment. In their Rainforest Graal Collection, Ola and Marie combine the craftsmanship of their Swedish heritage with a Pacific flair, creating glass artwork that has earned them worldwide praise.

Each Rainforest Graal piece is a singular work of art, engraved with its individual title and code, numbered and signed by the artists, and accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. Any Graal piece from this fine collection is an investment that will appreciate in value over time - a true collector's treasure.

What is Graal Glass?

According to the legend, the Holy Grail (Graal) was the chalice used at the First Communion and was also used to collect the blood of Christ during His Crucifixion. The Holy Grail was later discovered in England by the chaste Knight Perseval, who brought the chalice to King Arthur's court.

There are many myths surrounding the Holy Grail. One compares the search for the Holy Grail with man's search for his inner being and another says that whoever drank from the chalice would have everlasting life.

At first glance a Graal piece can appear



uncomplicated. The intricacy of the Graal technique often eludes the untrained eye. But each Graal piece, with its elaborate decoration suspended in several layers

of crystal glass, can take more than 40 hours to complete. Artistic sensitivity, intuition and great skill are required throughout the long, complicated and risky process. Each stage of the heating and annealing (gradual cooling) cycle generates stress within the different layers of crystal glass and must be carefully controlled.

Making a Graal vessel involves Ola first blowing a small, clear bubble of glass, often no bigger than an egg, and overlaying it with hot coloured crystal glass. This is known as a Graal 'blank'. A few days later, when the blank has been annealed and cooled, Marie and her assistants either cut, engrave or etch into the blank through the various layers of colour. This creates patterns and images similar to those created in the Cameo Technique (where upper layers are cut away to create a relief design).

The blank is reheated, attached to the blowpipe and coated with more layers of clear crystal glass.

Up to five layers can be used on each piece.

At this moment the air bubbles are trapped, bringing the individual character and beauty of the handblown glass to life. Ola and his team of assistants then blow the vessel into its final enlarged size.

For some of the Graal work, Ola uses the Incalmo technique where the piece is blown in two different





bubbles of glass. The two bubbles are then joined while still on the blowpipe, and fused together before the mouth/opening(?) of the vase is created. Although appearing deceptively light and delicate to the eye, each finished piece is extremely heavy and can weigh up to 12 kilograms (?).

Light bounces off the surface of these brilliant Graal pieces and is absorbed and distorted to create deep shadows and stunning three-dimensional effects within the glass. The layers play with the light, creating a luxurious translucence that captivates the gaze and draws you deep inside.

Each piece of the Rainforest Graal Collection traps the soft colours and shapes of nature, suspending energy, movement and depth as if in mid air.

These mesmerising pieces of glass art are a source of pure pleasure.

The Story of Glass

Throughout the ages, glass has always been a rare and highly prized commodity. It has been considered as precious as the finest jewels and rarer than gold. It is one of a very few substances that has no crystalline structure and although it appears solid, it is in fact a substance that has passed from a molten to rigid state without structural change. It is a 'cooled liquid'.

The history of glass is almost as old as the history of man. Chipped tools, made from volcanic glass, have been found dating back 78,000 years.

According to legend, man first made glass about 2000 BC. Phoenician sailors set up a camp on the sandy beach of a river in Syria and built a fireplace to support the cooking pots for their evening meal, using pieces of sodium carbonate found in their cargo from Egypt. The next morning they discovered that the sodium had fused with the sand and formed clumps of a clear substance - glass.

For almost 4,000 years, glass has been made by melting sand at a temperature of approximately 1,400 Degrees Celsius, using a flux such as soda to help it melt. The introduction of the glassblower's pipe, shortly before the birth of Christ, was a revolutionary event in the history of glass making and the tools and techniques used to form the molten glass have changed very little over the centuries.

For the last 400 years crystal glass contained lead, which gives it a brilliant and reflective quality. Today crystal glass can be made with all the same qualities of lead crystal glass, but replacing the lead with another substance such as a metallic oxide.

The Höglund Art Glass Rainforest Graal Collection has been made from the highest quality lead free crystal glass.