

VESSEL GALLERY

LONDON



Bertil Vallien (Sweden 1938 -)

Super Egg Pale Jade

'Super Egg Pale Jade' is a unique glass artwork by the Swedish artist, Bertil Vallien.

Vallien's Super Egg Series from the Kosta Boda Artist Collection are part of the artist's homage to Ingeborg Lundin and her classic Apple. Each artwork is mouth-blown by hand, resulting in a unique object every time.

As kids, we grow up blowing soapy bubbles into pop. It is an entertaining pastime, but also a reminder of how fragile and transient life can be. During a session in the studio, Vallien playfully suggested:

“no casting today, let's blow, let's show what human breath can do with glass.”

In the last thirty years, such bubbles have taken on various scales, from beans and eggs, to watermelons. During the Spring of 2023 and to continue with the blowing, as opposed to the casting, Vallien organised a quasi-competition amongst his team — to see who could blow the biggest bubble, a feat that was both exacting and spontaneous.

The results from that impromptu moment are these exquisite voluminous eggs, each characterised by

Artist description:

Bertil Vallien is a truly groundbreaking figure within Swedish glass art, who needs little introduction for those who love the beauty and mystery of glass as an art form.

Raised as one of seven children, Vallien's Father was an artistic painter & paster of an independent church and his mother was a housewife. Finding school tiresome, he took an early job as a decorator at PUB, which was one of Stockholm's largest department stores.

This early creative breakaway led to Vallien studying art at Konstfack, the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, from which he graduated at the top of his class in 1961 and awarded a Royal Foundation Grant. The early 1960s brought travel within the US & Mexico, gaining Vallien initial success as a ceramicist.

His return to Sweden and a move to the glass making region of Småland, saw Vallien joining Kosta Boda, having caught the attention of its then visionary CEO, Erik Rosén. A pivotal moment which brought about the artist's discovery of sand-casting, a technique for which he would go on to become world renowned for, with his sculptures often in the form of imposing glass ships with intricate encased details.

Like a Jules Verne of glass art, Vallien invents ever new stories, from the utopian to the enchanting. His love of science fiction, as played out in books, films and endless feats of imagination, has come to signify his aesthetic more than anything else. Amid the myriad of his techniques and ideas, one key theme he always returns to, is the vulnerability of the human condition.

Bertil Vallien has held acclaimed exhibitions all over the world. His work is represented in collections and at prestigious museums in Sweden and internationally. A true figurehead within Sweden's rich creative community, although primarily known for his own glass art, Vallien is an abundant source of inspiration for other artists and designers. With 2023 marking 60 years of his partnership with Kosta Boda, the vibrancy of his ideas, are as energetic as ever.

Artist portrait courtesy of Kosta Boda.