



**Michèle Oberdieck (Canada 1966 - )**

**Splendour**

15.5 x 49.5 x 25 cm (6 1/8 x 19 1/2 x 9 7/8 inches)

'Splendour' is a unique glass artwork by the Canadian artist, Michèle Oberdieck.

Oberdieck's aim is to question the effects of climate change, cross-pollination and human intervention, on the natural world around us, highlighting the precarious future survival of our vast, vital and varied species of plants.

Through intense studies of extinct and endangered species at the Herbarium in Kew Gardens, as well as visits to various plant science research centres, has resulted in her own visual catalogue, from which Oberdieck references to create her series of abstracted and imagined plant forms. In essence, assemblages from this exploration, resulting in stylised hybrid botanicals.

Beginning with gestural sketches, Oberdieck has found glass the perfect medium to bring forth her ideas, immortalising them in this alluring material. By simplifying plants to their core elements, the immediacy of blown glass and its fluidity, capture these forms perfectly, which are then carefully combined for her compositions.

In the artist's own words;

“The botanical forms start taking on animated qualities resembling insects and birds, as often seen in nature, taking on the role of a mimic. A role that could improve their chances of future survival. Evolving in a way that their characteristics start to blur the boundaries from one species to another.”

Oberdieck hopes that on viewing her Fantasy Plants, not only will we begin to fully appreciate the beauty that can be found around us but that we start to do all we can to preserve it.

The artist can also create pieces to commission, please contact the gallery for further information.

### **Artist description:**

Michèle Oberdieck explores balance and asymmetry through colour, form and surface decoration. Presenting her sculptural works as a gesture, an expressive mark, often composing individual elements together, she is fascinated in the narratives that can be created.

Drawn to biomorphic structures found in plant growth, life cycles and decay, such as the delicately aging silhouettes of tulip petals, it is these twisted yet beautiful organic shapes, that she aims to capture in her glass.

With a background in printmaking and textiles, involving hand dying and screen-printing fine silks, Oberdieck understands the relationship between colour and light, a relationship that is perfect to further explore with glass. As the artist puts it;

“The luminosity of colours found in the sky, as day turns to dusk, with the pivotal light from the sun or moon glowing through layers of folded clouds, is captivating.”

Oberdieck’s surfaces are achieved by using the classic Swedish technique of Graal; pre-made glass ‘cups’ are externally cut with motifs and patterns. These ‘cups of colour’ are then re-heated and re-blown, as the form evolves and enlarges, these incised marks blend, soften and distort, creating ethereal watery effects.

Fascination with the vast array of plant life and flowers, as reflected in Oberdieck’s earlier botanical textile prints, has come full circle with her most recent sculptural glass series ‘Fantasy Plants’, her reimagining and vision of organic life of the future.

Michèle Oberdieck has been working with blown glass since her MA at the Royal College of Art in 2016. This shift of material was the result of a significant commission involving the development of a new technique of fusing printed fabrics between sheets of glass. A moment that sparked curiosity in this new medium, paving the way for a new creative direction. Previously Oberdieck studied textile design at Glasgow School of Art and ran a successful printed textile practice for several years based at the Oxo Tower, London.

She has exhibited and sold work in Italy, France, Japan, Lebanon, USA, South Korea, Canada, as well as in the UK. Her work was selected for the European Prize for Applied Art Exhibition 2022 in Belgium, as well as the Ireland Glass Biennale 2019, being one of just 50 international artists on show. For the last three years she has been invited to exhibit at Venice Glass Week. In March 2023, she was chosen as just one of only 14 artists by the Crafts Council to exhibit at Collect Open, held at the prestigious

Somerset House. Most recently, Oberdieck was awarded the QEST (Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) grant in 2023, allowing continued training in blown and sculpted glass.