

## **Architetture di Luce / Jessica Loughlin**

22 May | 31 July 2021

Tuesday | Saturday 10 am | 7 pm

**The first thing is the light.** Always, everywhere. How it strikes – with brilliant intensity, or gently, with a caress.

Jessica Loughlin lives on a north-facing hill near Adelaide. From there she can see the entire horizon; every night, she watches the delicate pinks of the setting sun settle on bare pale-brown hills opposite. Adelaide is on the eastern shore of the enormous shallow Gulf St. Vincent; many times larger than Venice's Lagoon, it is similarly a place of misty vistas; the sun renders its long sands pearly, then grey, in its diurnal transit – *tidal #1* and *tidal #2*, both 2006, with their hovering horizons, evoke that endless natural cycle, here stilled momentarily.

Equally important, for many years Loughlin has been walking off-track with her partner, and in 2020 also with her young daughter, in arid regions hundreds of kilometers north of Adelaide, those great open life-filled lands of inland Australia, especially the vast salt lakes such as Lake Frome (Munda) and Lake Eyre (Kati Thanda), where the effects of shifting light are extraordinary. This is what we see in the two *receptor for light* pieces, which register constant changes in the light at these remote locations, and how one is completely immersed in an envelope of luminosity. And when she is there, Loughlin is always looking: scanning, shifting position, contemplating location – slowly, over time, over successive visits and long walks. And then she listens to the silence.

Glass is Loughlin's material but seeing, experiencing, being, in those full quiet un-peopled resonant spaces is her subject. Most importantly, she considers the light that makes these places and those moments, which are absolutely distinct from any others. This is what she gives us: she conjures the hanging pale blue firmament above the vast Australian desert lands, responds to its expanses with radical simplicity, and to its shimmering distances with the substance of the glass itself. Opaline glass, as it happens, behaves very like light in the sky: it reflects blue light but transmits warm tones, so Loughlin's pieces subtly shift in colour as ambient light changes in their environment. *receptor for light xiv* and *receptor for light xv*, 2021, for instance, reward long looking, just as the view from the top of a hill will reveal, gradually, nuances previously unsuspected. Spend time with them; walk around them; let your eyes settle and your heart rate slow right down.

And what of the Loughlin's use of blue? That blue that always, I think, hints at the sacred? I see the heavens above in *suspended hue i* and *suspended hue ii*, both 2021, as if the firmament includes a glorious tent hanging above the universe, like the sky-dome of the ancient philosophers, as well as the structure of the salt crystals that was the original impetus for the works. With *pale blue dot ii*, 2021, on the other hand, are we inside the heavens or looking back at the Blue Planet from deep space? These options are open, as Loughlin invites us to speculate on our place in this light-filled world.

Which brings me to the distinction between *luce*, light itself, and *lumen*, described scientifically as 'a unit of luminous flux equal to the light emitted in a unit solid angle by a uniform point source of one candle intensity.' Jessica Loughlin's exploration of glass exploits precisely this distinction: she unlocks the transcendent peace bestowed by the light of open unpeopled landscapes, that sense of release from self that is the particular gift of the sea, or the desert, through working the paradoxical capacities of glass. Light has entered the studio, and leaves it locked into glass.

*Julie Ewington*

*Sydney, Australia, May 2021*

**Jessica Loughlin** (Melbourne, 1975) is known for her minimal approach to artistic glass and the totally unconventional way she uses this material.

She has exhibited in important national and international exhibitions in USA, UK, Germany, Italy, Singapore and, of course, Australia.

She co-founded *Gate 8 Workshop*, a non-profit organization that provides equipped spaces for local artists.

She travels regularly, teaches and has won many awards including: "Outstanding New Artist in Glass" by Urban Glass, NY, USA; the Tom Malone Art Prize in 2004 and 2007 and the Ranamok Prize in Australia.

Her work is part of major public contemporary glass collections around the world including National Gallery of Australia in Canberra and Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; The Corning Museum of Glass, NY, USA; Mobile Museum of Art, AL, USA; MUDAC Lausanne, Switzerland; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK.

## **Architetture per il Corpo | Giampaolo Babetto**

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Giampaolo Babetto, a Paduan artist dedicated to the art of goldsmithing but also to architecture, design and photography, is one of the Masters of the Paduan Goldsmith School: an artistic movement born in the mid-1950s, primarily thanks to Master Mario Pinton, on the benches of the goldsmith section of the Pietro Selvatico Art Institute of Padua.

The artists of the School are inspired by the principles of the study of bodies moving in space; the look at architecture as design rigor and research in constructive detail; the in-depth analysis of material and construction techniques; the knowledge of sculpture – both ancient and contemporary – along with the awareness that from knowledge a jewel can be born as a work of art.

Working on this topic gives Babetto new ideas and leads him to constructive insights that become creative forms. To him, a jewel is «a simple and autonomous entity, extraneous to any subjective and symbolic reflection that is not the very process of its construction». (*Germano Celant, Giampaolo Babetto, SKIRA editions, Milan 1996*)

Caterina Tognon has been exhibiting contemporary glass since 1991 and for this exhibition Babetto has chosen to work with glass, a fragile material par excellence, combining it with gold, which is both pliable and durable. Two materials in antithesis, different and distant in characteristics and appearance, but harmoniously close in the synthesis of Babetto's creations.

His works inhabit the body and live on its supple and constantly moving surface, exactly as it happens in architecture where people animate the buildings and make them come alive. «Jewelry and Architecture thus become the extremes of a dialogue that has as its meeting points that of the body in motion». (*Domitilla Dardi, Corpo movimento struttura. Il gioiello contemporaneo e la sua costruzione, Manfredi editions, Imola 2018*)

**Giampaolo Babetto** (Padua, Italy, 1947) is considered one of the major exponents of the contemporary artistic jewelry of the Paduan Goldsmith School, known all over the world in the field of experimentation and research in auteur goldsmith's art.

His search for pure, rigorously geometric shapes, never loses sight of the practical function of the jewel, intended as an always wearable and enjoyable object, while the refined creativity leads him to associate gold with unconventional materials such as plastic and glass, and to practice avant-garde processes with great technical savoir-faire.

Since 1967 he has exhibited in Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, UK, Japan, USA. His works are part of every important public collection, in Italy and abroad, dedicated to contemporary jewelry. He lives and works in Arquà Petrarca (Padua) in his house-atelier in the Euganean Hills.