

# An Interview with



## Nick Mount

We figured it was near to impossible to have an issue about glass without getting the low down and dirty about glass blowing. Thanks to the wonders of the world wide web, we have for you a Q&A all the way from Australia (which just so happens to be home to the Glass House Mountains – what a coincidence!). Nick Mount has been providing the world with glass delicacies for over two decades, and lives with his wife Pauline in the land down under. Mount also has a book out entitled *Incandescence* that chronicles his range of work.

**2.0:** Did you ever expect to become a glassblower?

**NM:** I came into contact with glass as a medium for expression while I was at Art School in 1974 (the year we were married). Pauline and I were studying sculpture at an “open unit” art school and I was encouraged to take up the opportunity to get involved through a visiting artist from California (Richard Marquis). I had never expected to get involved with glass in the arts, seeing as there was no blown glass being done at a studio level in Australia at the time.

**2.0:** How have you evolved throughout your long career?

**NM:** My style has changed a lot over the years. When I first started out, I made whatever I could make. My skills were the main determiner in the range of objects that I could produce. With the development of my skill through time and application to the craft, I was able to expand my repertoire and apply myself to more adventurous forms and compositions. Pauline and I have always made our living through our

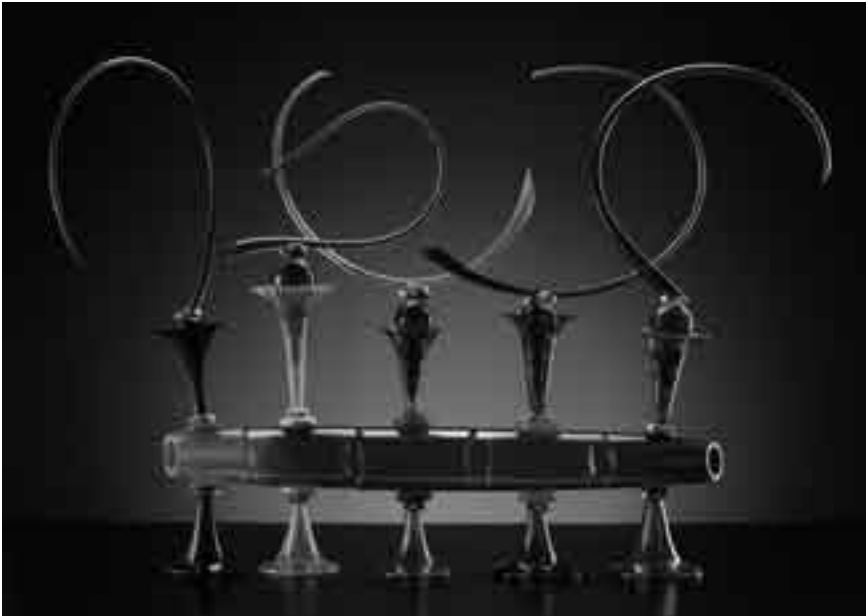


glass practice and studio production so we have had to be aware of the market we are working into and the changing market influences. We have always tried hard to work in a way that would describe ourselves as much as the market.

**2.0:** You’re known for your Scent Bottles, which you’ve worked on for nine years. There has been a marked change in the style of your pieces after each

year. In the beginning, your bottles looked more conventional, but your most recent project looks more like a modern sculpture than a bottle. What would you say marked this change?

**NM:** I started working with “Scent Bottles” as my motif for a number of reasons. I was looking for a subject that I felt was not limiting for my breadth of interest in my process and my materials. It needed to be relevant to the history of glass and to the contemporary movement. It needed to be able to describe what I wanted to say through my work and be endless without being overwhelming for me.



I chose the Scent Bottle because it is a recognizable object throughout the history of glass. It has a number of repeating components (the foot, joining parts, vessel, neck, lip, stopper, and dripper) that I can work with and manipulate in a never ending variety of compositions. I can use it to refer to the history and traditions of glass making and the makers, and to challenge peoples' expectations of the material and its contemporary manipulation. Mostly I like it because I am pretty obsessed with the notion of the value (value to an individual and a culture, not monetary value) of work (labour, the relationship between a person, their process and their material) and I believe that a well conceived and resolved product of work will resemble or "carry" the maker and that the "scent" of the maker will remain with the object.

The name "Scent Bottle" refers to that relationship more than anything else and I feel that anything I make, even if it looks like a cow or a car, should always be called a Scent Bottle. The Scent Bottles are an evolving series and reflect my skills and interests

as well as the environment of their making. We travel a lot to work in different studios and countries and I feel it is important for the objects to be aware of all of the things that affect their making.

**2.0:** How long does it take you to make one of your scent bottles? How many do you have?

**NM:** The time spent on a piece will vary a lot. Determined by its scale and complexity and my state of mind. Also, how much work there is to be done in the garden, etc.

**2.0:** Do you have any plans for your children to learn and become glass makers? Have they expressed an interest?

**NM:** Our children are all grown up and although I tried, from time to time, to get them interested in glass, they have all followed careers in art related areas that are way away from hot glass. We are a very close family and the children are just as interested in what Pauline and I make as we are in their work.

**DID  
YOU  
KNOW**

*Not all glass uses the same ingredients. The base is generally sand, limestone, soda ash, and potash, but you can also add metal oxides to add different colors or other materials to make the glass stronger.*