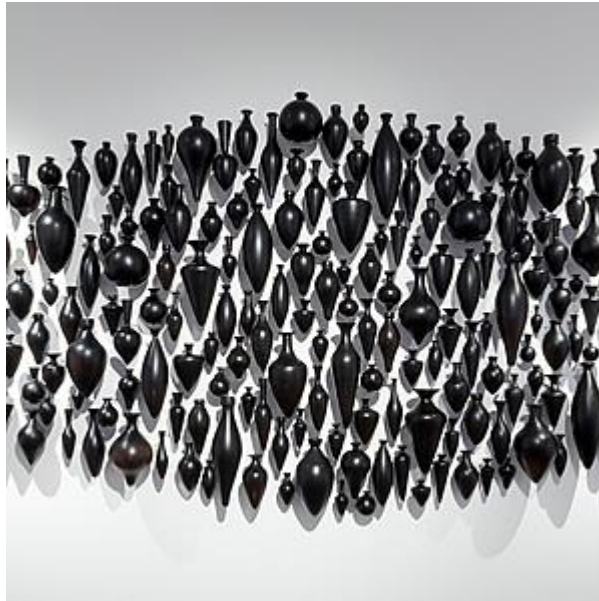


VESSEL GALLERY

LONDON



Baldwin & Guggisberg (Wales -)

Amphora Metaphor

Handblown and cut glass

175 x 460 x 22 cm (68 ⁷/₁₆ x 181 ¹/₁₆ x 8 ⁵/₁₆ inches)

'Amphora Metaphor' is a unique wall-mounted installation by the American and Swiss artists, Philip Baldwin and Monica Guggisberg.

Free blown and carved glass with metal.

The culture of amphorae spans the globe: a symbol of technology, craftsmanship, commerce, agriculture, and especially culture; a ubiquitous and iconic container of beauty and practicality; a designed object of ingenious simplicity and grace; a symbol of civilization. Here its shape in the form of the hull of a ship implies the underwater wrecks found by archaeologists as well as the way they spread across the world: in the belly of ships.

In the artist's own words;

"When we first started thinking about this exhibition we considered doing the entire show in black. It was seriously tempting. But as life-long colourists we hesitated. The installation *Amphora Metaphor* was the solution to honouring this desire, spread across four metres in bold, beautiful black. It gave us the opportunity to express our feelings about the relevance of history as it stretches through time.

Most of what we know about amphorae has been revealed through marine archaeology and evidence gathered from underwater shipwrecks. In yet another instance of fact reinforcing the prejudices of our imaginations, not a week after conceiving the black amphora wall a friend forwarded to us an image* of amphorae nestled in the approximate shape of the boat they had been travelling in when it sank, apparently due to their weight shifting in the hull. This delicious 'coincidence' underscores our natural inclination as artists towards history and understanding our past, and a desire to weave these things together in glass: an acknowledgement, as the critic James Yood once wrote, that 'what we are is rooted in what we were, but we are always heading somewhere we have never been before'."

(*The image in question was a Roman wreck discovered off Kefalonia where it sank some time between 100 BCE and 100 CE, its cargo of 6000 amphorae still retaining the outline of the ship's hull)

Artist description:

Baldwin (1947, New York) and Guggisberg (1955, Bern) have been a collaborative team for over forty years. They share an instinctive appreciation for the subtle blending of art and design, functionality and abstract expression, combined with a love of material – especially glass.

The list of museums and collections which have acquired their works is long and impressive. Individual showings, as well as participation in group shows, have given them opportunities to present their works at leading galleries and in major museums in Europe, Japan and the United States and their works rank among the best to be found in the international glass art scene. Working freelance, they have also designed successful products for international glass manufacturers since 1985. Their clients have included renowned firms like Rosenthal, Steuben, Corning and Venini.

Over time their work has developed its own distinctive signature, based in Italian cold-working (battuto) combined with the Swedish overlay process for layering colours. They have been pioneers in adapting these techniques and in creating a distinct expression of their own. Colour, light, texture, pattern, and shape together reveal an undercurrent of meaning and value, adhering to the simplest of forms and clear lines.

Over the years they have become more sculptural in focus, while seeking to imbue their work with a deep connection to archetypal forms and shapes, and striving for the highest level of craftsmanship. They address eternal symbols of human culture and history, while embracing contemporary evolution in form and meaning.

In recent years large installations and major exhibitions in public spaces, such as Canterbury Cathedral, UK in (2018) and more recently The Glasmuseum Ebeltoft in Denmark (2020-2021) increasingly reflect their concerns for the shared world of our times, highlighting some of the challenges while continuing to express their love for beauty in form and object.

They now live and work in rural Wales.