

BRANKA HLEVNJAK, M.A.

Kaleidoskop nade 09-22.12.2005. Muzej Mimara

## *Rogić Studio of Glass Design*

**R**ogić Studio has two members. They are the spouses Željka and Boris Rogić. Their entire studio in Rijeka is transformed into a space where they both work and exhibit their glassmaking craft. The Rogićes speak about their craft with an enthusiasm that makes it inappropriate to ask why they left their jobs after secondary school and decided to dedicate themselves to glass. The patience with which they use the technique of stained glass to shape lampshades, mirrors or some other object for everyday use is such that they make you enthused about the work of the world-renowned American artist Louis Comfort Tiffany.

For Željka and Boris Rogić the questions of design and technique of production are equally important. They are enthusiastic about dealing with problems in the making of a lampshade with over 3000 equally dedicated piecing together such a puzzle in glass; their creative joy after finishing a project is equal regardless whether they used designs by Tiffany, some other artist, or their own. Every act of cutting, sanding, framing, fusing pieces of glass, and every act of selecting and blending colours and achieving interplay among them provide room for original artistic expression.

The discipline of the very process of making mosaic glass requires a sincere commitment, which in turn enables the authors with many possibilities of interpretation. Like performers of music Željka and Boris Rogić may be said to perform corn-positions using pieces of glass of unusual colour and uneven translucence. At the beginning of the process of putting together, or more precisely, of shaping mosaic glass, the conventional forms are as abstract as are letters to a graphic designer who sets out to design a poster. Technical enthusiasts and fans of the great world-renowned master of the second millennium, the Rogićes believe that in the third millennium glass continues to be as fascinating, that working by hand is an irreplaceable value, and that patience is always rewarded by beauty.

Involved in the global circle of the fans and followers of Tiffany's glass craft, the Rogićes educate themselves continually. They take classes in Switzerland in a programme that involves a new level of education every year, which has enabled them to become extensively familiar with artistic glassmaking around the world. It is not an overstatement to say that Rogić Studio is a place of most updated information on glass design around the world, both in terms of understanding techniques and technologies and in terms of exploring the possibilities of the art.

The artistic duo presents their unique artistic approach to design of glass objects in the field of applied art by putting on occasional exhibits. The history of art has already demonstrated that hard-working and stubborn masters, who do not rush headlong into new trendy styles, create unique and fascinating objects of great

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craftsmanship and artistic quality. Taking their cues from Art Nouveau inspiration by Gothic mosaic glass, Japanese painting and Oriental arabesques, the Rogićes also make new creative breakthroughs. As is to be expected in the field of applied art, these breakthroughs depend on the commissioners of unusual mirrors, imaginative lampshades, decorative mosaic glass partitions, mystical representations on church windows, luxurious hotel walls, and richly decorated villas.

The glasses for these wondrous combinations of colour, shape, and lead and copper patterns are produced by hand, and hence their sense of wonder, sophistication, and rarity. They are so precious that they can only be imported from the United States. Such precious handmade glasses informed by contingencies of creativity the duo shows with sincere respect for the masters who crafted them.

To visit Rogić Studio means to feel admiration for the craft, the skill, the new art of the old millennium, as well as the need not to leave behind the good things from the past but to transform them with skill and enthusiasm into a new artistic expression.

Just as the Rogićes are loath to point out their own work from the work of others executed in the technique of stained glass discovered and perfected during the Art Nouveau period, they do not separate their own roles in their joint work either. They both discharge tasks as part of their harmonious team work, which they consider equal. However, without the masterly inventiveness of Boris Rogić it would be difficult to work in this old technique, since the long and painstaking business of putting together stained glass requires the making of many tools, moulds, and aids.

After they made a name for themselves with the original "Croatian lampshade", and with their successful designs for glass partitions and church motifs, the Rogićes have started exploring new glassmaking designs of primarily bowls, vases and built-in fixtures, which have the characteristics of simple and modern free form glass. These are presented to the judgement of the public, since applied art by its name already suggests that it wants to lead a full life.

