

December 13, 2003

Press information

Nordic Beauty: The Art of Pia Sjölin

Pia Sjölin, Swedish-American designer with an international reputation in glass and murals, has earned the admiration of art lovers and the unstinting respect of her peers. Her outstanding works of art for home and public environments delight the eye.

Pia Sjölin grew up near the Swedish west coast in a small village that dates from medieval days. A tradition of craftsmanship and textile weaving has existed in the surrounding countryside for centuries. One of her earliest memories is sitting on the floor playing with colorful scraps of fabric and bits of yarn, listening to the rhythmic thuds of her grandmother's loom and the busy hum of her mother's sewing machine.

At the age of ten, she became enamored with the material that is the second vehicle for her artistic talent. When her family visited the near-lying Faglavik glasshouse, this slender schoolgirl, encouraged by the gaffer, stepped up, put the blow-pipe to her lips, took a deep breath—and blew. The molten glass on the other end seemed to come to life.

The art of glass-blowing requires an innate balance. The trick is to blow not too hard and not too cautiously, not too soon and not too late. It is this sense of balance that characterizes both the artwork and the personal lifestyle of Pia Sjölin.

She balances the creative calmness of tapestry weaving with the rapid pace that glass-blowing requires. She balances the creative beat of the American East Coast with the inspiring serenity of Swedish nature. For with true Scandinavian zeal, she retains a love of the outdoors that is reflected in her art.

"There is a special luster, a sheen, found in the Northern daylight," she explains, "that gives a feeling of tranquillity. Yet the light of midday differs from the light of dawn or twilight. In bright winter sunlight, the snow reflects a white incandescence. Summer days have a radiance that somehow holds the green of the leafy trees. There is continual change. I find that very inspiring. A walk in the forest attunes me to the natural cycles. Of seasons. Of life. I learn from nature and incorporate these lessons in my work. Any feather, any leaf will have a unique feature. I seek balance, but not strict symmetry. A slight deviation, an imperfection if you will, can often be the source of unexpected beauty."

Pia Sjölin's creative genius is currently fueled by her native environs. An ocean away from the New England glassworks where she was part-owner, she has generated an exciting collection of glass and fabrics that is being launched in the two countries where she is most at home: the United States and Sweden. Her work was most recently displayed at the New York International Gift Show and at a homecoming exposition in Sweden.

Upcoming exhibition venues include Stockholm Formex, January 15 to 18; the Stockholm Furniture Fair, February 4 to 8; and the New York Home Textiles Show in New York City, March 16 to 29.

Pia Sjölin's work is showcased in many venues including some of the most prestigious: the Smithsonian, the Corning Glass Museum and the American Crafts Museum.