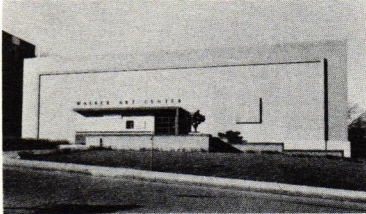


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DESIGN QUARTERLY





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DESIGN QUARTERLY

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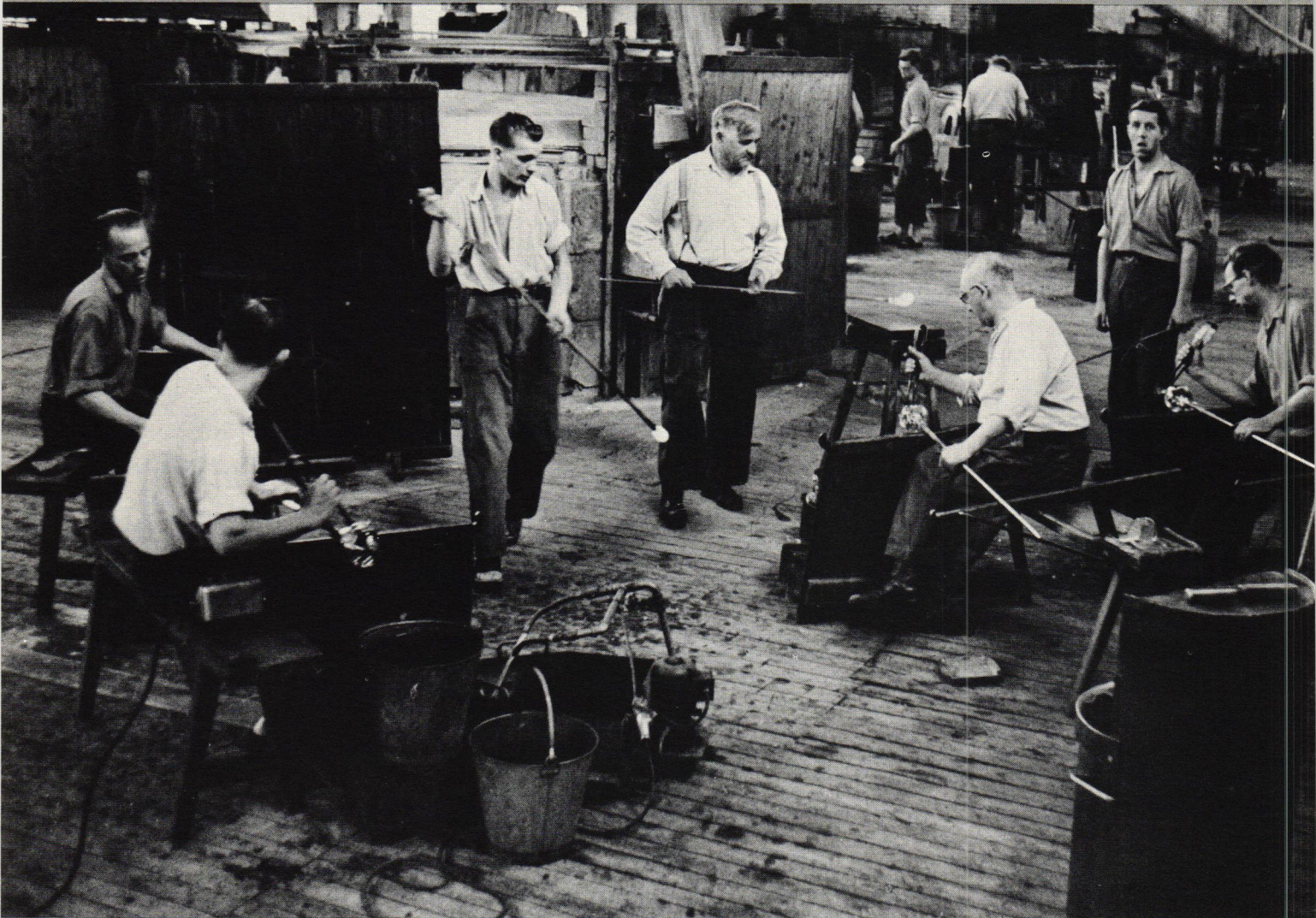
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1

- 1 A seven man team working as a unit produce a piece of glassware
- 2 Taking the molten glass out of the pots and supplying the team
- 3 Molding the shape by turning it in a wooden cup



3

ORREFORS *by Arthur Hald*

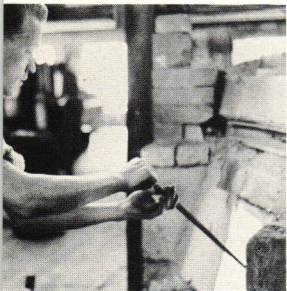
In terms of aesthetics, Orrefors is Sweden's most important glassworks, more widely known the world over than any other Swedish enterprise, whose products are based on creative design. It is outwardly unassuming by American standards. The works employ 350 in shop and office. But one figure is relatively high: the number of artist designers is half a dozen.

Orrefors lies outside the main thoroughfares of the Småland forests, an area which has become the heartland of the Swedish glass industry by virtue of ample fuel and water power. Some forty of the country's fifty glass factories are found in Småland within a circle of a thirty-mile radius. The Orrefors ironworks were established in the 18th century; as a glassworks it is just over fifty years old. Its period of greatness began immediately after the First World War and it has since formed one of the fountainheads of the modern movement in Sweden.

FORTY YEARS OF PROGRESSIVE DESIGN POLICY

The Orrefors achievement is the result of a continual but ever-varying triangle drama involving management, workmen and artists. Many men have preceded the present chief, Johan Beyer, at the helm. For one ten-year period the managing director was drawn from the ranks of the artists. It was during the depression of the 1930's, when the company's existence was at stake, that Edward Hald took charge, a move which explains in a nutshell the importance of the artist-designer at Orrefors. But without an exceptionally skillful corps of workmen the plans of management would have remained on paper. Master glass blowers such as the brothers Knut and Gustaf Bergqvist—supreme craftsmen who have spent more than half a century in Småland foundries—dexterous engravers, cutters and other workers have created a professionally welded team with a pronounced spirit of harmony. Individually they display shrewd combinations of self-confidence and the ability to laugh at themselves, qualities typical of the province.

But the heart of Orrefors and the creative forces in its development are the designer-artists. The first were Simon Gate (1883-1945) and Edward Hald, who realized a professional comradeship unique in the world's art history. Their association lasted thirty years. Both gave Orrefors stubborn ambition and bounteous production, each in his own way as man and artist. They were joined by Vicke Lindstrand, now chief of design at Kosta Glassworks. A little later Nils Landberg and Sven Palmquist, engravers, left their benches for the studio and the foundry. At the same time Edvin Öhström, the sculptor, began to work there, and in 1948 came



the first woman artist, Ingeborg Lundin, one of the most recent winners of the Lunning prize. Management's motto has been: *Trust the artists.* The workmen's motto: *You never end your apprenticeship.* And the artist's: *The glass must congeal at its most beautiful—but never let your ideas congeal.*

GLOWING GLASS

Come down to the foundry at 6:30 on an early winter morning. It is cold and pitch-dark outside. The snow creaks underfoot as the glass workers gather from their homes. Inside the foundry, tongues of flame shoot from the oven doors. Glass which has been melting in crucibles during the night now has the right sirupy consistency. It is at its best in the morning, and that is when artists and workmen create their new designs. The work is organized in shop teams of three to seven men. It is purely manual, although it is set up along industrial lines at a well-balanced pace. Every man knows his place in the team, from the youngest who holds the mold to the master who leads them all. It is a fascinating and at the same time somewhat confusing sight that meets the onlooker. The glass blower's theme is movement, continuous movement. As the glass is worked it is a more or less viscous mass which must constantly be balanced lest it be deformed. The workmen move like ballet dancers between oven mouths and work benches. The heat from the ovens is around 1600 degrees Fahrenheit (900 degrees Centigrade). Sweat pours from faces and arms. By nearly imperceptible nods or monosyllables the master gives his orders as he works. All flows along as in a well-trained choreographic tableau.

This scene is the design artist's field of operation. Drawing boards and studios exist chiefly to get down on paper the characteristics of objects already completed. The real work is done in the foundry. Craftsmanship in glass is a paradox. While the ceramics artist or the silversmith work their materials themselves, no hand touches an object of glass until it is removed from the cooling oven. Thus there must be an intimate interplay between artist and blower. Even without a mold, blowing freehand, the latter can follow the artist's intentions as explained orally or demonstrated in a simple sketch.

Go around in the foundry. There stands Edward Hald, grand old man of the art, who has helped to give Swedish glass its reputation abroad. He began as a painter, studying under Matisse in Paris, and came to Orrefors in 1916. He has devoted his life's work to Orrefors but he can also look back on important contributions as a ceramics artist. His nature is the opposite of bohemian. A man well versed in languages and the liberal arts, he is an intellectual and witty European. As an artist in



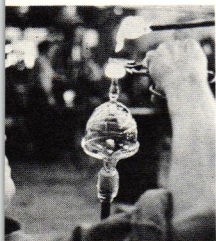
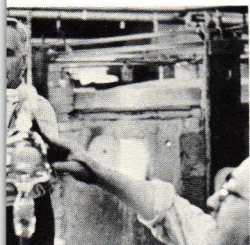
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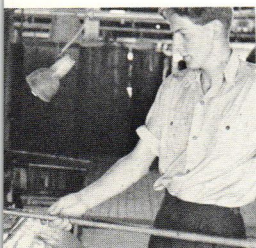
Adding th



*Taking the piece to the cooling
Later the top of the bubble is remov
the piece polished and engraved if rec*



ing the base with a wooden paddle



glass he is a director with an intuitive grasp of what everyone working with him can contribute. He has expressed his credo thus:

“To make glass is a swiftly flowing drama which cannot be played in any other material. There are no extras. Everyone has a main part, with the artist as the director. Successful or not, it is the intensity in the ensemble which stimulates to new exertions.”

Nils Landberg is the most easy-going of the Orrefors team. He does not take himself too seriously and his light-hearted approach to life is reflected in much of his work. As an engraving illustrator he likes to give an anecdotal point to his designs. His world of form is most often a gracious and airy play with bubbles blown freehand. He stands beside the blower and with the latter as medium he pushes on in his search for form up to the moment when the globule seems ready to break. Just before that point is reached the glass freezes into an elegantly supple shape.

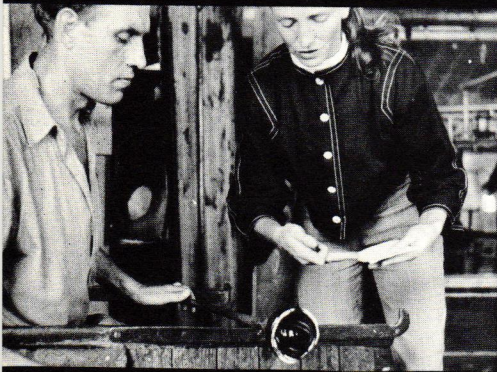
Sven Palmquist, his contemporary, is completely opposite in art and temperament. He is intense and continually seething with ideas which later burst forth in hot creative activity. He combines a high technical talent with a vivid interest in the artistic capabilities of industrial techniques. He works in the glowing, layer-colored Ravenna technique but has also, among other things, created a new method of mass-producing ordinary table glass.

Edvin Öhrström is a sculptor who primarily works with glass as a lump. His specialty is Ariel glass, in which he expressively plays with the gleaming, reflecting, shimmering air bubble inside the heavy enclosing mass. Powerful bowl forms with high relief decoration achieved by means of sand blasting are also among his products. Virility and weight are his artistic signatures.

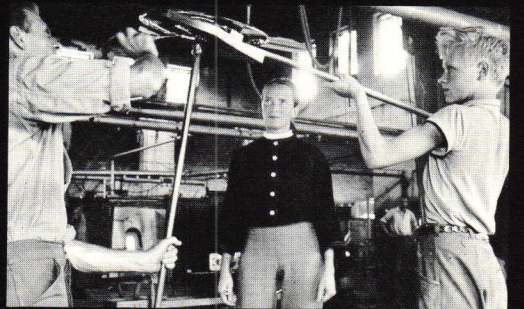
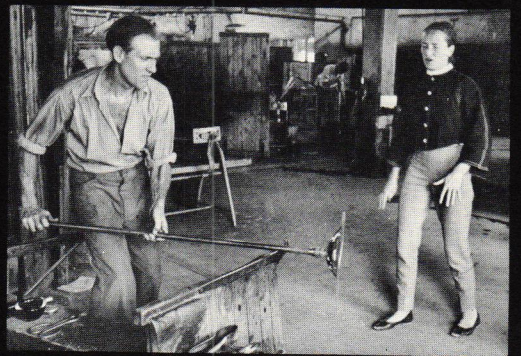
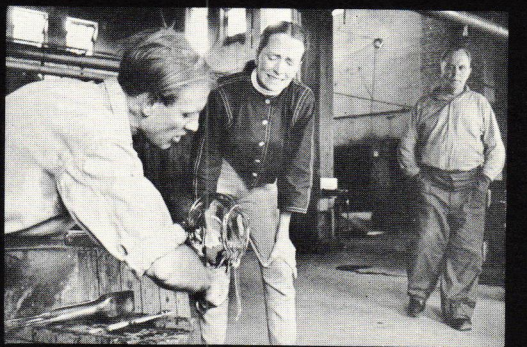
Ingeborg Lundin, youngest of the team and a former drawing teacher, waves a maidenly magic wand over blower and glass and lures forth willful, sensitive and graceful shapes. But she also uses her feminine common sense to create simple, everyday forms. More than anyone else at Orrefors, she represents the antennae toward the future—promising renewal of the creative talent at Orrefors.

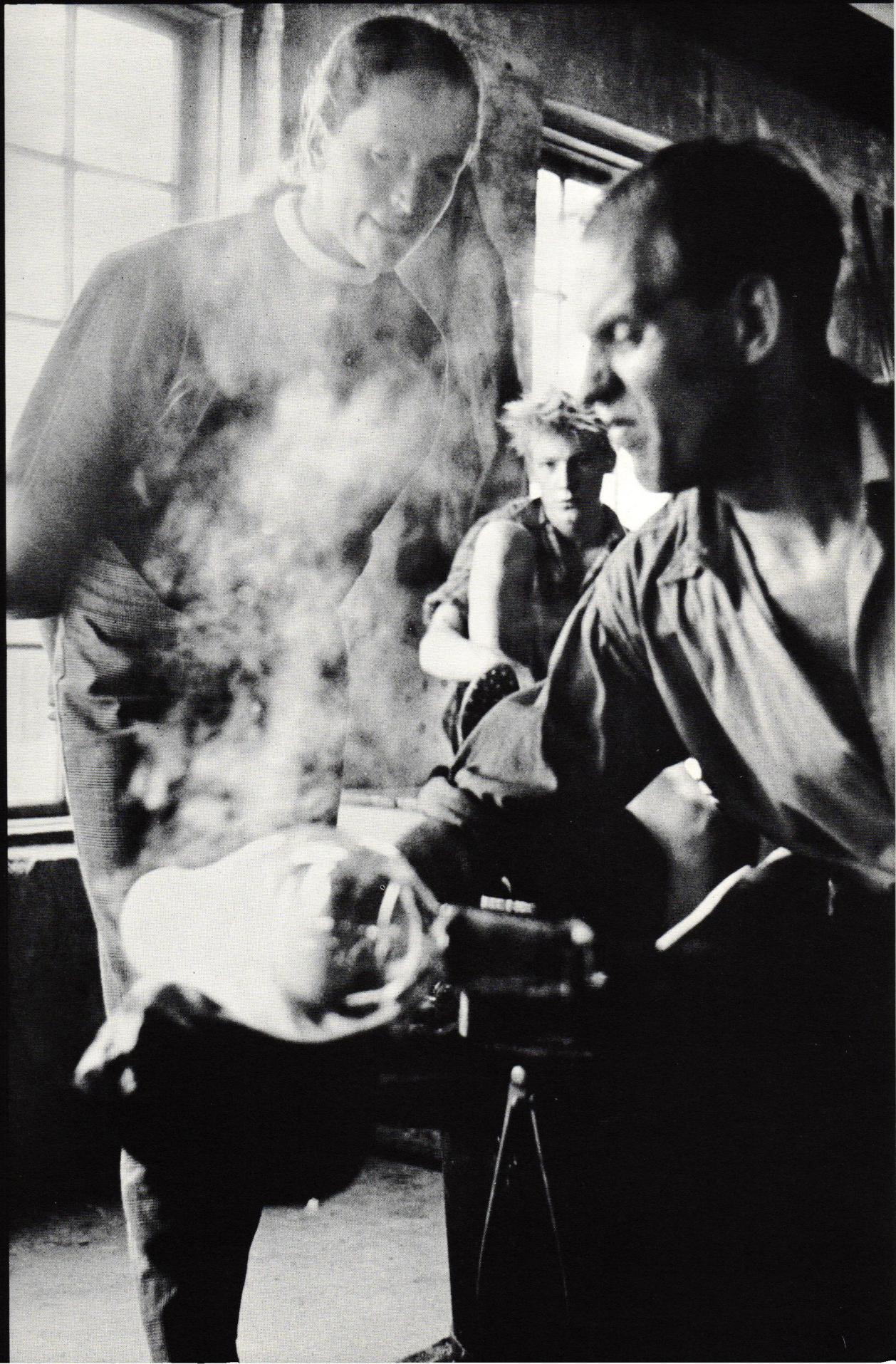
Finally there is John Selbing, who has helped his colleagues visualize glass forms through photography. He occasionally leaves his darkroom to work in the foundry, where simple basic forms and graphic effects are his means of expression.

A painter, two engravers, a sculptor, a drawing teacher, a photographer . . . these are the professional titles of the six. But their playful and passionate striving to evoke ever new possibilities from the mysterious but still clearly transparent material glass is what makes them distinctive for Orrefors.



INGEBORG LUNDIN DIRECTS A MASTER
CRAFTSMAN IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A NEW LIGHTING FIXTURE DESIGN



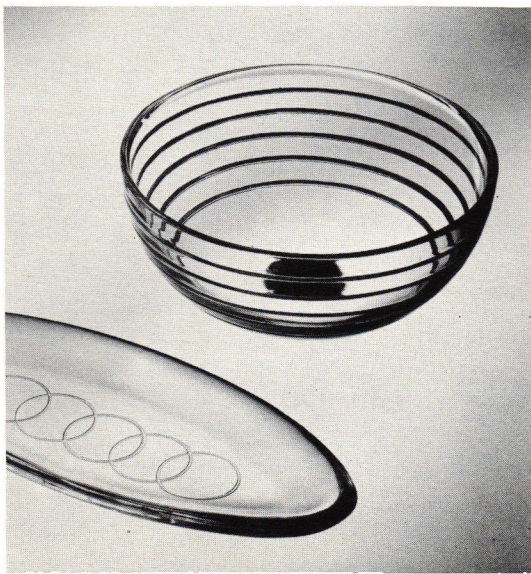
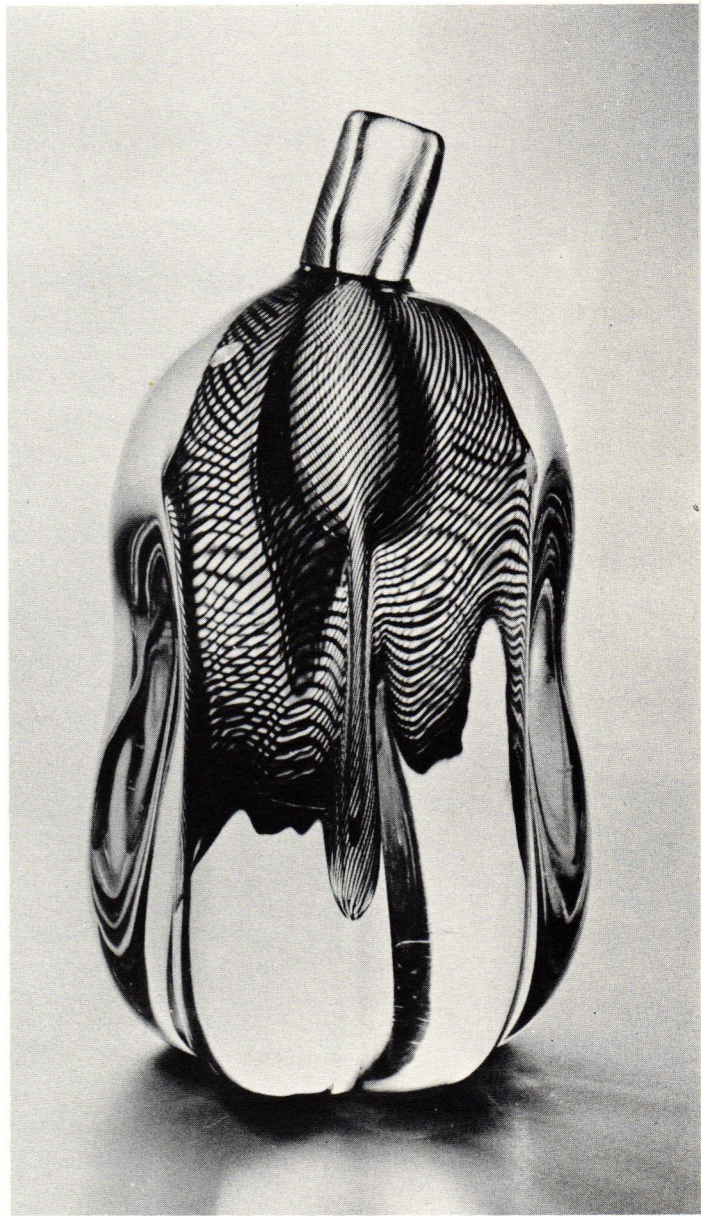
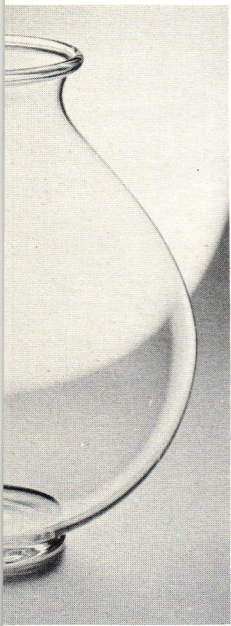
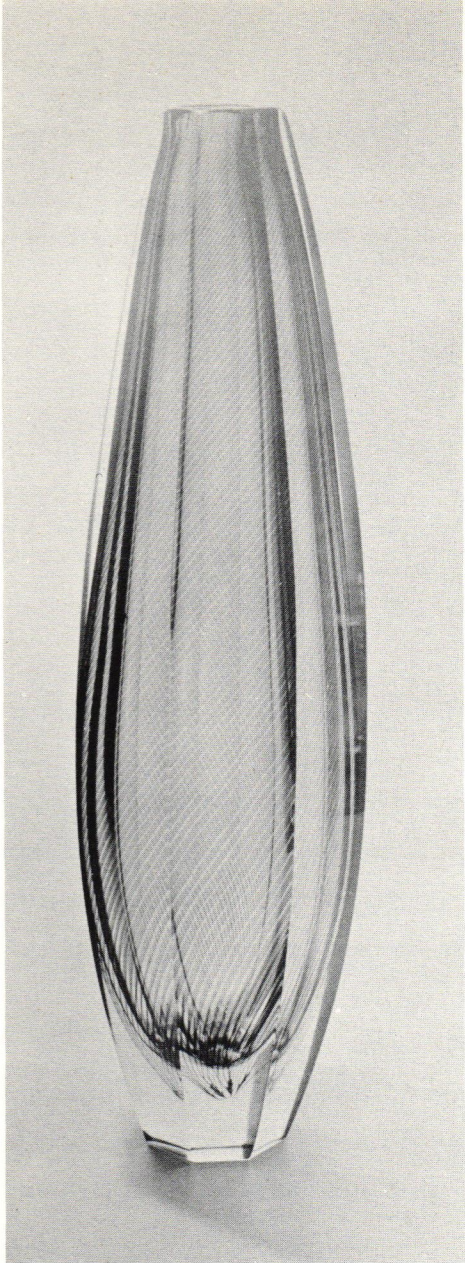


EDWARD HALD

Edward Hald born in 1883, painter and industrial artist, started the artistic production at Orrefors together with the artist Simon Gate (born 1883, died 1945). Hald is still very active and creative in most of the types produced by the factory. He is represented in the great museums all over the world.

*The Position of the Designer - "The relationship between the designer and the manufacturer is perhaps best described by paradox: the designer should be free - tied to the factory with heavy bonds - but still free. By this I do not imply that there should be some sort of loose connection between the factory and the designer. He must be given steady, long-term employment, which will give both parties the opportunity to arrive at fruitful collaboration. Thus the manufacturer should never, for instance, hire a designer just before an exhibition to create a few 'novelties' that perhaps later will never get into production. The manufacturer must not think of the designer as a cook who has to put the yeast into the pudding just before it is served. It is not the job of the artist to sell the manufacturer elegant renderings, perhaps without having any idea of how they are to be executed. The designer should have both the opportunity and the duty to live right in the factory and follow every detail of production. The manufacturer must give the designer as many opportunities and as much time as possible. Only thus is it possible for the designer to find himself and his own style - before anything is shown to the public. He must be given time to mature, so that he can accept the responsibility for the artistic value of the product. In glass making, the designer's collaboration with the workmen presents another paradox in that he does not even touch the product until it is finished. In this field, the designer is even less capable of executing the things for which he has the artistic responsibility than in other crafts. This requires a special and intimate contact between him and the group of people who execute or follow his intentions. The glass designer is like a stage director with a cast consisting of glass blowers, the glass metal itself, the temperature in the kiln etc. The director must make everyone do his best and create a whole out of individual performances. Of course the designer provides the text, instructions about how the play is to be performed, but the performance does not become mature until after many rehearsals. This means, among other things, that it is often best first to create an individual piece of glassware and only later draw the design to serve as a guide for continued production." **

* From a lecture given by Edward Hald before the Third International Glass Congress, Venice, Italy, 1953. Published in KONTUR.

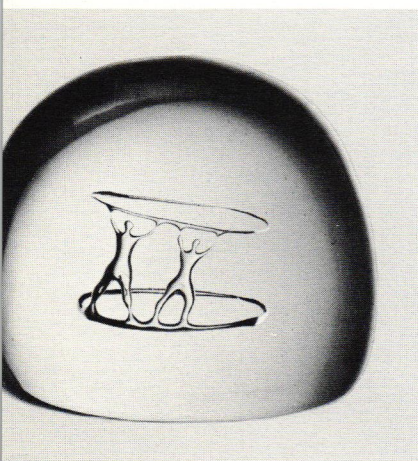


EDVIN ÖHRSTRÖM

Edvin Öhrström born in 1906, sculptor and industrial artist, joined the staff of Orrefors in 1936 after studies in Stockholm and Europe. In addition to his important work as a sculptor, he has created designs for engraved Graal and Ariel glass types. He has displayed his work at a number of exhibitions - Paris 1937 and New York 1939 - and is represented in museums at home and abroad.

"To work in many materials comes naturally to me - glass, wood, metal, stone. Glass, with its special characteristics, flowing, dynamically alive, fascinates me. The fragile air bubble - the massive lump of crystal, a sparkling air of festivity - a simple clearness. It is a material which bridges extremes and challenges the designer to work with all its attributes."

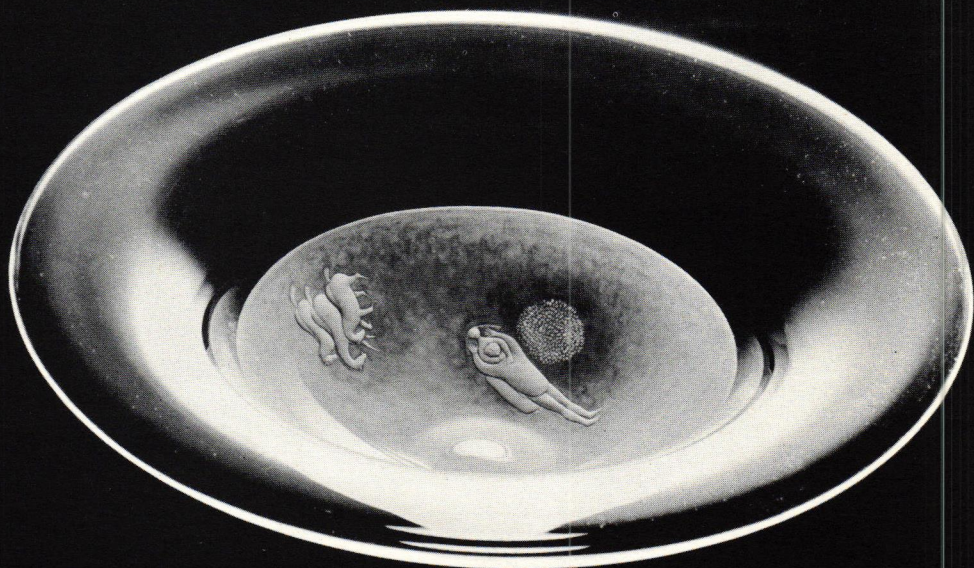






ÖHRSTRÖM

LUNDIN

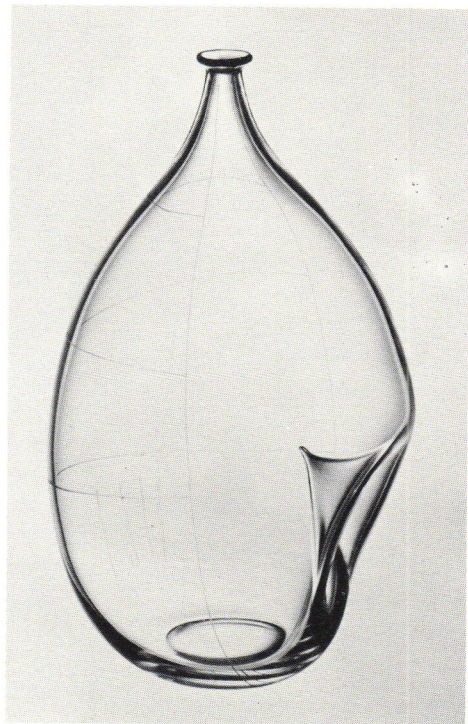
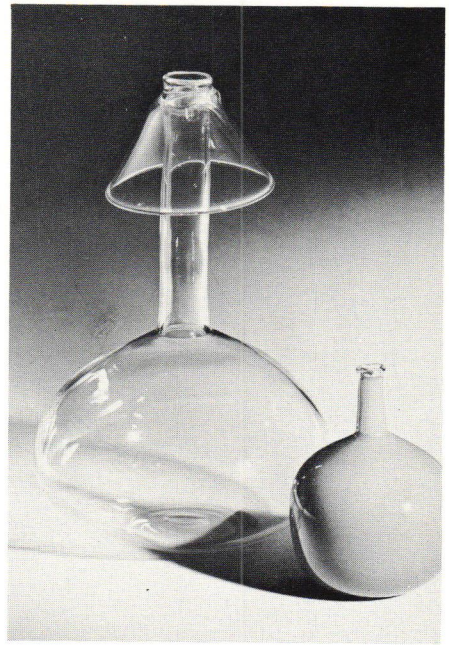


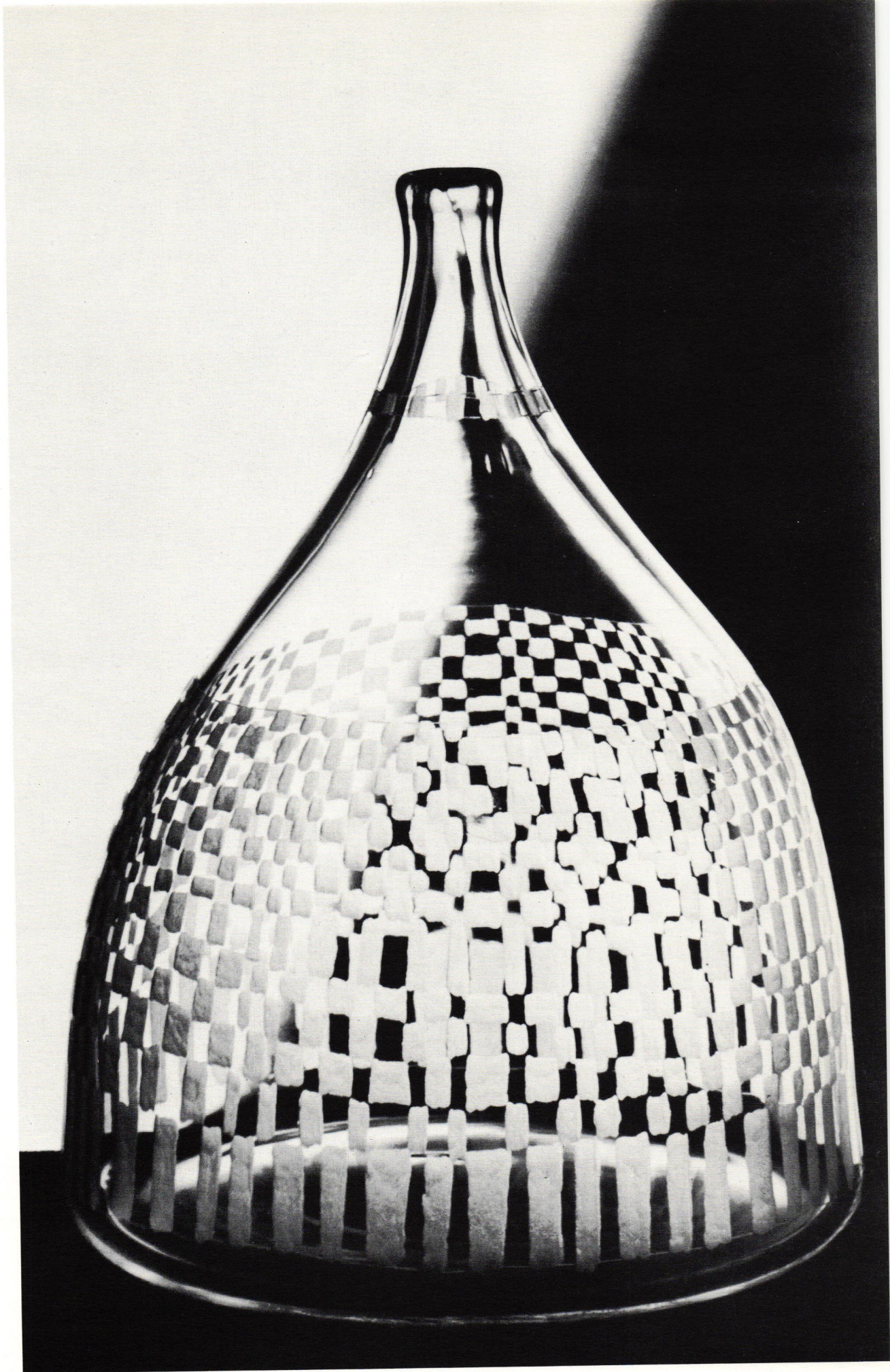
INGEBORG LUNDIN

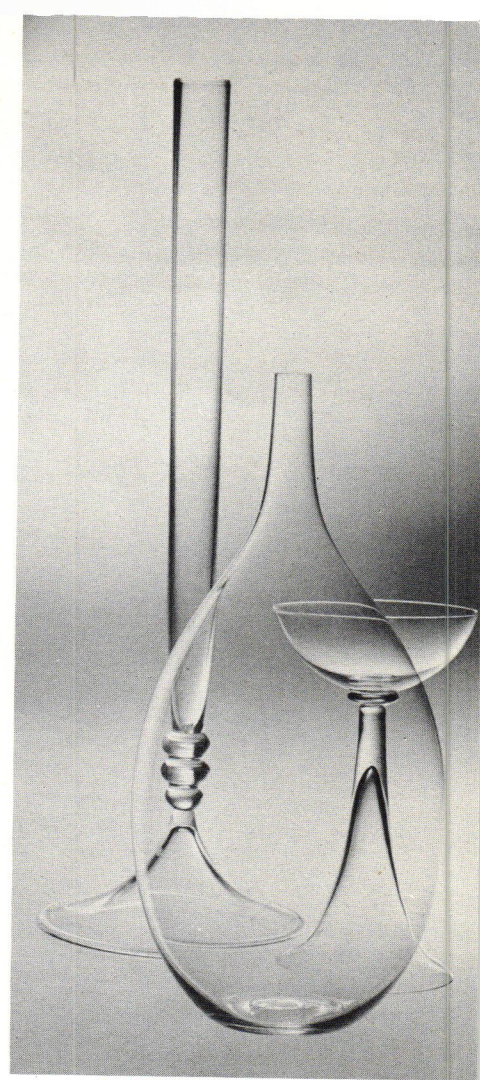
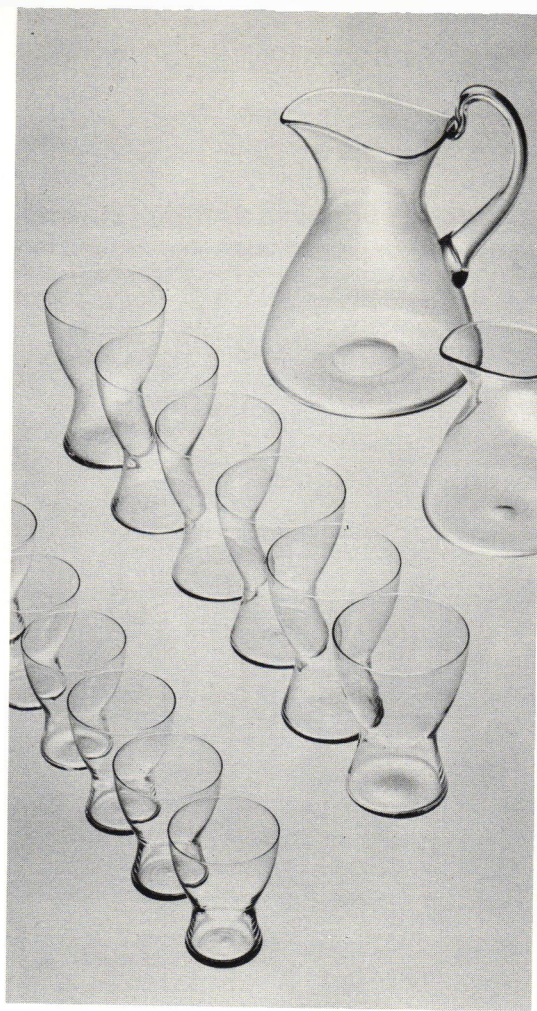
Ingeborg Lundin born in 1921, industrial artist, studied in Stockholm, the Scandinavian countries, France and Italy. Appointed by Orrefors in 1947, the most recent addition to its artists' staff. Since 1948 she has been represented in all exhibitions in which Orrefors has participated, and her work is on display at the Swedish National Museum in Stockholm.

"The past eight years have been spent designing for Orrefors. Previously I was a design teacher in Stockholm. If I decided to be something else I would be a painter. My preference is for the thin glass and the thick glass but not so much the in-between. We are very free at Orrefors; my work is constantly changing. I love to play with forms in my mind. I get ideas from watching the workers in the factory and observing the material. The movements of the glassblowers are inspiring. Probably I am happiest making free and fantastic forms in glass but I also enjoy the challenge of designing a new piece or set of utility glass. When I myself serve something at home I must have the correct glass for the drink, even the right glass for the right person. The most difficult thing is to design a drinking glass."









NILS LANDBERG

Nils Landberg born in 1907, industrial artist, attended the school of the Society of Swedish Arts and Crafts in Gothenburg and the school for engravers at Orrefors. After completing studies in France and Italy he joined the artists' staff at Orrefors. His designs include window glass and lighting fixtures. He has participated in Orrefors exhibitions since 1936, and is represented in several Swedish and foreign museums.

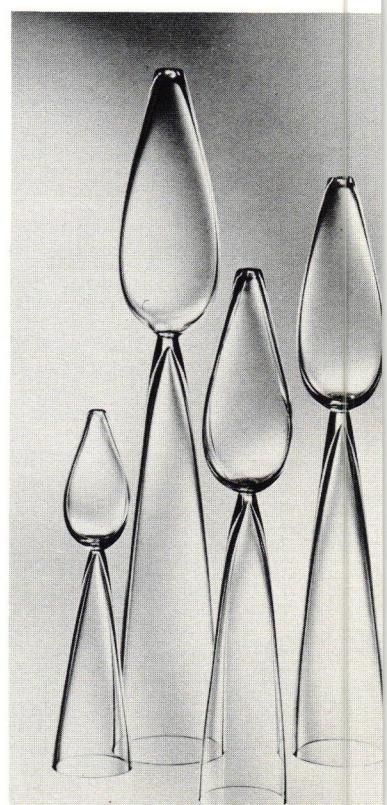
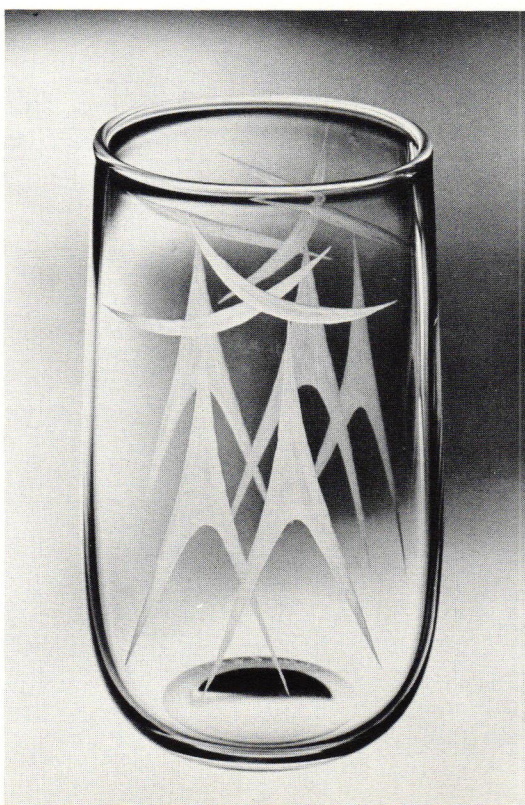
"It may have been chance, not a special desire, that made glass my medium, but now I find it hard to think of working in any other. One gets an idea, goes down to the foundry and gets it transformed into immediate reality - no other material has such possibilities. Bull's-eye or flop - it is the spontaneity in work with glass which gives me greatest satisfaction. Form gives suspense by itself, but often one gets a feeling that something must happen to a flat polished surface, and so one adds enrichment to the surface."

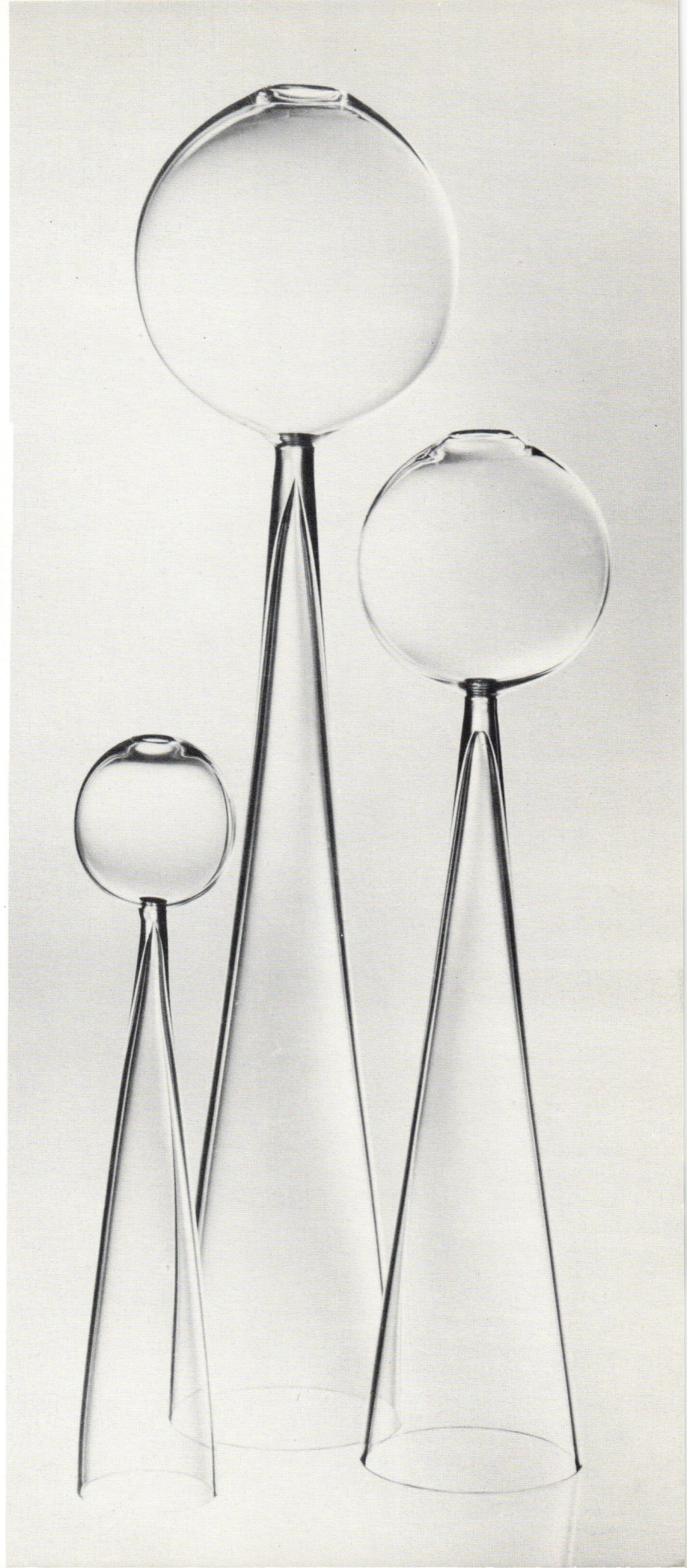
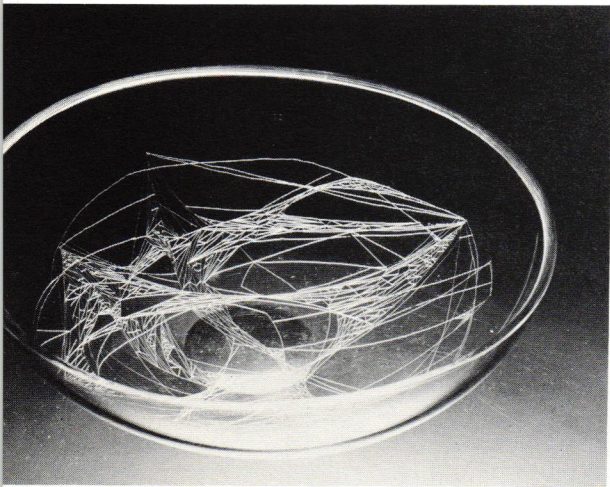


JOHN SELBING

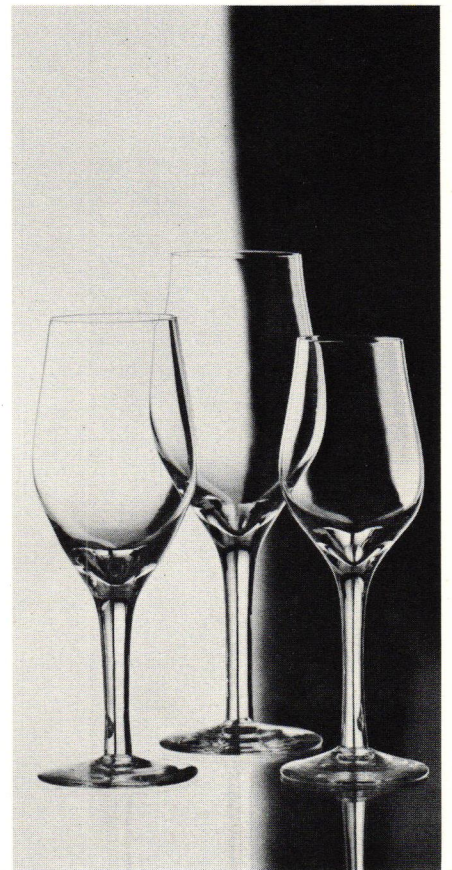
John Selbing born in 1908, employed by Orrefors in 1927 as assistant in the drafting room, turned to photography. He is the author of articles on glass photography in the magazines Foto and Fotografisk Arsbok. He has participated in a number of exhibitions with his own compositions in glass.

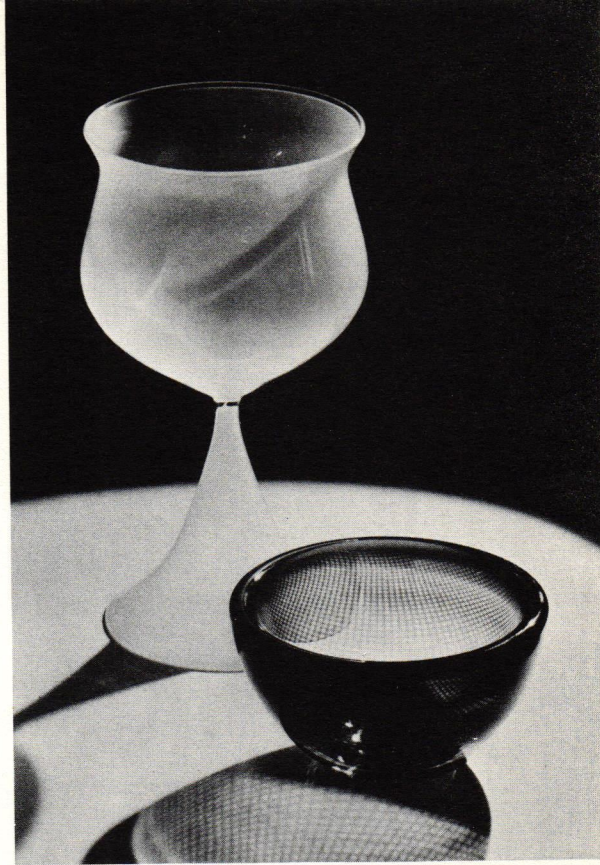
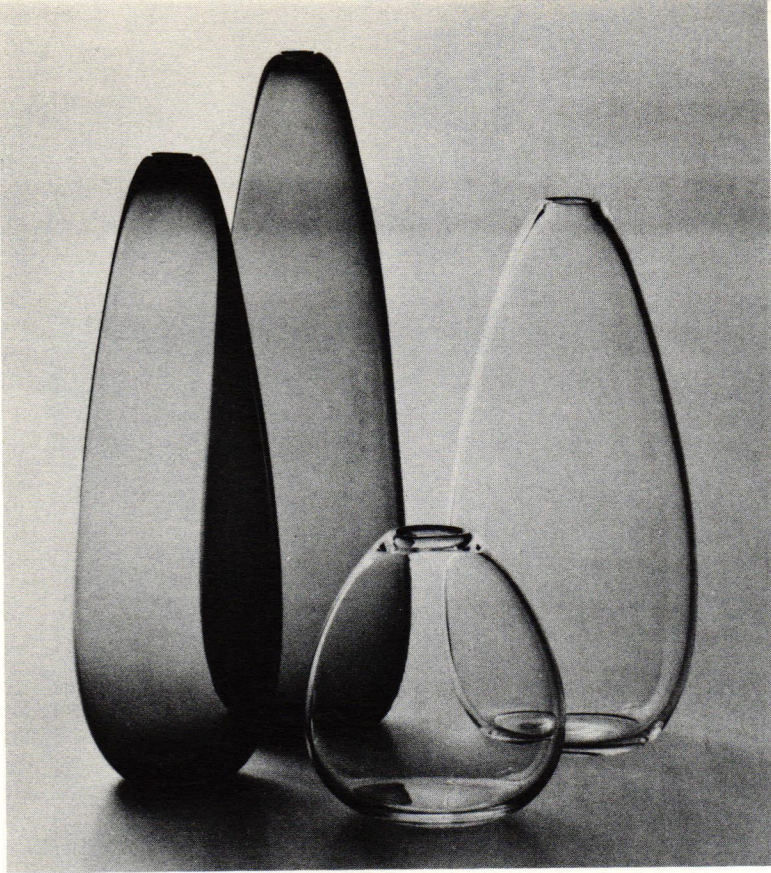
"Through my work as a photographer, I have come to circle continually around glass as unformed mass and finished articles. From there it is a short step to the desire to capture the material not only in pictures but also in volume. The light, airy bubble is for me the most expressive form of glass. The world of geometric form is in general my point of departure."





PALMQUIST





SVEN PALMQUIST

Sven Palmquist born in 1906, industrial artist, first trained at the Orrefors' school of engraving; later on continued studies in Stockholm. Traveled in Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Italy. To a large extent he has contributed to the development of several of the newest techniques and designs in the making of glass, for example Kraka and Ravenna. He has participated in many exhibitions - Paris, 1937 and New York, 1939 - and is represented in various Swedish and foreign museums.

"The clear, unchangeable, transparent material called glass is an inspiration for many tasks - to the purely decorative as well as the practically useful article. The beauty of material can be expressed in the simple table glass and in the sacramental chalice, in the richly formed sculpture and the untreated bowl. Glass in its glowing, softly flowing consistency has given me the natural feeling of wanting to express myself in pliant forms, thin and fragile or full and heavy; the flexibility of the unworked material gives glass its character for me."

