

Jam Factory

BILLY JAMES CRELLIN

Second Year Glass Studio Associate

Art Deco and heavy balloons? Glass artist Billy James Crellin's inspiration comes from wide and far.

From studying electronic music and dabbling in sculpture to interning in a lighting studio, Billy Crellin has developed a practice drawn from his many travels through life. Graduating from the Sydney College of the Arts with honours in Glass in 2012, Billy's thirst to further his training in Europe saw him undertake practical glass training in Denmark with Erik Meaker, and further studies at the Valašské Meziříčí glass school in Czech Republic.

Whilst in Europe he became interested in industrial design, in particular design and applied arts objects from Austria, Bohemia, and the Czech Republic. He followed this passion, researching the production wares of the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshop). In Europe, where there is a strong industry in tableware and huge factories making molds for mass produced glassware, Billy found invaluable resources to evolve his products. Utilising his new skills and knowledge, Billy developed his first stacking cups and perfected the style of handles he uses in much of the functional ware he makes today.

Returning to Australia, Billy was accepted into the Associate training program and quickly whisked back overseas, as recipient of JamFactory's annual scholarship to Pilchuck Glass School in the US. Here he attended workshops by Shuji Omura and Scott Darlington, and expanded his glass production repertoire to include core sculpting and fire polishing - methods of production sculpting.

At JamFactory, Billy has enjoyed the opportunity to be a part of a community of talented glass blowers, learning from talented and driven people daily. "It was so inspiring to see one of the pieces I assisted Tim Edwards on last year exhibited at The Art Gallery of South Australia as part of the 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art," he says. "Although my time at JamFactory seems whirlwind and fast paced, seeing Tim's work reiterated for me, the opportunity and time I have been given here to experiment and improve my technique as a whole".



"I feel more confident in my skills to experiment with new materials and processes since being at JamFactory. I have definitely found it easier to push my exhibition practice here than I have overseas".

One such result are Billy's fun glass balloon sculptures, formed through experiments with various surface treatments, that have exhibited across Adelaide as well as part of the *Made in Australia* exhibition in Berlin. With exhibiting an important feature of his practice, Billy has a solo exhibition confirmed at Manning Regional Art Gallery, Taree, NSW and through an opportunity with Guildhouse, Billy will exhibit in the Biennale of Australian Art in Ballarat alongside one of his idols - Stellarc. For the JamFactory Generate 2018 exhibition, Billy plans to focus on functional ware. He might surprise us with another of his interests, the material nature of working glass with tools, to create art works containing metal and graphite.

After his Associateship, Billy is content to continue working with his strong networks made in Adelaide, and further afield, if history is proof, he will embrace more travel. A dream is to work with some of the big production studios. In particular, he lists Lasvit – a leading lighting and glass company in the Czech Republic, specialising in contemporary chandeliers.

Words: Lara Merrington, *Assistant Curator*,
JamFactory



Billy Crellin, Drinking glass as part of the *STACK* Series.
Photo: Courtesy of the artist.