



Sylva Petrová

Czech and Slovak Glass in Exile

Kant



Jeronim Tišljarić

'While working on the project of the interior design of the Croatian Parliament, we encountered manifold problems, predominantly related to the inability of realising our ideas. ...Then we met Jeronim Tišljarić... All dilemmas and questions received their answers. His presence in the team soon became invaluable, and his contribution immeasurable.'
Zvonimir Krznarić, architect¹

Jeronim Tišljarić's places of professional activity are located in a triangle of three central European cities: Zagreb, Vienna and Prague. Zagreb is the capital city of Croatia where he lives and works at the moment, Prague is the place where he studied and lived before, and Vienna is a city in which he has found work opportunities and good professional contacts as well.

When the young Tišljarić made the decision to opt for glass studies in the early 1980s, he actually made the decision to study abroad at the same time. Although his native country had a good tradition in glass industry, its studio glass movement was at that time in the very early stages of its development. There was no possibility of a complex glass education.

Thanks to a lucky coincidence, Jeronim Tišljarić was accepted into the glass department of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague, where he became one of Libenský's last students before the legendary glass artist was forced to retire in 1987 by the Czechoslovak regime. Jeronim Tišljarić was given a unique opportunity to study under the greatest glass art figure of the 20th century and one of the world's pioneers of glass sculpture. Knowing that a similar opportunity would not arise again in his life, he worked as hard as he could to make his studies beneficial.

Czech individual glass development was at its peak in the 1980s. Tišljarić's study in Prague opened the door to the further study of innovative glass technology (especially in kiln and ground glass), as well as to new ideas in using glass in architectural space. It gave him an excellent art

training in every possible field of his future glass practice.

Soon after graduating, Tišljarić felt the need to share his life with his relatives and friends in Croatia, and he returned home with his wife.

As a professional glass artist, he became active in individual glass production, making sculptures and objects along with exclusive series of table glass. However he designed industrial glass containers and collaborated with architects on large glass commissions as well. His versatile talent enabled him to design liturgical objects and vestments, similar to other famous southern European artists: the sculptor Ivan Meštrović and the painter Ivo Dulčić.

Tišljarić's designs, especially those he created for the famous Viennese glass house Lobmeyr, made him well-known for his genuine new ideas and courageous forms such as the drinking sets known under the titles 'Floppy Disc' and 'Ammonite'. They are called Tišljarić's masterpieces and chiefly draw their distinctiveness from the contemporary way of life. These works made Tišljarić an important name among such high-profile glass firms as the Austrian Riedel Factory, which is a prime European producer of high-quality drinking glass. They even paved his way to successful cooperation with Czech glass factories such as Harrachov, Beránek in Škrdlovice and Crystalex in Nový Bor. Although drinking set designs are normally rather exclusive and produced in limited series, Jeronim Tišljarić went for precisely the opposite, designing packaging glass, particularly glass bottles for the Zagreb-based firm 'Badel 1862' that are now mass produced and are often used in industry.

Tišljarić's concept of his individual pieces is very much based not only on his professional experience, but on his own personal preferences as well. His works are visually rather purist and minimalist, striking in their compositions, attractive and appealing. The formal language of his pieces is often geometrical and rather ascetic, often benefiting from the use of grinding and polishing as part of their concept. Similar to other genuine glass sculptures, these objects reflect light, absorbing it and at the same time radiating it out into the surrounding space. Tišljarić's thinking in glass

proves the obvious: that he was a good student and carefully listened to the 'lessons' of Libenský and Brychtová.

This bond with both of them is particularly visible in Tišljarić's general approach to using glass in architectural space, interiors and exteriors. His visions are strong, open-minded, progressive, and see the glass piece as an integrated part of the architectural space. The function of the glass piece should not be limited or reduced to the role of a mere decoration that is mechanically attached to the building. Glass art used in architecture should support the entire idea of the space, its overall purpose and public message.

For such a concept, close collaboration with architects is essential. Jeronim Tišljarić collaborates with a wide range of architects (Rusan, Krznarić, Hrzić, Bašić, Lamagna) and this cooperation brings about many different results. Whether it is a case of large glass sculpture segments, stained glass windows or lighting objects, they always complete the overall idea of the space. One of Tišljarić's most ambitious projects is the design of the largest glass piece monument to be erected in Croatia. It consists of 4.5-metre tall pillars made of fused glass and is designed to reflect the eternal memory of the unknown victims of the civil war in Yugoslavia. It is located in the Mirogoj cemetery in Zagreb.

The stained glass windows that Tišljarić produced for the sanctuary of the Holy Mother of Freedom in Zagreb and for the chapel of Franciscan nuns of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Šibenik are different as they adapt to the religious purpose and transcendental meaning of the space.

Jeronim Tišljarić follows the best examples of the contemporary tradition of Czech and European art in glass and occupies an exceptional position in Croatian contemporary visual art.²

1/ Quoted from: Various authors (2004) p. 8.

2/ Mažuran-Subotić, V.: Text on the artist. Unpublished article.
From the artist's archive.

Jeronim Tišljar
Floppy Disk Goblet, 1994
Blown glass, designed for the J. & L. Lobmeyr
Company, Vienna
H 26 cm
Photo the artist's archive

Jeronim Tišljar with Harvey Littleton and Dale
Chihuly, the 1990s,
photo the archive of Jeronim Tišljar

Jeronim Tišljar
Pyramid, 1997
Cast ground glass
H 25 cm
Photo the artist's archive

