



**NICKMOUNT** WHISPERING DOMES AND OTHER RECENT WORK





Opposite page Scent Bottle # 010108 55" x 41" x 6", Scent Bottle # 011207 28" x 70" x 12"



Scent Bottle # 030108 28" x 39" x 5.5"

*Whispering Domes*, the title of an exhibition of new glass by Nick Mount, a stalwart of the Australian glass movement, reminds this writer at least of the famous line borrowed from Shelley – *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* – used as the title for an influential 1912 collection of imagist poetry by Amy Lowell, the eccentric, cigar-smoking associate of Ezra Pound, and perfect exemplar of that style of public personality we know today as a *celebrity*. Of course, Nick Mount's long-running series of blown glass forms designated as *Scent Bottles* – these current works are the latest variations on the theme – are widely celebrated in their own right, but more on this in a moment.

In her *Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* poems, Lowell refers to different forms of aromatic experience – all are pleasurable but none, alas, actually involves scent bottles *per se* – including to 'perfumed offerings' and 'sacrificial urns'; to the 'pungent sweetness' and 'damp freshness' of the earth; to 'Frankincense and Myrrh'; and, with disarming innocence, to the 'joyous fragrance' of flowers. But there is still another poem in this early collection that has a certain resonance here, an unexpected *Mountean* connection as it were, a usefulness as far as the spirit of this brief note is concerned – and its title? – *Venetian Glass*.

This is quite a short poem although, to be sure, long on atmosphere and nostalgic musing, but short in terms of any detail about the venerable lagoon city and its famed island of Murano, or indeed about the legendary *cristallo* for which Venetian glassmakers have been revered since the Renaissance. Lowell's *Venetian Glass* does, nonetheless, evoke the enduring romance of the place, and perhaps even the fugitive nature of those thin, attenuated vessels of straw-tinted soda glass that are, and have always been expensive collectables. Similarly, Nick Mount's gloriously non-functioning scent bottles, with their fine precision of handling, rapturous and almost precarious profile, and lyrical character, are keenly evocative

of some other age of splendour, as of the ancient tradition of Venetian glassmaking with its familiar repertoire of fancy detail and signature flamboyance of manner. These are not the only features that define Nick Mount's new so-called scent bottles, but they are aspects of a story that informs the style and character of works in this exhibition.

These new works by Mount (classified by their stylistic groups as *Whispering Dome* pieces, *Granulare* and *Pascale*) also evoke, albeit only in a general sense, another tradition that can be traced back to antiquity – the tradition in which glassmakers have blown, moulded or otherwise formed specialised vessels – usually elegantly conceived and small in scale, much smaller in fact than Mount's spacious compositions – for the containment of expensive and precious *essences* and *balms* – exotic scents, fragrant oils and rare ointments. In recent memory, Lalique is probably the name most will associate with the design and manufacture of artistic scent bottles (for Coty and others in the 1920s), while Gallé designed art nouveau counterparts for Guerlain.

Clearly, Nick Mount's scent bottles are that in name only – their scent might be construed perhaps as an aura, most likely that of the artist himself. More convincingly, they are the latest works of an agile and elegant visual imagination, a language informed by much that has happened in the history of glassmaking (Venetian glass in particular, and the innovations of the contemporary studio movement likewise) but after all is said and done, this is a language whose origins and development are traced ultimately to the home and studio of Nick and Pauline Mount situated in the civilised suburbs of the southern Australian city of Adelaide.

Geoffrey Edwards – Director Geelong Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia.



From left to right Scent Bottle # 070108 22" x 40" x 5.5", Scent Bottle # 060108 20" x 36" x 5"  
 Cover Scent Bottle # 031207 27" x 44" x 10"



Scent Bottle (Tallest) 21" x 5.5" x 5.5"

**TRAVER  
 GALLERY**

110 UNION STREET #200  
 SEATTLE WA 98101  
**PHONE** 206.587.6501  
**FAX** 206.587.6502  
 INFO@TRAVERGALLERY.COM  
 WWW.TRAVERGALLERY.COM



Photography Grant Hancock and Richard Marquis