



# GLASS CHRYSLIS II

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery  
Canberra Glassworks  
JamFactory

**Wagga Wagga Art Gallery**, home of the National Art Glass Collection and Gallery has supported Australian art glass and artist practice and development for 50 years. In 2025 we are proud to present the exhibition *Glass Chrysalis II* - celebrating exceptional promise in the work of early career Australian glass artists. Co-curated by the Gallery, **Canberra Glassworks** and **JamFactory**, Adelaide, *Glass Chrysalis II* showcases six recent graduates of university and residency programs: Jordan Benson, Madeline Cardone, Calum Donaldson, Hamish Donaldson, Carman Skeehan and Isobel Waters.

These six artists were identified for their creativity, their uncommon commitment to practice, innovation of form and exquisite technical prowess. Displayed here, their work is an acknowledgment of the many influential artists, mentors and teachers who came before them. It is also a window into the wider field of contemporary Australian studio glass.

The gallery would like to thank Caroline Field, Curator ACU Art Collection for her celebratory essay. Our thanks also to our institutional partners JamFactory and Canberra Glassworks. Their support and stewardship of outstanding Australian glass artists over some decades has led to significant developments in practice, and greatly elevated the art form.

Dr Lee-Anne Hall  
Director  
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery +  
The National Art Glass Gallery

## With Promise and Gift Glass Chrysalis II

## Glass Chrysalis 11: Where tradition meets innovation

In the dynamic realm of contemporary art, few mediums combine aesthetic resonance and technical challenge the way glass does. A fragile medium of exquisite beauty and great impact, glass is a compelling vehicle for artists keen to push traditional boundaries. The artists shown in *Glass Chrysalis II* combine time-honoured techniques of working with glass with fearless experimentation to redefine the possibilities of the medium.

*Glass Chrysalis II* brings together work created over the past two years by six exciting young Australian artists: Jordan Benson, Madeline Cardone, Calum Donaldson, Hamish Donaldson, Carman Skeehan and Isobel Waters, selected by a curatorial panel from Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Canberra Glassworks and Adelaide's JamFactory. This triennial exhibition states its intention in its title, 'chrysalis' pointing both to early career artists and to the transformational possibilities offered by glass. It is a vital incubator for young artists, 'an ongoing opportunity', says co-curator Michael Scarrone, 'to support emerging artists and ... give them exposure in the Australian studio glass scene and to exhibit in the National Art Glass Gallery'.<sup>1</sup>

These artists are diverse in their influences, concerns and practices. Based in Melbourne, Jordan Benson is a painter and stained-glass artist who fuses the visual languages of graphic design and graffiti with the splendour of Gothic stained glass. A 2022 graduate of Melbourne Polytechnic, his passion for this medium was kindled while travelling through Europe in 2018.<sup>2</sup> The radiance of cathedral windows left a lasting impression on him. Combining digital design, painting and etching, Benson makes works that shift between the familiar and the transcendent, as he transforms expressions of

the everyday into moments of illuminated beauty.

Donna Kennedy, director of GLASS Inc., notes that Benson has developed a distinctive voice, creating something extraordinary from imagery of the ordinary—a milk crate, a tram, traffic lights. His works capture an energy, the vitality of which feels youthful and urgent, drawing on the radiance of glass while adding a charge uniquely his own.<sup>3</sup> In his *Car Crash* (2025), a wrecked car becomes a fractured mosaic of intersecting lines and vivid colour. Benson uses the medium's latent tension to probe themes of violence, collision and instability. The work harnesses the moment of destruction, turning chaos into a story of light, resilience and transformation.<sup>4</sup>

Madeline Cardone is a 2018 graduate of the Australian National University (ANU) School of Art and Design and is based in Canberra. Her practice is informed by her Italian heritage, and this lineage and memory are quiet undercurrents through her work and have shaped her fascination with glass. Cardone's work is highly focused and restrained; she reflects that:

I usually work with an absence of colour, often using black material to explore a tactile experience of light and shadow. I see colour through this lens—the way the changing qualities of light and shadow generate subtle variations in the shade, tone and tint of colour in the environments that surround us day to day.<sup>5</sup>

Cardone explores black glass as a living 'skin', coaxing it through sandblasting and refiring into surfaces that shift from velvety matt to a gleaming sheen. Her sculptural forms are slumped, twisted and resist containment; they evoke bones, geological strata and primordial anatomies, and invite slow, tactile contemplation of their materiality. They sit at an intersection between organic archaism and technological futurism. Cardone seems to treat glass as both a corporeal and architectural skin, revealing through her work how surfaces conceal and expose, and

<sup>3</sup> Donna Kennedy, interview with author, 8 September 2025.

<sup>4</sup> See also, Sophie Berrill, 'Reviving an age-old craft', *Inside: Interior Design Review*, no. 121, 2005, pp. 63–67.

<sup>5</sup> Madeline Cardone, <https://craftanddesigncanberra.org/collections/madeline-cardone>, accessed 8 September 2025

<sup>1</sup> Michael Scarrone, email to the author, 10 September 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan Benson, interview with author, 21 August 2025.



she urges us to consider how textures shape identity and space.<sup>6</sup>

Working from their Red Hill studio on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, Hamish and Calum Donaldson are the sons of established glass artists Grant and Eileen Donaldson. The brothers are a clear presence in Australia's contemporary glassblowing scene and recently exhibited in the family's landmark exhibition, *Blowing in a New Era*, at McClelland Gallery.

A 2022–23 graduate of Adelaide's acclaimed JamFactory Associate Program, Calum Donaldson studied under esteemed glassblower Drew Spangenberg where he specialised in murrine, a technique through which delicate glass canes are cajoled into intricate internal patterns that reveal, when sliced, hidden worlds. In recent works such as *Moss Mania* (2025), he surrenders to glass's wild side: exposed murrine erupts into bulbous, organic forms that evoke deep forests or alien landscapes. Rough, unpolished surfaces ignite a visceral effect along every contour, as the artist embraces a medley of textures and the energy that courses through gnarled ridges and shadowed crevices.

Each piece of work is infused with adventurous spirit, which creates a dynamic interplay of calculated risk and joyous spontaneity. Calum is fascinated with metals within glass—copper and iron—which lead to fleeting shimmering and flickering reactions that highlight how imperfection and unpredictability can transform raw material into unexpectedly poetic forms.<sup>7</sup>

Although Hamish Donaldson, like his brother, was raised in a family of glassmakers, he worked with it intermittently, only committing to the medium in the wake of four years' carpentry training and extensive travels through South America. Fascinated with the meticulous geometry, ritual structures and architectural, functional and symbolic resonances he found there, Hamish discovered the influences that continue to shape his approach to working with glass.

<sup>6</sup> Madeline Cardone, interview with author, 22 August 2025.  
<sup>7</sup> Calum Donaldson, interview with author, 1 September 2025.

Hamish's recent installations capture the awe and solemnity of monumental space. His practice holds an equilibrium: strength and delicacy that are resolved in forms of striking sophistication. In works such as *its mother is the moon* (2025), in which two forms are glued together, he experiments with scale, extending the possibilities of large-format glass. Layered panels, finely etched surfaces and subtle inflections of light create a language of transcendence. The artist elaborates:

This work is an ode to the elemental composition of nature, both within and without, above and below. It speaks to the waters that move across the Earth and, in turn, flow within us: from the tides of the ocean to the emotional currents shaped by the rhythms of the moon. The chalice stands open and receptive, a vessel for the unseen realms of emotion and intuition. A symbol of the feminine aspect, it embodies the receptive nature that balances the dual nature of reality.<sup>8</sup>

Hamish's work will be presented in the prestigious Rigg Design Prize at the National Gallery of Victoria later this year.

Adelaide-based Carman Skeehan graduated from the ANU School of Art and Design in 2019. She completed the JamFactory Associate Program in 2023 and participated in a Canberra Glassworks Residency in 2024. She weaves memory and narrative into luminous glassworks, translating painting and still life traditions into shimmering, nostalgic vignettes. Meticulous shaping and flameworking define Skeehan's practice, with each part of the process integral to the result.<sup>9</sup>

In works such as her *Baby's Breath* (2025), delicate, budlike petals protrude, echoing childhood gardens and quiet recollections. Fallen petals evoke nature's cycles of decay and renewal, while every curve and contour holds a fragment of personal history. This fusion of enduring motifs with

<sup>8</sup> Hamish Donaldson, email to author, 22 August 2025.  
<sup>9</sup> Carman Skeehan, interview with author, 25 August 2025.

experimentation reflects a renaissance spirit, an artist pursuing mastery while exploring new expressive territory. In her hands, glass becomes a vessel for collective memory and for comforting, intimate stories—a testament to the power of the medium and of our shared pasts to move us.

Isobel Waters, who in 2024 graduated from ANU's School of Visual Art and Design, turns glass into eloquent homages to unseen labour—casting an incandescent glow across prosaic practices of care. She has received invaluable technical support from Canberra glass artist Catherine Newton and was mentored by distinguished glass-blowing artists Tom Rowney and Annette Blair at Canberra Glassworks.<sup>10</sup> For her *Glass Chrysalis* installation, *The Mental Load* (2025), a reimagined clothes horse of charred timber cradles rows of delicate glass pegs, each a silent sentinel for the countless gestures of tending and holding. The luminous pegs hover like whispered acknowledgment of domestic toil, their precarious suspension reflecting the delicate balance of unpaid work that underpins so many of our lives.

Waters also explores trompe-l'œil effects, using realistic imagery to create the illusion of three-dimensional objects and spaces. The result is almost hallucinatory, inviting viewers to look twice and to question assumptions of the differences between materiality and perception. Her alchemical process begins by returning glass to frit and bringing it back to life through refiring—a ritual of decay and renewal that mirrors the cycles of labour and care. Through the glass technique *pâte de verre*, she layers glass powders into intimate, tactile forms, tiny topographies of resilience that reward close inspection. In Waters' practice, glass becomes more than material; it transforms into a textured vessel of social strength, delicate yet steadfast, bearing witness to the unsustainable systems and invisible acts that sustain us all.

*Glass Chrysalis II* captures a specific moment along the timeline of contemporary glass art in Australia. While it

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10 Isobel Waters, interview with author, 29 August 2025.

showcases the exceptional work of six stellar early career artists, it also underscores the roles of mentorship, professional support and creative risk in driving innovation and sustaining a vital art glass ecology. As Canberra Glassworks artistic director Aimee Frodsham, observes:

It's really exciting to see the vocational training producing artists of this calibre, who are using a broad range of techniques and exploring both non-abstract and conceptual concepts. We need to continue supporting this new generation of glass makers so they can create bold, innovative works. They are deeply passionate about their craft, and collectively, they represent an inspiring evolution in contemporary glass art.<sup>11</sup>

This new generation of glass artists is not merely inheriting a tradition; it is reimagining it.

Caroline Field  
Curator, ACU Art Collection  
September 2025

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11 Aimee Frodsham, interview with author, 4 September 2025.

## Artists

Jordan Benson  
Madeline Cardone  
Calum Donaldson  
Hamish Donaldson  
Carman Skeehan  
Isobel Waters



# Isobel Waters

Lives and works in Adelaide SA

Isobel Waters' glass practice is informed by her experience as an acute care physiotherapist, where she engaged daily with the physical and emotional complexities of the human body. This clinical background continues to shape her approach to material and form, driving a practice that interrogates both personal and socio-political dimensions of health, care, and embodiment.

Working across glassblowing, kiln forming, flameworking, cold working, and assemblage, Waters creates visceral, anthropomorphic pieces that explore the fragility, strength, and adaptability of the body. Her work often invites interactive or immersive viewing experiences, encouraging audiences to reflect on their own physicality and the broader systems that govern healthcare, wellness, and the human condition.

Through layered processes and tactile surfaces, Waters aims to evoke the rawness of bodily experience—scars, tension, healing, and resilience. Her work exists in a space between art and anatomy, where glass becomes a medium for empathy, critique, and transformation.

Isobel Waters trained initially as a Physiotherapist, before undertaking a Bachelor of Visual Arts at the ANU where she specialised in glass. She is currently completing Honours at the University of South Australia.





Isobel Waters, *Discords*, 2025  
kiln formed glass, nails, silicone





Isobel Waters  
*The Mental Load (draped corner piece)*  
2025, installation view  
Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery





## Jordan Benson

Lives and works in Heidelberg VIC

Jordan Benson's work is concerned with capturing a moment or interaction, witnessed or imagined. Using the medium of stained glass, Benson explores 'disgusting, confronting or everyday scenes' found in the public sphere, be it grime, trash, vandalism, graffiti. His work actively subverts the notion that glass should be 'gorgeous or awe inspiring'.

Jordan Benson is a design graduate of Gordon Institute of TAFE, Geelong, and holds qualifications in Glass and Glazing from Melbourne Polytechnic. Benson has exhibited widely, and undertaken a postgraduate residency at Canberra Glassworks. He is a full time artist and teacher at Melbourne Polytechnic.





Jordan Benson, *Crash*, 2025  
stained, etched, plated, lead.





Jordan Benson  
Various works 2025, installation view  
Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery





## Madeline Cardone

Lives and works in Canberra ACT

Madeline Cardone contemplates the body's relationship to space; the space beneath, the space it holds, and the space it evokes. The glass is a skin that suggests holding and containing, but also letting go. This connection to the body is personal and speaks of experiences being uncomfortable in one's own skin, of taking up space, or surrendering to it. The act of making too is personal. Memory is embedded in material. The work doesn't dictate meaning but offers space for it; space for the viewer to bring their own body and own narrative.

In this liminal state, glass opens a dialogue between body and matter, moment and memory, presence and trace. Though ambiguous, it evokes a strange familiarity—a sense of the corporeal, or a terrain—while shifting our understanding of what materials can hold, reflect, and become.

Madeline Cardone is a graduate of the ANU School of Art and Design (2018). She is a past recipient of the Bassett Downs Scholarship, 2021, the Ausglass Vicki Torr Emerging Artist Prize, 2022, and the Aldo Bellini Acquisition Award for Milano Vetro Under-35, 2024.





Madeline Cardone, *Eminence*, 2025  
kiln formed



Madeline Cardone  
2025, installation view  
Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery





## Calum Donaldson

Lives and works in Redhill VIC

Calum Donaldson's practice is rooted in the traditions of glassblowing and coldworking, drawing deeply from his family's generational history of glassmaking. This legacy informs not only his technical approach but also his respect for the material's inherent complexity. He works with glass as both a historical medium and a substance capable of transformation, delicacy, and resilience.

Inspired by the rhythms of the natural world, Donaldson's work explores the shifting forms, textures, and tones found in the seasons and the fleeting essences of nature, this approach delivers glass forms that are both abstract and evocative.

While Calum Donaldson's practice foundation is traditional, his approach is exploratory. He is continually investigating new methods and forms, allowing innovation to emerge through process. In honouring the past, Donaldson is actively contributing to a contemporary dialogue with nature, craft, and material.

Donaldson got his technical and artistic grounding working out of Gordon Studio Glassblowers, the Associate program at JamFactory in Adelaide and a Scholarship to Pilchuck Glass School in the USA.









Calum Donaldson  
2025. installation view  
Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery





## Hamish Donaldson

Lives and works in Redhill VIC

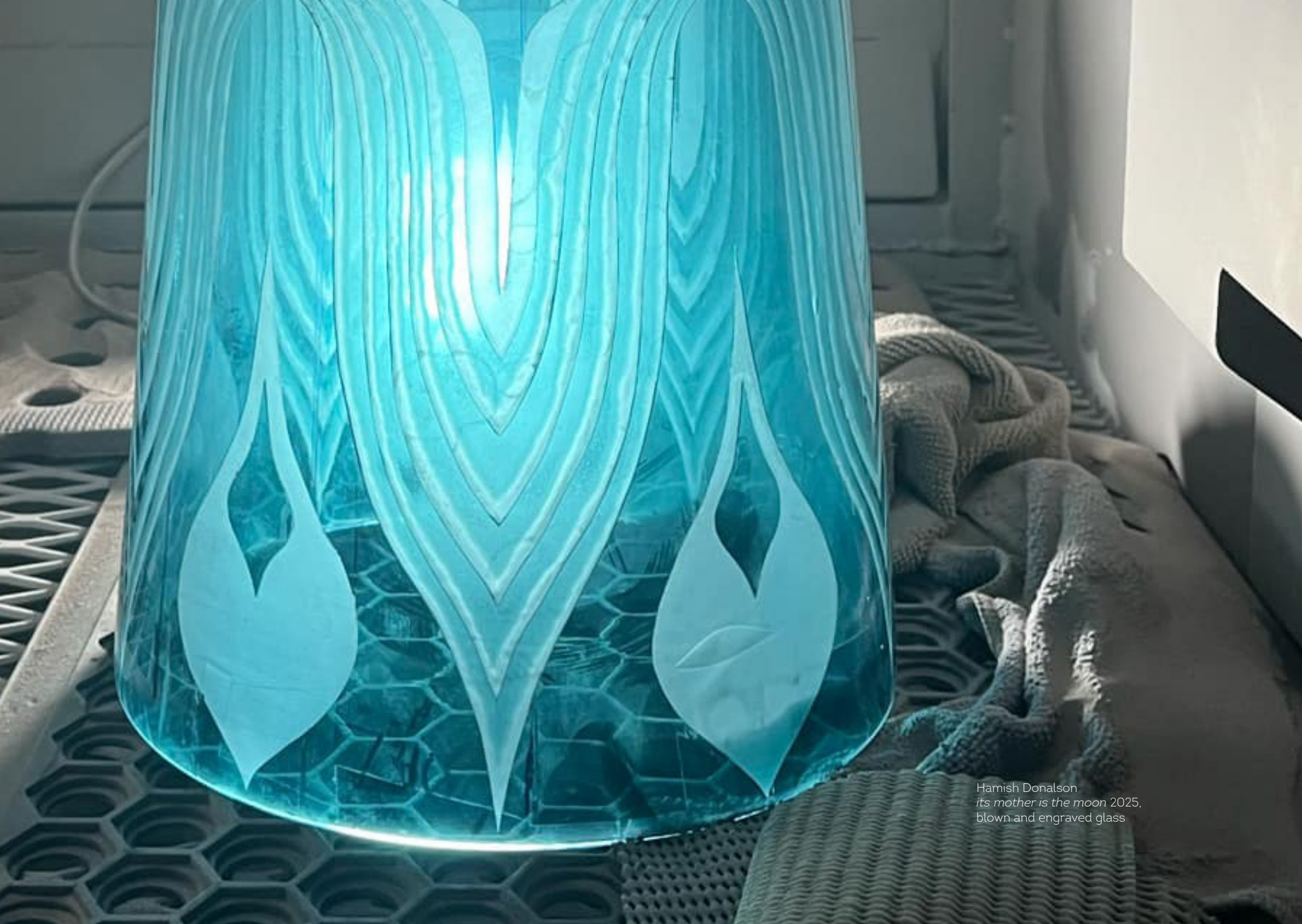
Hamish Donaldson is a third-generation glass artist, carrying the flame of glassblowing and engraving into the modern era. His work involves the application of colour overlay techniques with hand blown forms to create vessels that serve as canvases for intricate surface design. In bridging digital precision and hand drawn detail, culminating in deeply layered engraved glass vessels.

Donaldson began his career at his family's studio, Gordon Studio Glassblowers, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula. He went on to complete the Glass Associate Program at the JamFactory, and take other professional development opportunities, learning from some of the field's leading artists, including Martin Janecky at Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, as well as Australian masters Nick Mount, Tom Moore, Liam Fleming and Scott Chaseling.

Hamish Donaldson has been recognised through finalist selections in the Rigg Design Prize at the NGV 2025, the FUSE Glass Prize Emerging Category, 2020 and 2024, as well as the National Emerging Art Glass Prize at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, 2020.

Today, Donaldson manages and works out of Gordon Studio Glassblowers continuing to deepen his practise in glass blowing and engraving.





Hamish Donalson  
*its mother is the moon* 2025.  
blown and engraved glass





Hamish Donaldson  
2025, installation view  
Photo: Wagga Wagga Art Gallery





## Carmen Skeeihan

Lives and works in Adelaide SA

Carman Skeeihan is a glass artist and maker living on Kaurna land in Adelaide, SA. Her practice centers on storytelling through objects, exploring how domestic routines and overlooked items hold emotional weight. Using glass techniques such as flameworking, kiln forming and coldworking, she assembles still life scenes that reflect memory, repetition and care, drawing on personal experience and shared rituals.

The series *Domestic Archive*, brings together carefully composed still life scenes rendered in glass. Through reimagining toothbrushes, butter dishes and pencils in fragile transparency, the work invites viewers to reconsider the objects that populate our daily lives and how we archive memory through material things.

Carman Skeeihan is a graduate of both the ANU School of Art & Design 2018, and the JamFactory Associate Program, 2023. Now based at the JamFactory, Skeeihan was a finalist in the 2024 FUSE Glass Prize in Adelaide.





Carman Skeeahan, *Domestic Archive - Pencils*, 2025  
blown and flameworked glass, enamel





Wagga Wagga Art Gallery's contribution to Australian art glass is due to the early vision and leadership of its City Council, professional gallery staff, the Wagga Wagga Art Society, Friends of the Gallery, and many donors. Under the leadership of the Gallery's inaugural Director, Judy Lelievre, a glass collecting and specialist acquisition fund was established, resulting in a collection today of over 750 works. In 1992 The collection was formally named as The National Art Glass Collection, in recognition of its significance as the largest public collection of studio art glass in Australia.

Subsequent years saw many developments. With the opening of the National Art Glass Gallery in 1999, the collection was given a dedicated home. The appointment of glass curator Michael Scarrone further enhanced the Gallery's ability to curate and research glass art, commission new works, participate in glass art forums and conferences, support artist incomes and significantly, support the development and exhibition of Australian glass artists.

Over time the Gallery has curated nearly 300 glass exhibitions and exhibited many hundreds of glass artists. It has welcomed over 500,000 visitors since 2000. These metrics reveal Wagga Wagga Art Gallery home to the National Art Glass Collection and Gallery, to have played a pivotal role in the history, practice, development and profile of Australian Glass Art and Artists. It is a history of which this city is deservedly proud.

Jam  
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WAGGA WAGGA  
ART GALLERY

## Curatorial Panel

Canberra Glassworks  
Aimee Frodsham

JamFactory  
Brian Parkes

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery  
Michael Scarrone  
Dr Lee-Anne Hall

## Exhibition Team

Director  
Dr Lee-Anne Hall

National Art Glass Curator  
Michael Scarrone

Exhibition Design and Install  
Drew Halyday  
Dylan Smyth

Curatorial Assistant and Catalogue  
Design  
Claire Wemyss

Programs / Engagement  
Astrid Reed

Retail Operations  
Helen Robb  
Karin Zuge Bruton

## Essay

Caroline Field, Curator - ACU Art  
Collection




Image front & back cover:  
Hamish Donaldson  
*Its the mother is the moon*  
2025, blown and engraved glass

as within so without, 2025  
blown and engraved glass

# GLASS CHRYSALIS II

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery  
27 September 2025 - 31 January 2026

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Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is  
supported by the NSW  
Government through Create NSW.

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is a cultural facility of Wagga Wagga City Council.