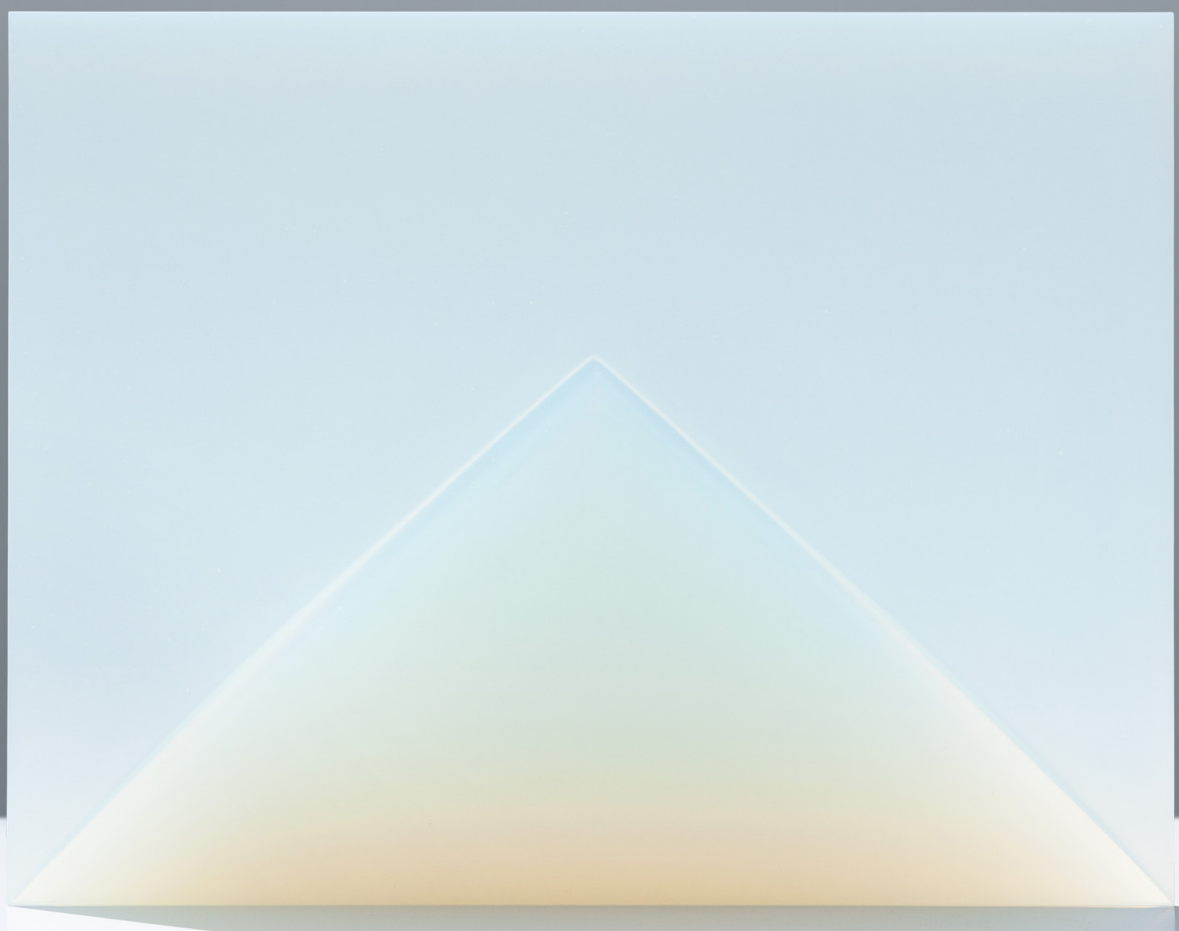


JAMFACTORY ICON  
**JESSICA LOUGHLIN: OF LIGHT**

EDUCATION RESOURCE



Jam  
Factory



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## INTRODUCTION

### The Resource

This resource provides information and activities designed to assist teachers in enhancing student engagement with the **JamFactory ICON Jessica Loughlin: of light** exhibition and extending their visual arts learning. Activities are tailored toward secondary students in the middle to senior years age bracket (Years 7-12), however, teachers are encouraged to adapt all content to suit the age and needs of their specific student group. Some suggestions for modification and extension have been provided.

### Curriculum Connections

This resource aligns with the general aims for 'The Arts' learning area of **The Australian Curriculum**<sup>1</sup> and all activities have been developed to address specific content descriptions outlined in The Australian Curriculum: Visual Arts (Version 9.0)<sup>2</sup>.

\*Although the specific content descriptions referenced in this resource have been selected from the Years 7-8 and Years 9-10 bands, common concepts and themes, such as interpretation and personal response, concept development and experimentation with materials, techniques and styles, are repeated across all bands and are relevant to all age groups.

This resource also addresses the **General Capabilities** and **Cross-curriculum Priorities** outlined by ACARA:

- Opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop **all General Capabilities** are embedded throughout this document.
- **Cross-Curriculum Priorities** are primarily addressed through:

#### Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia:

- a) Loughlin's formative training in the Japanese art of **Sumi-e** and its relationship to the principles of Zen Buddhism.
- b) How Loughlin's early exposure to principles of Japanese culture and spirituality have influenced her individual perception of the world and art making practice.

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures:

- a) The exploration of how different people and groups perceive and represent the Australian landscape, including First Nations Australians.

## This Exhibition

*JamFactory ICON Jessica Loughlin: of light* is the tenth exhibition in the JamFactory's annual ICON series. Each year, the JamFactory presents a solo exhibition highlighting the practice of one of South Australia's most accomplished visual artists working in craft-based media. This year, we celebrate the work of glass artist Jessica Loughlin. Loughlin has been a studio glass artist for over twenty years, quietly honing her **kiln forming** and **cold working** skills through a highly disciplined process of research and experimentation. Achieving a level of technical and expressive mastery that has seen her work widely exhibited and held in many important public and private collections, Loughlin has developed a highly refined and subtle visual language that evokes the meditative emotional and psychological state she experiences in vast, open and empty spaces. Light, space, evaporation, the horizon, mirages, perception and the observation of subtle changes are all recurring motifs in Loughlin's work – all elements tied to her fascination with expansive, flat landscapes such as the salt lakes of South Australia. Through the manipulation of glass, light and space, she creates pieces that embody the quiet, still and open qualities she is so drawn to and invites the viewer to experience their own moment of peaceful **introspection**. *JamFactory ICON Jessica Loughlin: of light* launches in Adelaide during the South Australian Living Artists (SALA) festival before embarking on an extensive Australian-wide tour.

### Coding System used to indicate Curriculum Connections

Content Descriptors:

Years 7/8 band (e.g. **AC9AVA8E01**)

Years 9/10 band (e.g. **AC9AVA10E01**)

General Capabilities:

LIT: Literacy

NUM: Numeracy

DL: Digital Literacy

CCT: Critical & Creative Thinking

PSC: Personal & Social Capability

IU: Intercultural Understanding

EU: Ethical Understanding

Curriculum Priorities:

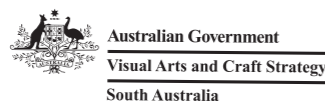
ASIA: Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia

ATSIHC: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Cross-disciplinary Connections:

e.g. History – *brief description of thematic links.*

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



## SECTION 1 MEET THE ARTIST



Jessica Loughlin is a studio glass artist who uses her exceptional technical skills to create refined and ethereal works that reflect her preoccupation with the experience of space, light and stillness.

Loughlin, the eldest of three children, was born in Melbourne in 1975 into a creative family – her mother, Elizabeth, is a dancer and her father, Graeme, an architect who practices in the **International Style**. The Loughlin household was full of art, design, dance and music. Living in inner-city Carlton, the family regularly attended art exhibitions and music and dance performances and would often spend weekends at the Sunday Market at Clifton Pugh's Dunmoochin artists' colony in Cottles Bridge, Victoria, or bushwalking in country Victoria. Elizabeth recalls her eldest daughter being very active from a young age and always "...interested in doing...". With no television and few toys in the house, she would occupy the young Loughlin by dancing with her up and down their long hallway and setting up daily painting sessions on butcher's paper. Loughlin began mother-toddler dance classes at twenty-two months of age at Dorotea Mangiamenes's **Mangala Studios** of Yoga and Creative Dance in Carlton (where her mother worked in creative dance and dance therapy). She studied dance, yoga and violin until her late teens.

It was at Mangala Studios that Loughlin first encountered Japanese ink painting or Sumi-e (also known as Suiboku-ga). **Sumi-e** was used as a way to help children relax and focus in preparation for a creative dance class. It involves the labour-intensive process of grinding ink before using a fine brush to paint elegant strokes that graduate softly from black to pale grey. Sumi-e is an artform that requires high levels of concentration and patience – an unusual occupation for a young child – however, six-year-old Loughlin enjoyed the process so much that she enrolled in weekly classes that would later influence the direction of her adult artmaking practice.

When she was a young adolescent, Loughlin went on a school excursion to Umoona (Coober Pedy) in northern South Australia. She vividly recalls the moment she looked out of the bus window and was confronted by the vast expanse of open space, finding herself transfixed by the distant horizon. Reflecting on this event, Loughlin thinks that she was probably the only child eager to take a photo of 'nothing'. Having grown up in the urban environment of a major city, surrounded by multi-storey buildings and bustling traffic, this was her first experience of a completely empty and still landscape. The feeling of freedom and calmness that this experience instilled in her has stayed with Loughlin throughout life and proved particularly influential on the development of her artistic practice. For the last twenty years, she has dedicated herself to translating this feeling into her work.

During her final year of high school, Loughlin began experimenting with glass, fascinated by its ability to hold light. She attended glass classes at the Meat Market Craft Centre in North Melbourne and began making objects from glass. After completing high school, Loughlin had two interests – science and art. Although she chose to study visual art, she ended up pursuing both disciplines, to some degree, through her investigation of glass – its material properties, how it interacts with light and how to manipulate its unique qualities. Loughlin completed a Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts) (Honours) at the Australian National University's prestigious **Canberra School of Art**, where she majored in Glass (specifically **kiln formed** glass) under the guidance of the esteemed artist and teacher **Stephen Proctor**. In 1997, the same year she graduated, Loughlin received the Ranamok Prize for Contemporary art and was also chosen to undertake a **Bullseye Glass Company** Residency in Portland, U.S.A., as part of their inaugural International Young Artists in Glass Program. Four years later, in 2001, she was awarded the Urban Glass 'Outstanding New Artist in Glass' award – another huge achievement for someone just starting out in their artistic career.

Throughout her artistic practice, Loughlin has constantly refined her technique and visual language in order to more accurately communicate with her audience and invoke in them the same meditative state of mind that she experiences in the vast expanses of the Australian Outback. Her earlier work often took the form of an almost flat vessel, such as a platter or shallow bowl, and interpreted her fascination with the horizon more literally. These vessels were made of different sheets of glass, in slight tonal variations of grey and blue, fused together to create the effect of earth meeting sky – the horizon line accented as either a bright or dark hue (depending on the time of day being represented) or left as a slim channel running along the middle of the vessel. Organic lines, rather than perfectly straight lines and sharp edges, were used to replicate the way things are formed in nature and she experimented with the use of an illegible scrawl, mimicking the script used in historical letter writing, engraved into the surface of the vessels to symbolise the memories embedded in the land. Over the

Left: Jessica Loughlin with *receptor of light xi*, 2020, photographer: Rachel Harris

past twenty years, Loughlin's work has slowly evolved, becoming less figurative and more abstract in both **aesthetic** and concept. Through a growing confidence in personal style and command of technique, she began to manipulate her medium to "...sculpt light and shadow" in pursuit of the expression of pure emotion. (for a detailed account of Loughlin's artistic development see Julie Ewington's essay "Moving Still" in the monograph *Jessica Loughlin: From Here*).

Loughlin's **reductive** style and sophisticated use of material makes her stand out in the studio glass community and has resulted in her being held in a number of important art collections both in Australia and overseas, including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, the Corning Museum of Glass New York, U.S.A., the Glasmuseum in Denmark, the Victoria and Albert Museum in the UK and the Musée de Design et d'Arts Appliqués Contemporains in Switzerland. Loughlin has also been awarded a number of prestigious prizes including the Tom Malone Prize in both 2004 and 2007 and the inaugural Fuse Art Prize in 2018. In 2020, she was also the first Australian to be shortlisted for the Loewe Foundation Craft Prize. Her work has been exhibited almost annually since 1999. She has been involved in over sixty group exhibitions and *JamFactory ICON Jessica Loughlin: of light* will be her twelfth solo exhibition. Over her twenty-year career, Loughlin's unique perspective and use of the glass medium has established her artistic reputation both nationally and internationally. Her work has been exhibited extensively across Australia and the United States (U.S.A.), as well being shown in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, China, the United Kingdom, Japan and Portugal. Loughlin has also held numerous residencies and teaching positions, including stints instructing at two prestigious studio glass institutes in the U.S.A. - **Pilchuck Glass School** and the **Corning Museum of Glass**.

Loughlin moved to Adelaide in 1998, attracted to the presence of a strong studio glass community and the easy access this city afforded her to the vast, open landscapes of central Australia that provide her with such inspiration - particularly the large salt lakes of South Australia, including Kati Thanda (Lake Eyre). From 1998-2007, Loughlin was a member of Adelaide's celebrated **Blue Pony Studio** - a shared studio space for glass artists, including previous JamFactory ICON artists Clare Belfrage and Tom Moore. During her time as a 'Pony', Loughlin developed a strong working relationship with **Deb Jones** through their "...shared dedication to creating an inspiring studio environment. In 2007, they both left Blue Pony to establish **Gate 8 Workshop** in an old church in Thebarton, S.A. Loughlin continues to work from Gate 8, enjoying the beautiful play of light through the church windows each day and the comradery and collaboration facilitated by sharing a studio space with colleagues and friends.

In 2015, Loughlin and, fellow Gate 8 member, **Rachel Harris** started a public art cooperative called **Project 2 Project**. Using large-scale graphics, moving image projections "...and what ever [sic] else it takes..." they create installations that slip seamlessly into public spaces and subtly alter the viewer's perception of the world around them. Often with a focus on bringing nature into the urban environment, Loughlin and Harris aim to ignite the public's imagination and provide respite from the monotony of daily life by creating small, unexpected moments of wonder. *Karrawirra Parri Lane* (2015), for example, consisted of slow-moving footage of the River Torrens projected through the top floor windows of a building on Peel Street, Adelaide. This created the effect of a giant aquarium sitting atop the trendy bars, cafes and restaurants of Peel Street - you can view footage of this, and other public artworks by Project 2 Project on their [website](#). (see 'Further Reading on Jessica Loughlin - [Online Links](#)' in SECTION 5 for the full listing).

From Loughlin's early study of sumi-e to her studio artworks and public art installations, a strong focus on nature, and its potential as an antidote to the over stimulation of modern life, has been at the centre of her art making. She continues to seek out wide open landscapes as a way to clear her mind and gain renewed inspiration.

*Whether I'm in the desert or at sea, I feel like I have returned to the beginning of existence, before anything on earth had been created. Here there is no confusion, only harmony. When I look at the horizon, I always want to know what is there and what it would be like to be there, but like the future, I will never get there, only see it from a distance.*

- Jessica Loughlin

For a detailed outline of all Loughlin's achievements, see her [curriculum vitae](#) (see SECTION 5 for the full listing) or pages 164-177 of *Jessica Loughlin: From Here* - available in the gallery bookshop.



Above: Jessica Loughlin, *receptor of light xix*, 2022, photographer: Rachel Harris

## SECTION 2

# EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION

### THROUGH FIVE THEMES



### THEME 1 - THE SPACE WITHIN

To engage with the work of Jessica Loughlin is to enter a world of luminosity, tranquillity and contemplation where we are encouraged to disconnect from the bombardment of noise, ideas and imagery that surrounds us each day. She once wrote that at the heart of all her work is an expression of "...my relationship to vast space and seeing distance and understanding how those wide-open spaces affect us." For Loughlin, vast spaces, light and the mirage-like effects of perspective that these combine to create are a constant source of wonder and a doorway to the contemplation of the inner-self.

This fascination with open space has been with Loughlin since her youth. In her early adolescence, she travelled from the urban environment of her home in Melbourne to Umoona (Coober Pedy) in central Australia and it was here that she first encountered what she would later describe as "the beauty of emptiness". Loughlin vividly recalls of this trip:

*It was then that I became aware of open space. The freedom, calmness and roughness of the desert was intense...I could look around me and all that was in sight was the raw earth and the sky.*

She was drawn immediately to the horizon in the distance, desperate to photograph it. Today, these environments of isolated open plains where the broad expanses of sky and earth meet in a shimmering horizon inspire her with the same meditative sense of peace and freedom that she first felt as a child. She seeks out these environments, like the vast salt lakes of inland Australia that exist as dry plains for most of the year, "...looking for a particular moment. A moment of transcendence. For the large space to take over." It is this experience that she takes back to her studio and attempts to convey through her exquisite glass works – not the geography of the landscape itself but the mood the intense stillness invokes in her.

As a young artist, Loughlin wrote:

*My work aims for freedom, the freedom from all the distraction that may clutter our lives, in our search for inner understanding. It is the untouched landscape that we perceive as being perfect which arouses these feelings.*

*What is it that is so perfect about nature? Even though every leaf is different and every mountain has its own shape, they are all the right shape. They are all beautifully composed and yet all chaotic.*

For Loughlin, the perfection she finds in nature is the gateway to this inner freedom and transcendence – taking elements of the landscapes that generate these emotions in her she distils them into a means for us to share this experience. Tonal gradients of sky blue and hazy cloud-like mists are incorporated into her work without any intent to directly represent these phenomena. In works like *unfolding continuum iv* (2016) and *unfolding continuum v* (2017), Loughlin attempts to emulate the balance of order and chaos found in nature by spraying a 'slurry' of glass particles suspended in water across a plate of glass – allowing a dynamic relationship between her control of the spray and the water's freedom of movement on the glass. The soft swirled lines that remain when the water evaporates allude to the similar natural process by which salt plains are created, when the water evaporates, without being intended as a depiction of them (for a detailed explanation of the technical process involved in these pieces see ['Theme Four – A Vocabulary of Glass'](#) in SECTION 2). In both her wall-hanging and free-standing pieces, Loughlin orchestrates the interplay of light with the transparent and the opaque – building layer upon layer of glass to create works that call on us to notice the subtlest changes in light. The glowing simplicity of the resulting works draw us in without providing anything for us to focus our eyes or our **objective thought** on – like the barren salt plains Loughlin travels to, here there are no distractions, only ourselves and the light.

A fascination with perception underscores Loughlin's work. She is drawn to effects of the light that occupy a blurred space between real and unreal. Phosphenes (the blue dots we see when we close our eyes after looking at a bright light), mirages and the blue line of the horizon are all real, in the sense

that they are visible to us, but do not physically exist in the form we see them – they are a relationship between the light and our perception of it. Of course, the way the light and atmosphere create these illusions is easily explained by science but, for Loughlin, it is the poetry of these visible but **intangible** phenomena, forever outside our grasp, that makes them so compelling. Since childhood, she has been preoccupied with the nature of the horizon – a place that only looks the way it does so long as we are far away. If we go to this distant place, it will look quite ordinary and the horizon will have moved further beyond us. That mysterious haze of blue can never be experienced in the manner that we see it – it is a place that we can never visit. Loughlin has connected deeply with the work of Rebecca Solnit whose exploration of this theme in her writing echoes Loughlin's own fascination. In a piece titled 'The Blue of Distance', Solnit writes:

*For many years I have been moved by the blue at the far edge of what can be seen, that color [sic] of horizons, of remote mountain ranges, of anything far away. The color of that distance is the color of an emotion, the color of solitude and of desire, the color of there seen from here, the color of where you are not. And the color of where you can never go.*

For Solnit, "...blue is the color of longing for distances you never arrive in..." and the horizon is a visual metaphor for things that we desire but can never possess. As she resolves, "Some things we have only as long as they remain lost, some things are not lost only so long as they are distant." Blue has become increasingly important in Loughlin's work as an expression of the meditative nature of these unanswerable questions of real versus unreal – of the ambiguous relationship between what is visible and what is **tangible**. We find this particularly in pieces like *focal point*, *focal point ii* and *focal point iii* (2022) all of which appear to be blue but are made of colourless opaline glass which, despite containing no blue pigment, reflects only blue light. Like the horizon, there is a difference between what they are and how they appear.

Loughlin explores her connection to stillness, silence and perception as a means of creating works that draw viewers into the quiet space necessary to notice the subtle changes of light her pieces reveal. When we focus our attention on one of her artworks, we find that our first impression slowly begins to develop more complexity as we start to perceive incremental differences in the tones of light it transmits. A piece like *incorporeal* (2020) that appears to be an intense pure white suddenly reveals a variety of different tones, from icy blue-tinged white to soft gold, as we contemplate it. As it does with all things in life, our perspective of the subject becomes different the longer we consider it. Loughlin encourages us to reflect, to be still, to listen to our own thoughts and feelings. Her work is filled with a sense of generosity – rather than projecting a conceptual concern of her own onto her viewers, she seeks to create "...a place for the viewer to actually take notice of their own mind". This internal focus is at the heart of Loughlin's practice. She draws inspiration from the natural world but her aim is not for her audience to consider the world around them – she wants us to "look in", not out. The space she seeks to engage with is, ultimately, not the space around us but the space within

## THEME 2 - THE INFLUENCE OF ZEN

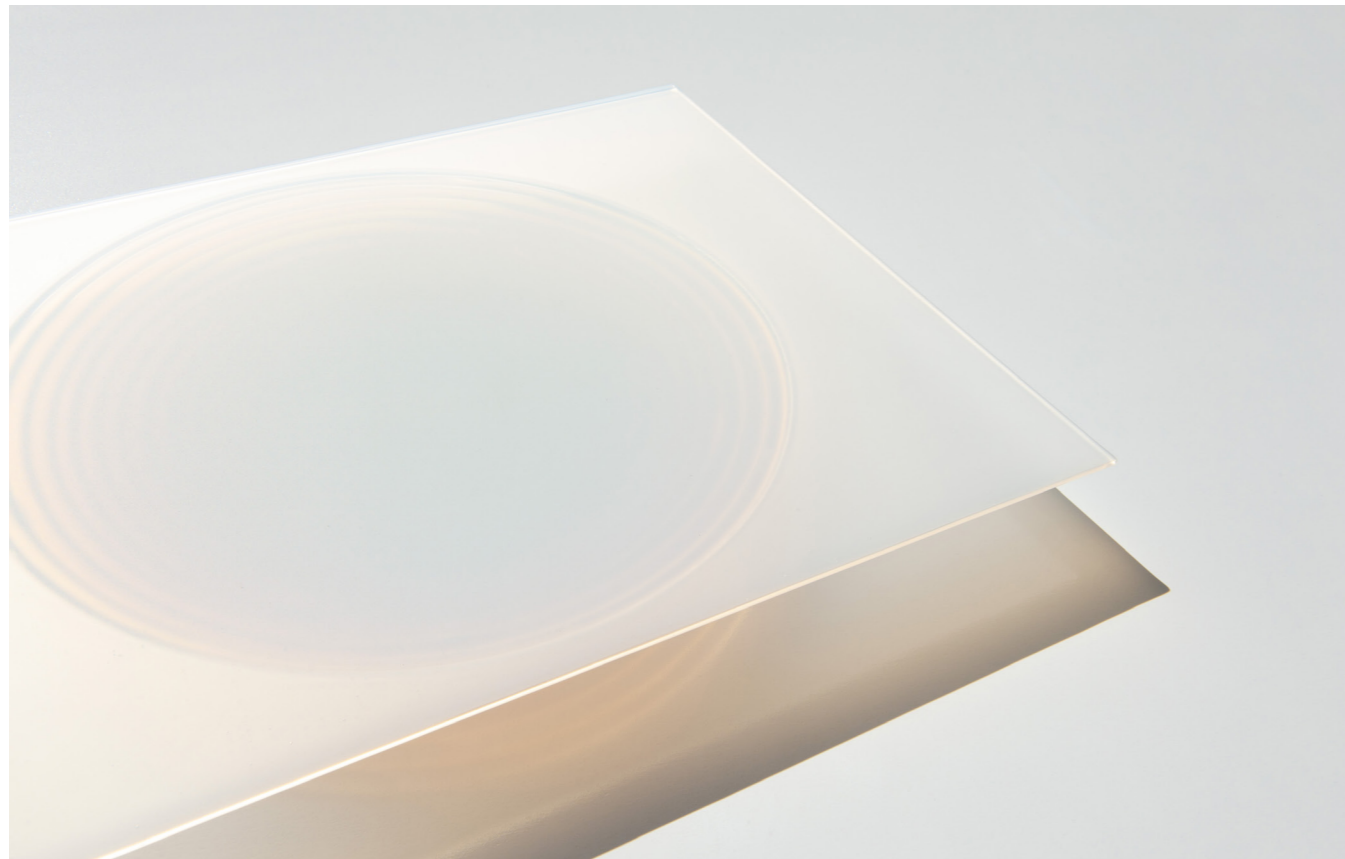
As a child, Jessica Loughlin spent six years studying **Sumi-e**, the art of Japanese ink painting, which was to prove a strong influence on her future career as an artist. There is an obvious connection between the aesthetics of Loughlin's adult art making practice and her experience practicing Sumi-e. She has said that everything she knows about tones and composition she learnt from Japanese painting and in her early works she showed a strong preference for working with the same gradation of **monochromatic** tones in glass as are used in ink in Sumi-e (see for example *Space Between 14* (2005) and *Through Distance 1* (2006) on display in this exhibition). Throughout her career, the elegant simplicity of her pieces has clearly illustrated her absorption of the refined and pure style of Japanese aesthetics. However, there is a more subtle connection between Loughlin's adult and childhood artistic practice that emerges when we consider the origins and practices of Sumi-e in more depth.

Right: Jessica Loughlin, *receptor of light xvii*, 2021, photographer: Rachel Harris



The Japanese artform Sumi-e (also known as Suiboku-ga) derives from a Chinese calligraphy technique that was adopted as part of the practice of Zen Buddhism by Japanese monks in the mid-14th century. Its techniques and themes are intimately connected to the Zen way of understanding the world – an understanding that is very different to that of Western thought. Zen Buddhism is not technically a religion or philosophy as at its heart is the search for an ‘enlightenment’ which cannot be achieved through rituals or logical thought. Rather, for its followers, Zen Buddhism is a way of living that seeks this enlightenment by the discovery of one’s own inner nature through meditation – the word Zen itself means ‘sitting meditation’. The Zen practitioner seeks to achieve a state called *no-mind* through meditation – in this state the distinction between the self and others and the self and nature disappears. No-mind is “...a free mind that is not **delimited** by ideas, desires and images...no-mind is a practical **transcendence** from the everyday mind, without departing from the everydayness of the world”. Meditation is the means by which a practitioner frees themselves from the ingrained cultural and **linguistic** teachings of their society and looks inwards for their own ‘original nature’ which exists in harmony with the natural world and all other beings.

Sumi-e developed in this context as a combination of meditation and expression of spiritual belief by early Zen Buddhist monks. **Richard Liddicut**, an experienced Sumi-e practitioner and teacher (who taught Loughlin as a child), explains that the practice of Sumi-e begins with a slow process of grinding of ink – this could take half an hour. This process is undertaken to still the body and help to make the mind empty and responsive. The practitioner then makes slow, conscious brush strokes with extreme precision and spends much time perfecting their stroke or copying templates in order to achieve a high level of skill. In this way, Sumi-e is, like yoga, a form of moving meditation that engages body and mind and focuses on the connectivity between them. Liddicut is not himself a Buddhist but believes that the connection between mind, body and spirit forged through these practices can help to connect the artist to a deeper sense of self and develop a more authentic and focused relationship with their art making. For Loughlin, the need to focus inward, rather than constantly engage with and react to the noise and ideas around her, has always been a central element of her practice. It is both the means by which she finds the inspiration to make her works and the result she intends to achieve with them by creating an “...atmosphere of contemplation...” for others. Like the process of grinding ink, she finds the time she spends hand grinding her glass pieces creates a reflective and meditative mood similar to that which she is trying to invoke in her audience.



Above: Jessica Loughlin, *depth of field i*, 2020, photographer: Rachel Harris

The themes of Sumi-e focus on the natural world including flowers, animals and landscapes and reflect the Zen Buddhist perception of human beings as rooted in nature rather than as separate entities that exist in a struggle against it. In the Zen Buddhist understanding of the world, the distinctions between mind and body, myself and others, the person and the natural environment simply do not exist in the way they do in Western thought. In keeping with this, humans often appear as tiny figures within large landscapes as one element of a harmonious whole. In Western art traditions, when humans are represented as small figures in a huge landscape it is usually to highlight the smallness and fragility of man in the face of nature (and by extension of God or nothingness depending on the perspective of the artist). This feeling of overwhelming awe, tinged with fear, at the realisation of man’s insignificance and vulnerability in the face of the magnitude of nature is referred to as the ‘**Romantic sublime**’ and was a favourite subject of the **Romantic** painters of the early 19th century. A classic example of this is the painting *Monk by the Sea* (1808-1810) by Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840). The monk appears as an insignificant black figure on the shoreline swamped by the vast expanses of water and sky that unfold around him. The painting is dark and moody, filled with Friedrich’s sense of awe at the immensity of the divine. If we compare this to the Sumi-e hanging scroll *Landscape* (15th century) by Gakuo Zoukyu (active c. 1500), although both works are rooted in spirituality, the difference is immediately obvious. It also depicts a landscape of land and water - high mountains descending into a body of water below. A tiny boat with a figure in it floats on the water on left hand side – the painting references a story about a man visiting a friend by boat. The representation of the boatman in this way is not aimed at generating angst or awe at man’s small stature in the world, it simply presents a peaceful and coherent whole where the small human being occupies a realistically scaled position within their surroundings.

There is a particular view of nature – a sense of harmony and comfort with vastness and isolation – at the heart of Loughlin’s work that seems to bear the influence of her early exposure to this Zen understanding of the world. Loughlin has explained that the further you go out into vast uninhabited landscapes the further you go into your own mind. For many people, the power of isolation to turn the human mind inward on itself is not necessarily a comfortable thought but, for Loughlin, this is its attraction. The emotions that overwhelm her in the immense vastness of nature are not vulnerability or **existential angst** but freedom and peace. She returns to this idea of looking inwards, of reflection, of meditation again and again in her work, attempting to share this experience by evoking the contemplative atmosphere of the natural world for her audience. In this focus on the inner-self and sense of harmonious connectivity – between the physical, the mental and the environment – that pervades her work we find the imprint of a Zen way of seeing.

### THEME 3 – PAINTING WITH GLASS

One of the most intriguing aspects of Jessica Loughlin’s work is the way her pieces defy our expectations of what a ‘glass’ artwork is. Loughlin’s wall-hanging or free-standing pieces are not sculptural objects that hold their meaning entirely within their own shape or design. Neither are they conceptual works that derive meaning from their relationship to an idea – for example, through the subversion of a traditional glass form like the dramatically oversized *Scent Bottle* (2001) by Nick Mount (b. 1952). Loughlin makes works in glass but glass is only one element of her works – the other is light. As she has said, “The main reason I started working with glass is because of its ability to hold light...”. Both glass and light are critical to the realisation of Loughlin’s artistic vision. It is through the combination of these two elements that she can re-create the experience of infinite stillness and silence she finds in vast, isolated spaces of nature and allow her viewers to share the mood of peaceful contemplation this invokes in her.

Loughlin’s use of light to create a mood, and also to explore her fascination with the space between what we perceive and what is **tangible**, echo the concerns of the artists of the Light and Space movement that developed in California during the 1960s. The artists involved with this movement explored perception, and the ways in which light influences our perception of the space around us, often through the creation of immersive environments or **installations**. Examples of this style of artwork include James Turrell’s (b. 1943) ‘projection piece’ *Afrum Pale Blue* (1968), where projected light creates a hologram of a box suspended inside a dark room, or his *Wedgework 3* (1974), where light creates the illusion of walls inside a space. Turrell has explained his practice in these terms:



*My work has no object, no image and no focus. With no object, no image and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking. What is important to me is to create an experience of wordless thought.*

Loughlin shares this focus on the viewer's experience of their own thoughts with Turrell and his work and philosophy have been influential on her practice. In his ethereal [Virga](#) (1974), a constantly changing veil of natural and artificial light that references the streaks of rain visible below a cloud, we can see a link to Loughlin's own manipulation of light in order to evoke natural phenomenon.

Although she shares the interests of the Light and Space artists, Loughlin's practice differs from theirs in a significant way. For the Light and Space artists, the means of heightening the viewer's awareness of their own perception is, generally, through the interaction of light with an environment. As Turrell articulated above, his work has 'no object, no image and no focus'; he considers his medium to be "pure light". His views are echoed by Robert Irwin (b. 1928) another leading artist of the movement. In his work, Irwin seeks to draw our attention away from the materials his installations are made from and direct it onto our perception of the spaces they are installed in – he refers to this as "conditional" art. Irwin insists that his installations are not objects (by which he means **art objects**). For him, the various materials used to create the installation are not part of the artwork – the work itself only exists in the viewer's perception of space created by the installation. For example, Irwin has made works that involve placing clear acrylic columns in urban spaces in order to "...radically alter the viewer's perception of a given space". These columns, one of which is displayed as [Untitled \(Acrylic Column\)](#) (1969-2011), are designed to be almost invisible from some angles and act as a prism from others. Irwin does not consider these columns to be sculptural objects or art objects in themselves but rather "tools" through which he can explore "...the quality of a particular space...". The acrylic column in Irwin's work functions very differently to the glass pieces Loughlin creates. In her practice, the manipulation of light occurs through its interaction with a laboriously hand-made object that connects the viewer intimately to its maker – Loughlin's work is made from light but it is equally made of glass.

Loughlin's artworks consist of an inseparable interrelationship between light and glass – they are glass artworks that express their meaning through their interaction with light. In some of her wall-hanging pieces, she employs one of her most innovative techniques which she has described as 'painting with glass' – using water to spray a slurry of glass pigments across a sheet of glass as if it were a canvas, allowing the water to evaporate and then fusing the pigment to the glass sheet in the kiln (See [Theme 4: A Vocabulary of Glass](#) in SECTION 2 for more detail on this process). This process reflects the **Abstract Expressionist** painting style 'action-painting' in which artists sought to achieve a more authentic representation of their emotions by allowing the materials to take their own form (by splashing, dripping, pouring or flicking the paint). In Loughlin's work, her ability to both control the process and allow her materials some degree of freedom is an attempt to capture the harmony between order and chaos that she finds so compelling in nature. In works like *unfolding continuum, iv* (2016), *unfolding continuum v* (2017) and *incorporeal* (2020), we find soft, undulating hazes that recall, in particular, the gently fluid style of Abstract Expressionist painter Helen Frankenthaler. The connection between the technique used to create these pieces and the concept of a glass painting is quite obvious but, in a larger sense, all of Loughlin's work can be viewed as comparable to painting – as paintings made of glass and light.

Loughlin's earliest experience of art practice was the six years she spent studying **Sumi-e**, Japanese ink painting, as a child and she has stated that it was from Sumi-e that she learnt everything she knows about tones and composition. It is this background that she brings to her exploration of glass and light – and of the potential for these two elements to combine to express the feelings she experiences in wide open spaces. In all Loughlin's glass pieces we find the skill of the abstract painter for composing subtle arrangements of colours and tones to express meaning and emotion – but rather than coloured paint on a canvas, her works are composed of coloured light emanating through or reflecting off glass. When seen in person, her works reveal subtleties of colour that cannot be captured by photography – colours become more vivid and the transitions between them are softer and more imperceptible. Through her mastery of technique, Loughlin is able to compose glass works that manipulate and orchestrate light to create the effects she desires. In this way, she combines the theories of the Light and Space artists and the expressive power of abstract painting to create a style of artwork that is uniquely her own. Loughlin has referred to her *receptor of light* series pieces as

performing almost as "...a 'tabular rasa' [blank slate] for noticing subtle changes of light throughout the day", due to the way its apparent milky whiteness becomes washed with planes of colour that change in response to the subtlest changes in light. We could just as easily describe them as blank canvases for noticing light. The work of Light & Space artist Mary Corse (b. 1945) can be seen as something of a precursor to Loughlin's work when viewed in this way. Corse created abstract paintings made of white acrylic paint in which she suspended glass microspheres (which she had discovered were used to make the markings painted on roads reflect light at night). A painting, like [Untitled \(First White Light Series\)](#) (1968), that was created with these microspheres would appear to be pure white but, when seen in person, would glow with reflected light as the viewer moved in front of it. In Loughlin's pieces, this concept is taken further – rather than attaching glass particles to a fabric canvas, the canvas and composition merge into an inseparable whole through their fabrication entirely in glass. Loughlin's work, however, is less concerned with the conceptual notion of the viewer creating the work through their perception and movement, which is so central to Corse's work. For Loughlin, it is creating works that pull her back into "...an imaginary space that is a space of stillness and reflection and satisfaction" that is important.

Loughlin distils the visual effects of light and atmosphere into abstract works that evoke the emotional experience of the landscapes they are inspired by. In this evocation of the effects of light in nature, Loughlin's work connects to the practice of **Impressionist** painter Claude Monet (1840-1926). Obsessed with capturing the effect of light, from the early 1880s, Monet devoted himself to painting several series of paintings that focused on the changing nature of light on a specific subject. These included a series of haystacks, one on the façade of Rouen Cathedral and, most famously, one on the water lilies in his garden. Monet sought to represent not the subject of the paintings (a cathedral, for example) but the way the light reacted with this subject throughout the day. He would set up multiple canvases, sometimes up to fifteen of them, in a row and race from one canvas to the next in an attempt to illustrate the constantly changing effects of light over time. [La Cathedrale de Rouen, Le Portail et le Tour Saint-Romain, effet du matin](#) (1893), [La Cathedrale de Rouen, Le Portail, soleil matinal](#) (1893) and [La Cathedrale de Rouen, Le Portail et le Tour Saint-Romain, plein soleil!](#) (1893) give an illustration of the results of this technique. Like Loughlin's work, these paintings appear very different when viewed in person – photography cannot capture the way in which they appear to radiate light. Although these paintings are not complete abstractions (in other words, we can still recognise a cathedral), Monet's focus is on the subtle changes in the tones of light that reflect off the white chalk that the cathedral façade is built from. Loughlin's work can be viewed as a resolution of these attempts by Monet to capture the nature of changing light. She creates pieces that provide both the subject for the light to interact with (the glass form she creates) and the representation of the light (the composition of light that is created through its interaction with the glass form). This results in pieces that are able to constantly change their representation of light in relation to changes in the light around them. It is often said that Monet was the painter of light – by employing her exceptional glass working skills, Jessica Loughlin is able to use glass to paint *with* light.



Above: Jessica Loughlin, *unfolding continuum iv* and *unfolding continuum v*, 2016, photographer: Rachel Harris

## THEME 4 – A VOCABULARY OF GLASS

Like many practices that involve exceptional skill, the simple and serene appearance of Jessica Loughlin's artworks belie the rigorous practice of experimentation, testing, innovation, meticulous construction and laborious hand finishing that goes on behind the scenes to create each piece. Many hours of work go into creating a single artwork – so much so that Loughlin can only create a small number each year. Drawing on only a select few **elements of art/design** – principally colour, texture and light – her sophisticated command of technique allows her to manipulate these elements in a myriad of ways in order to communicate meaning. Loughlin describes the relationship between material and process as glass being her language and technique her vocabulary, saying "...the more I understand technique and the more I become more proficient in it the wider my vocab [sic] is for being able to express my ideas through glass". In Loughlin's work, glass is used specifically for its ability to manipulate light rather than to create a form that is sculptural or decorative in itself. It is the interaction between the glass and the light that creates her pieces and her understanding of how to use glass to generate the effects of light she desires reveals her mastery of this language.

Loughlin works in **kiln formed** glass art – meaning she manipulates glass using the heat of a **kiln**. Three main techniques form the basis of her practice: **casting, fusing and slumping**. Through constant experimentation with these techniques, she has developed innovative and highly individual ways of creating the ethereal effects that characterise her work.

### Casting

Some of Loughlin's freestanding works, including the *receptor of light* series, and thicker wall pieces, such as *halites* (2021), *waning crescents* (2022), *cerulean cycles* (2021) and the *focal point* series, are created using a casting technique. Casting is a process by which molten glass is 'cast' in a mould where it then solidifies and produces a glass object in the shape of the mould. This can be done in two different ways. In sand and graphite casting, a mould made of either compacted sand or graphite is filled with molten glass and then solidified by slowly cooling in a kiln (**annealing**). In kiln casting techniques, on the other hand, solid glass chunks/powder are placed in a mould which could be made from a range of materials including wax (lost-wax casting), a mixture of plaster and silica, clay or metal. This is then heated (or **fired**) in the kiln to melt the glass which flows into the shape of the mould and is annealed. Casting allows the artist to sculpt glass into any desired form and to capture fine detail. In Loughlin's unique freestanding pieces, casting allows the creation of gently curved surfaces with a very dense, solid centre of glass that gently thins and becomes more transparent toward the edges.

### Fusing

Loughlin's thin wall pieces, including *incorporeal* (2022), *unfolding continuum iv* (2016), *resonance i* (2022) and *near/far i* (2022), are created by fusing pieces of glass together in the kiln to create one flat sheet. The glass can be placed in layers or fitted edge to edge (like patchwork). When fusing edge to edge, the glass must be cut very precisely to avoid leaving any gaps between sections which may prevent them fusing properly.

Once arranged, the composition is then placed in the kiln and fired at the appropriate heat to melt the glass and allow bonds to form between all pieces of glass before annealing. A large number of layers can be fused together at once – Loughlin has fused as many as eighteen layers of 3 mm **sheet glass** in one firing to create some of her freestanding pieces. This technique offers many possibilities for creating different effects with glass. Glass pieces of different shapes, colours and/or **opacity** can be used to create a range of visual effects. Different firing temperatures can also be used to further the artist's vision. In tack fusing, the glass is fired to a lower temperature which softens the glass pieces enough to allow them to bond but also retains some of their original shape. Full fusing heats the glass to a higher temperature so that it becomes molten and the individual elements merge together smoothly – this is used by Loughlin to give her works their seamless perfection. A piece may go through multiple firing processes to build up a certain pattern or effect.

Loughlin has invented a unique fusing technique that allows her to 'paint with glass' in order to create her cloud-like wall pieces, such as *incorporeal* (2022), the *unfolding continuum* series and *virga ii* (2016). First, she **sandblasts** the surface of a large piece of sheet glass to create a textured surface that will grip the glass 'paint' in the next stage. She then fuses multiple layers of very dense,

white-coloured glass to produce a solid 'patty'. The patty is then ground down using a **diamond grinder** which results in a mixture, or 'slurry', of glass particles and water. This slurry is mixed with more water and poured onto the sandblasted surface of the sheet glass. Loughlin then uses a hose like a brush to wash the glass mixture across the sheet glass until she is happy with the pattern that has been created. The glass is then left to dry. As the water evaporates, it leaves subtle water marks on the glass that create a reminder, or memory, of the water's presence. The sheet is then fired in the kiln to fuse the glass 'paint' to the sheet glass. She may repeat this process four or five times until she achieves her desired effect. Through this technique, Loughlin is able to create soft washes of colour layered on top of the clear sheet glass so that, like clouds in the sky, the light is able to filter through the transparent spaces, creating shadows on the wall, while illuminating the floating, white mass (to see this process in action, see the JamFactory and Well Made videos found in 'Further Reading on Jessica Loughlin – [Videos](#)' in SECTION 5).

### Slumping

Loughlin also uses slumping to produce sculptural works such as *depth of field i* (2020) (not included in this exhibition) that are characterised by a crater in the middle of a flat surface – like an exposed sinkhole in the earth or black hole receding into space. Slumping basically involves placing glass on top of a mould and firing it in the kiln so that the glass softens and slowly 'slumps' into or over the shape of the mould. A mould can either be used upright (concave position) with a sheet of glass balancing on the rim, so that the glass slumps down into the centre of the mould, or the mould can be used face down (convex position) with the glass balancing on the base so that it slumps over the body of the mould. Loughlin's slumped works sit on the base of their bowl so that light can reflect off the surface that the work is sitting on and pass through the glass from above and below, creating different coloured shadows.

After creating her artworks in the kiln, Loughlin finishes each piece using **cold working** techniques that allow her to make further adjustments to the glass once cold. She regularly uses grinding techniques to create satiny smooth, matte surfaces. **Grinding** can be achieved using a number of specialised cold working machines, such as a **lathe** or **hand-held grinder**, or it can be done by hand using abrasive papers/gloves or a mixture of **grit** and water. Despite being time-consuming and laborious, Loughlin enjoys these grinding processes as the non-stop, repetitive movement involved allows her to enter a meditative state which reflects the message of her work – creating a unique cohesion between process and concept.

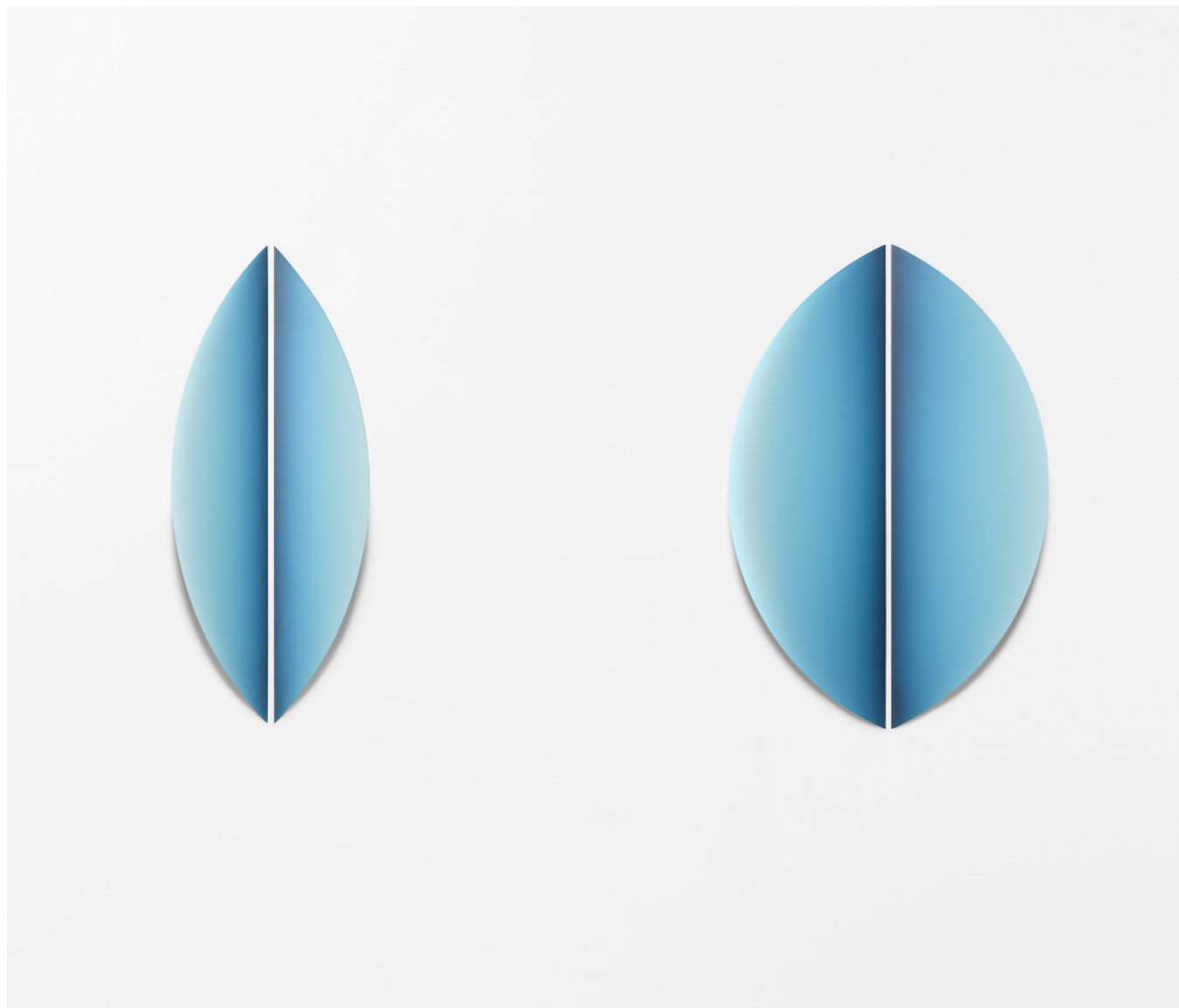
Loughlin's use of these techniques to express herself is underpinned by her strong understanding of the science behind light. Her choice of technique is guided by the effect she is looking to achieve when the resulting piece interacts with the light. White light, such as sunlight, is made up of a spectrum of seven colours – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. When white light falls on a coloured material the material absorbs all colours of light and either reflects (if it is **opaque**) or transmits (if it is **transparent** or **translucent**) light of its own colour. A red ball, for example, will absorb all colours of light and only reflect red light and blue cellophane will absorb all colours of light but allow blue light to transmit through it. A clear glass window will transmit all colours of light, thus permitting white light to shine through it. The density of a transparent or translucent medium will affect how much light can transmit through it – for example, the water in the ocean is clear but we cannot see the ocean floor because of the density of the water. When white light falls on a white material, the material reflects all colours of light (producing white light) and when it falls on a black material all the colours are absorbed and it appears black. A textured surface will reflect light that falls on it in all different directions, while a smooth, shiny surface will reflect light in only one direction. This is how we see and how our eyes perceive colour – through the interaction between the spectrum of light and different surfaces.

To create her works, Loughlin employs the unique material properties of glass to orchestrate the interaction between light and surface and create a nuanced range of colour and light effects. Glass can be opaque, translucent or transparent, which allows Loughlin to control the amount of light being transmitted through, or reflected off, her artworks. Her pieces interact with light from multiple angles – her freestanding pieces, which are made of different flat and curved surfaces, can generate a number of light effects at once depending on the angle you view them from, whereas her wall pieces utilise the shadows and reflected light on the wall behind to create a layered effect. Loughlin grinds most of her surfaces to a perfectly matte finish to disperse the reflected light in different directions and create a

soft, diffused haze of colour. As a subtle contrast to this, she will sometimes leave thin strips or edges of highly polished glass to create a sharp beam of reflected light that cuts through the haze.

Perhaps her most impressive manipulation of light is through the use of opaline glass. Opaline glass has the unique property of being able to reflect the cool end of the light spectrum while transmitting the warm. This is what gives the pieces in the *receptor of light* series their magical quality – when light shines from behind the piece you see golden and pink tones come through, when light shines on the front of the piece you see blue tones and when light is coming from both directions a combination of warm and cool tones occurs. Opaline glass is also used to create the intense blue coloured hanging pieces such as *cerulean cycles* (2021), *halites* (2021), *waning crescents* (2022) and the *focal point* series. They all appear blue but are made of white opaline glass. Loughlin has fused black glass on the back of each piece to prevent any light being transmitted through it – they can only reflect blue light giving them an intense blue colour. However, if you look closely, you will see a thin strip of pink or golden light on the wall. This is because Loughlin has intentionally left a gap between the black backing and the edge of the work so that a little bit of light is able to transmit through the edges.

It is through this command of technique, her vocabulary of glass, that Loughlin is able to express herself with such subtle and nuanced sophistication. As she has stated, glass is a “...very hard material...”, however, through her clever and considered manipulation of glass and light, Loughlin is able to render this very hard medium into a soft, light and ethereal manifestation of internal thought and emotion.



## THEME 5 – MINIMALISM AND MEANING

*The concepts explored in this essay are challenging and, therefore, more suitable for older year levels (11-12) or for use by the teacher to structure a class discussion with younger students.*

Discussions of Jessica Loughlin's work usually involve the terms 'minimalist' and 'minimal' being applied to describe the very sparse use of compositional elements in her pieces. However, care must be taken in applying these terms as, when they are used to discuss artworks, their implications go beyond merely describing the **aesthetic** appearance of a work. It has become quite common in everyday usage to describe something with a simple, unadorned style as minimalist or minimal but, in the context of art, these terms are related to the art movement Minimalism that developed in New York in the 1960s. Minimal art, or Minimalism, was a form of abstract art that rejected the traditions of European art – rather than their paintings reflecting a subject or an emotion, Minimalist artists insisted that the physical reality of their work was enough in itself. The Minimalists sought a break with the art of the past and the values and belief systems that it had evolved from. In order to work outside of traditional notions of composition, Minimalist artists based their work on simple geometric shapes – see for example Frank Stella's (b. 1936) [Grey Scramble](#) (1968-69). The authoritative statement of what Minimalist artists were attempting to achieve was made by Stella in a 1966 interview about his work:

*I always get into arguments with people who want to retain the old values in painting – the humanistic values that they always find on the canvas. My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there. It really is an object. Any painting is an object and anyone who gets involved in this finally has to face up to the objectness [sic] of whatever it is that he's doing. He is making a thing... If the painting were lean enough, accurate enough or right enough, you would just be able to look at it. All I want anyone to get out of my paintings is the fact you can see the whole idea without any conclusion...What you see is what you see.*

When interviewer Bruce Glaser concluded “That doesn't leave too [sic] much afterwards, does it?”, Stella replied, “I don't know what else there is”. The important thing to note about Minimalist art is that the idea behind what the artist is creating is as important as, if not more important than, the **art object** itself. Minimalism operates in dialogue with the values and traditions of the art that has gone before – it is an idea about what art has been in the past and what it should be in the present. By using industrial looking, simple forms that are intended to represent nothing other than what they physically are, the Minimalists challenge our understanding of what makes art, art. It is more than the use of simple, unadorned forms – it is the reason those forms are being selected by the artist.

Like minimalist works, Loughlin's artworks may appear very sparse and unadorned but she has adopted this simplicity in pursuit of a very different result – removing anything that could distract the viewer from the meditative mood she aims to create. This reflects an understanding of Minimalist theory and an ability to utilise its principles for her own ends but does not make her works Minimalist. Her works, even the freestanding pieces of the *receptor of light* series which have drawn comparisons to the work of Minimalist sculptor Donald Judd (1928-1994), are not mere 'objects' in the sense Stella was insisting on. Their shape serves an entirely different function – to capture, reflect and transmit light to create the effect Loughlin is seeking. The purpose of Loughlin's art is to invoke a mood of peaceful contemplation in her viewers – her work is not about an idea, it is about an emotion. The choice of simple or geometric forms, in itself, does not make a work Minimalist. As Judd has remarked about comparisons between artworks, “A lot of things look alike, but they're not necessarily very much alike”. We can see this most clearly when we consider Kazimir Malevich's (1879-1935) [Black Square](#) (1915) – a painting that consists of nothing but a black square in the centre of a white canvas. *Black Square* could easily be mistaken for a Minimalist painting due to its stark geometric form, however, Malevich's motivation was quite different. Malevich named his artistic style 'Suprematism' to represent his belief in the supremacy of pure feeling or perception in art – to represent pure feeling he removed any allusion to the physical world by using only geometric shapes. In his work, Malevich sought to represent a higher spiritual reality beyond the physical reality of the world and for him the square was the representation of this. This is far removed from a rationale of 'what you see is what you see' – it is a depiction of **esoteric** feeling rather than an assertion of **objective reality**.

Left: Jessica Loughlin, *cerulean cycles* (detail), 2021, photographer: Grant Hancock

In Loughlin's work, especially when viewed in person, we find a connection to another painting by Malevich – his [Suprematist Composition: White on White](#) (1918). In *White on White*, the square returns but this time it is white and floats at an angle against the (slightly warmer) white background of the canvas – the artist's brushstrokes add a delicate variation in texture. For Malevich, white was a representation of infinity and his composition captures a feeling of peace and transcendence. We find a similar expression of the infinite conveyed through the abstract use of white in Loughlin's *incorporeal* (2020), *unfolding continuum iv* (2016) and *unfolding continuum v* (2017) – all of which feature white hazes, suspended in clear glass, through which subtle tones of warm and cool white light are revealed. A more literal connection can be made when viewing *unseen* (2011) which appears to be a large rectangular 'canvas' of white light until our eyes adjust and we suddenly perceive a brighter white rectangle of light hovering in its centre. Then there is *receptor of light xxi* (2022). With its flat, square plane of milky glass that emanates various **ethereal** tones of light (through its constant interaction with the spectrum of the white light that surrounds it), it is as if the 'white square' had been set free from the canvas and gained a physical presence. Like Malevich, Loughlin believes in the **primacy of feeling** in art. As a young artist, she wrote that "Artwork has the potential to make people aware of their emotional responses, where previously they may not have been fully aware" and that "I believe in using the qualities in the raw material, and in simple clean design, but to evoke a message of emotion that will create the environment that we want to live in". For Loughlin, these beliefs about art and its ability to help shape the world we live in underly all her art making – whether in her studio art practice or public art projects. Her work is intended to impact on the feelings of those who interact with it; to create a small window of peace and tranquillity, or a moment of wonder and **transcendence**, from the potentially overwhelming stimulation of daily life.

Loughlin takes aesthetic cues from Minimalism but the motivations and values that underpin her work are different. In this way, her work is similar to that of the painter Agnes Martin (1912-2004). Martin, whose work has been a strong influence on Loughlin, created works based on intricate grid forms and, later, bold geometric **schemes**. Due to her close association and friendship with Minimalist artists and the geometric nature of her works, Martin is often classed as a Minimalist. She refuted this in a 1976 interview, saying that "...I do place myself as an expressionist." She went on to explain:

*You see, the artist lives by perception. So that what we make, is what we feel. The making of something is not just construction. it's all about feeling...everything, everything is about feeling... feeling and recognition!*

Martin sought to express her emotions through her grids and geometric works – these were simply the forms that she found expressive. Discussing her art making process, Martin spoke of the relationship between feeling and image:

*...the image comes into your mind after what it is. The image comes only to help you to know what it is. You're really feeling what your real response is. And so, if you put down this image, you know it's going to remind other people of the same experience.*

Like Loughlin, she attempted to convey emotional experiences through her work, focusing on feelings of innocence, happiness and stillness, through the use of simple schemes that combined elements of perfection (symmetry) and imperfection (allowing subtle variations within the symmetrical schemes). In [Friendship](#) (1963), for example, a canvas is covered in thin, gold leaf which Martin has then scratched fine lines through in a delicate grid pattern. Red oil paint, which lies under the gold leaf, is visible where the lines have been made – the slight imperfections of the hand drawn lines create a sense of movement and shimmering energy. Martin attempts to 'remind' us of this feeling through her canvas; like Loughlin's glass pieces, she takes an experience and attempts to distil it into a visual form.

The expressionists, with whom Martin is placing her practice, are the American Abstract Expressionists who dominated the New York art scene in the post-war years of the 1940s-1950s. The Abstract Expressionists sought to translate the experience of being human onto the canvas. Taking influence from their exposure to modern European art where expressionism – art that sought to reveal the inner life of the artist – had been a theme for around fifty years, they developed styles of pure abstraction that focused on energetic and innovative means of applying their materials to huge canvases. Out

of this dynamic approach (known as action painting) developed a more controlled, intellectual and subdued style of painting that came to be called colour-field painting. In the work of the colour-field painters we again find direct links to Loughlin, particularly in the work of Mark Rothko (1903-1970). Rothko created large canvases, stripped back of all detail, that consisted of hazy 'fields' of colour and were intended to create a "**quasi-religious**" experience in viewers. The colours of his works invoked a range of emotions, from the joyful [No. 13 \(White, Red on Yellow\)](#) (1958) to the intensely brooding [No. 16](#) (1960), with a deep sense of gravity – he famously hoped that his works would move people to tears. Loughlin certainly does not intend to leave her audience in tears, she is expressing very different emotions, but she avoids detail for the same reason – to assist in drawing the viewer into a deep emotional, or in her case meditative, state. In Rothko's paintings, the bands, or 'fields', of colour seem to float on the canvas due to the halo-effect created around their edges where their colour overlaps with that of the background. Seen in person, these bands seem "...to dematerialize into pure light". In Loughlin's works we find glass and light used to create planes of colour that dissolve into each other in a similar way, in pieces such as *Virga ii* (2016). The washes of coloured light that form across the *receptor of light* pieces are also reminiscent of Rothko's work, albeit with a far more **ephemeral** and peaceful mood.

What Malevich, Martin and Rothko all have in common with each other, and with Loughlin, is the use of abstract schemes that are reduced to their essential elements in a quest to communicate something beyond the **tangible**. For these artists, their work is a personal expression of emotion, of a state of being or of spiritual awareness – their subject is something other than the object they produce. In each artist's practice, the subtle visibility of the 'hand of the artist' is a critical means of connecting artist to viewer. We find this in the imprecise outlines of the white square and the visible brushstrokes of Malevich's *White on White*, in the imperfections that reveal Martin's lines are hand drawn and in the soft, painterly transitions between the fields of colour in Rothko's work. In the work of the Minimalist artists, these obviously human elements have been removed to create an impersonal, industrial finish that enhances the 'objectness' of their work. As Agnes Martin explained of her friends' approach:

*...the minimalists are idealists...they're non-subjective. They want to minimize [sic] themselves in favor [sic] of the ideal. Well, I just can't. The minimalists clear their minds of their personal problems... they don't even leave themselves there! They prefer being absolutely pure, which is a very valid expression of involvement with reality. But I just can't.*

We can see this distinction if we compare Martin's [Untitled](#) (1977) with Stella's *Grey Scramble*. The nuances of Martin's piece reveal her presence in the work and its meaning as a representation of an individual's emotional experience. Hand-making is integral to Loughlin's practice – it is the way she balances elements of simplicity and detail, order and chaos to find the right **emotional register** to emulate the transcendence she finds in nature. Her masterful use of technique may create works that achieve an elegant simplicity but, when we interact with them in person, subtle nuances reveal themselves. Look closely and you will notice tiny bubbles in *through distance 1* (2006), flecks in the third square of *halites* (2021), marks left by evaporated water in *incorporeal* (2020) and delicate graduations of tones of blue in the *Cerulean Cycles* (2021) (for more detail on Loughlin's technical processes see '[Theme Four – A Vocabulary of Glass](#)' in SECTION 2). Even in the pieces that appear closest to minimalism such as *receptor of light xix* (2022) and *receptor of light xvii* (2021), with their strong interior geometric shapes, and the Judd-like frame of glass *reflected light* (2021) are alive with fluctuating washes of colour as they interact with the light. These subtleties and nuances are important to Loughlin – she wants us to notice them. She has said:

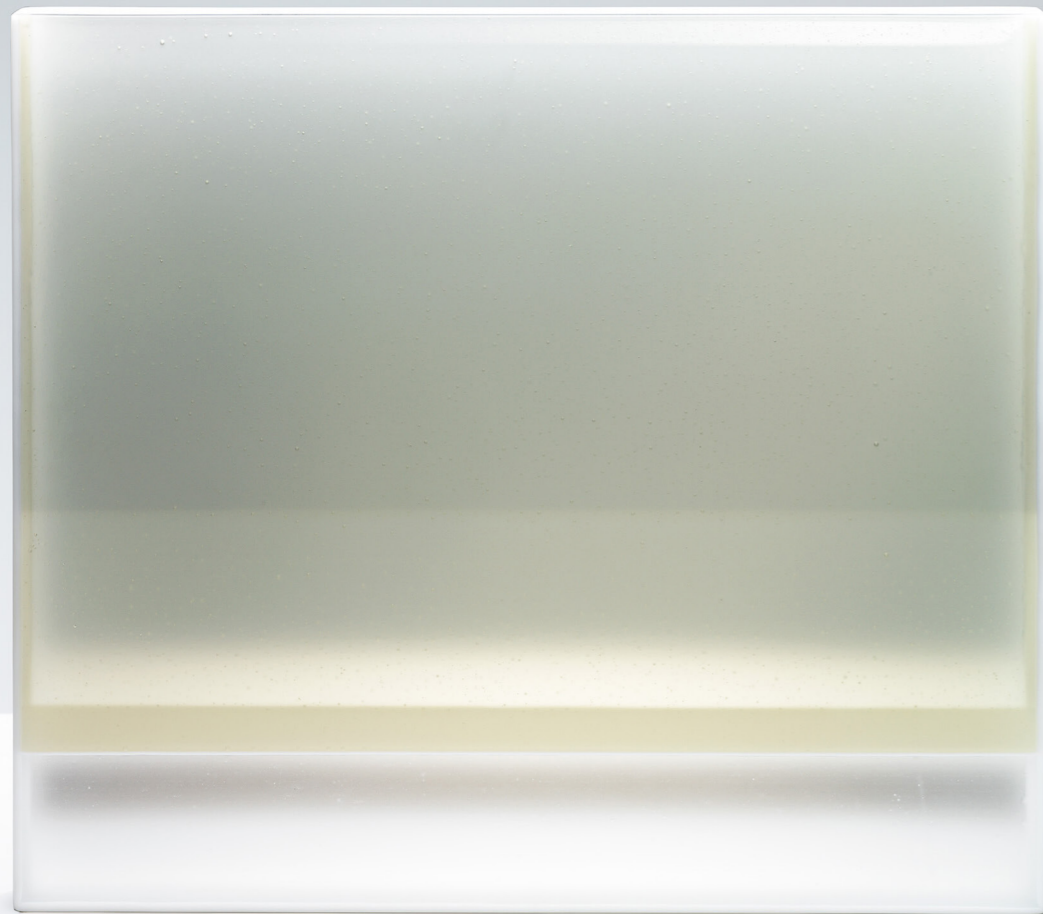
*I feel that my work is not about ideas and does not access the intellect. Rather, my aim is to be an abstraction, to be emotive, to present the feeling of stillness – concentrated stillness.*

Far from being impersonal objects that reference only their own physicality, Loughlin's artworks are her way of drawing us into the experience of infinite space and silence that she finds in the salt lakes of central Australia – they are very much an expression of the sensibilities of the artist herself.

## SECTION 3

### AN OUTLINE FOR TEACHERS

#### PREPARING YOUR EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE



#### ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

If you are planning to bring a school group to this exhibition, please book now. Bookings are required to guarantee scheduled entry to the exhibition.

Covid-19 guidelines are determined by the venue. We advise checking these prior to your visit.

Please contact the venue for all bookings and enquiries.

#### CONTEXT BUILDING

See **SECTION 4: A BEFORE THE EXHIBITION** for a range of activities designed to provide the context needed to enhance students' experience of the exhibition.

#### ON ARRIVAL

On arrival, your group will be met and welcomed by a member of the exhibition venue staff.

Before entering the venue:

- Ensure all Covid-19 guidelines are observed.
- We recommend organising students into smaller groups, or pairs, to facilitate a more manageable viewing experience.
- Distribute any materials students will require to complete on-site activities (see **SECTION 4: B AT THE EXHIBITION**).
- Focus students and review gallery viewing protocols:
  - Quiet talking.
  - Calm and careful movement through the gallery space (walking not running).
  - Do not touch the artworks, unless otherwise informed.
  - Be aware and respectful of other visitors in the space.
- \*There are many fragile glass elements in this exhibition, so we encourage teachers to emphasise the need for students to be aware and careful of their movements in the gallery space.
- Emphasise the importance of spending quality time viewing and reflecting on the artworks. Encourage students to invest time viewing a couple of their favourite pieces so that they can develop a deeper personal connection with the artwork.

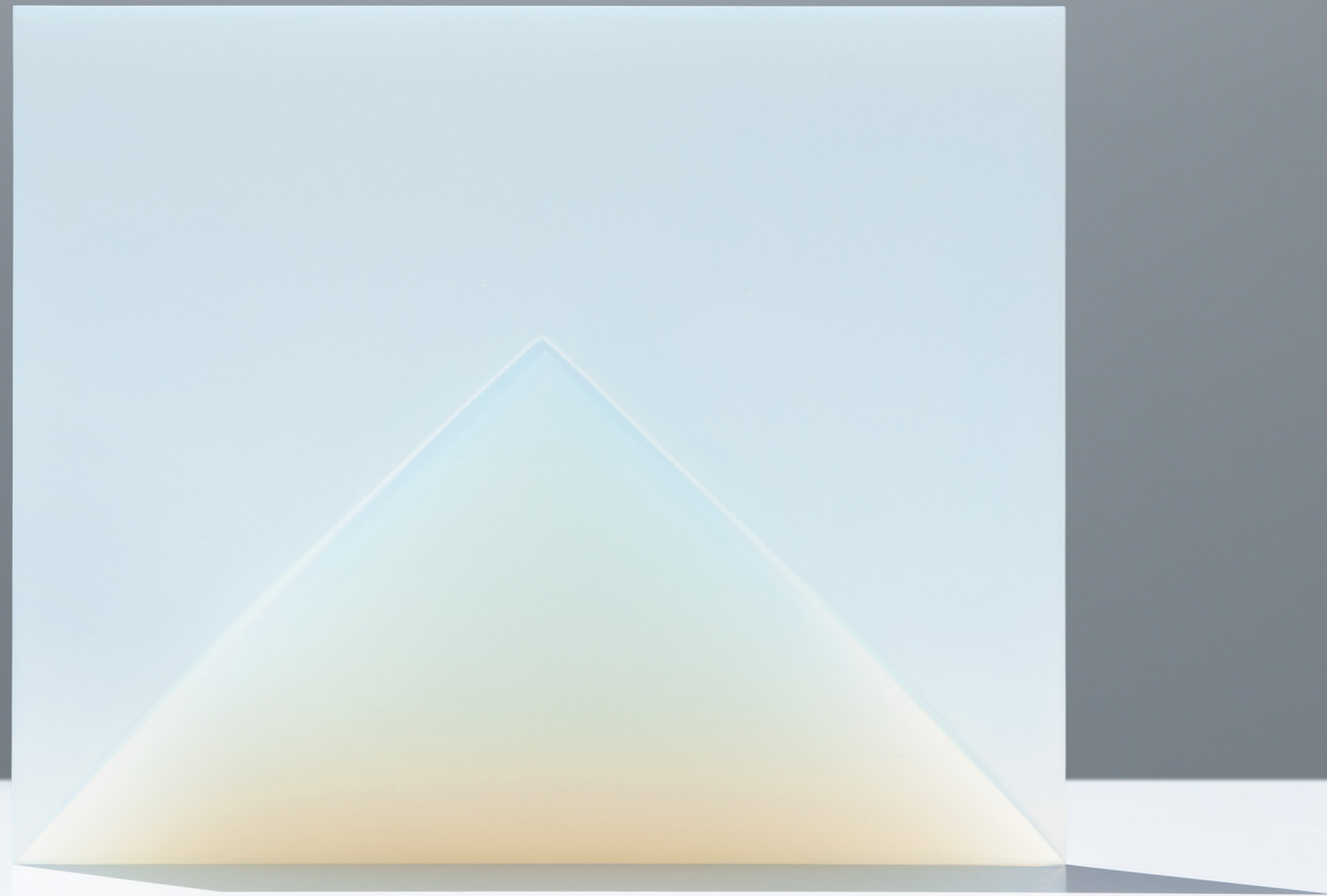
#### AFTER THE EXHIBITION

See **SECTION 4: C AFTER THE EXHIBITION** for a series of activities that promote deeper thinking about the exhibition (i.e. themes, materials, techniques and curatorial properties) and provide students with the opportunity to draw on their experience to create a personal response.

## SECTION 4

### ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

#### INTERPRETING AND RESPONDING TO THE EXHIBITION



The following series of activities are designed to support students' engagement with the exhibition in three stages: before, during and after experiencing the exhibition. You may draw on the thematic information provided in **SECTION 1: MEET THE ARTIST** and **SECTION 2: EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION** to support the implementation of these activities.

Teachers or students may select any number and combination of the activities to complete.

*All activities can be undertaken as individual, pair, small group or whole class activities, depending on the context (i.e. student age and needs and any time, space or resource limitations).*

#### A. BEFORE THE EXHIBITION

- READ 'Theme One - The Space Within' in SECTION 2 to learn about the inspirations behind Loughlin's work.

WATCH the JamFactory's [ICON 2022 Jessica Loughlin: of light](#) film to learn more about this exhibition (see 'Further Reading on Jessica Loughlin - Videos' in SECTION 5 for the full listing).

[AC9AVA8E01](#); [AC9AVA8D02](#)  
[AC9AVA10E01](#); [AC9AVA10D02](#)

LIT, ICT, CCT

Science - properties and material composition of glass; heat energy and change of state; particle theory; the use of science in Visual Art.

Geography - water in the world; landscapes and landforms.

- EXPLORE the Australian landscapes that have inspired Loughlin's fascination with "the beauty of emptiness" , including:
  - [Kati Thanda](#) (Lake Eyre), S.A.
  - [Lake Gairdner](#), S.A.
  - [Munda](#) (Lake Frome), S.A.
  - The land around Umoona (Coober Pedy), S.A.
  - [The Hay Plains](#), N.S.W.

\* The 'IMAGES' function on all search engines can be particularly useful for this activity.

BRAINSTORM words that describe these landscapes.

*What are some of the common features of these landscapes? Think about both physical and atmospheric qualities. How many different words can be used to describe these features? Can you think of any similes or metaphors that encapsulate the character or **ambience** of these places?*

[AC9AVA8E01](#)  
[AC9AVA10E01](#)

LIT, ICT, CCT

English - descriptive language.

HASS - the importance of place to people; the interconnections of Australian First Nations Peoples to Country/Place; features of the natural landscape; the importance of environments to people and animals;

management of Australian environments.

Geography – water in the world; landscapes and landforms; place and liveability.

Drama – film representations of the Australian outback.

- Loughlin describes her experience of being in vast, open, silent landscapes as creating a sense of freedom, stillness and introspection:

*“Whether I’m in the desert or at sea, I feel like I have returned to the beginning of existence, before anything on earth [sic] had been created. Here there is no confusion, only harmony”*

- Jessica Loughlin

CONSIDER your own experience of these environments.

*Have you ever visited a landscape like those described by the artist?... it could be a desert, beach, salt lake, out at sea, looking up into the clouds or night sky, at the bottom or top of a mountain, hill or cliff... How did you feel in this environment? Why do you think you had this response?*

COMPARE your experience with those of other students.

*Why might our experience of the landscape be different?*

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D01; AC9AVA8C01  
AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10D02

CCT, PSC, IU

English – reflective writing.

HASS – the importance of place and the environment to people; the interconnections of Australian First Nations Peoples to Country/Place; features of the natural landscape.

Geography – water in the world; landscapes and landforms; the spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for people; cultural connectedness of people to places and how this influences their identity, sense of belonging and perceptions of a place.

Drama – how the Australian landscape is represented and used to create atmosphere in film.

- LOOK at the horizon line at different times of the day.  
*Have you ever noticed the changes in light and colour along the horizon line?*

DOCUMENT what you can see (sketch or photograph).

*Take note of the colours, how they blend into each other and the intensity of light.*

CREATE a timeline of your images to observe how the light on the horizon changes throughout the day.

*How do the different light effects make you feel? Do you have different responses to the horizon at different times of the day?*

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D02; AC9AVA8C01  
AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D02; AC9AVA10C01

NUM, CCT, IU, PSC

Science – properties of light; Earth and space sciences; the use of scientific understanding in our daily lives

- The reason we see a blue sky and sunset of pink and golden hues is because of the way that light from the sun interacts with gas molecules in the Earth’s atmosphere. The particles in opaline glass, which Loughlin uses to make her receptor of light series, interact with white light

in a similar way.

READ Theme Four – A Language of Glass in SECTION 2 to learn how Loughlin makes her artworks using the science of light and glass.

CARRY OUT the “Sunset Colors in a Glass” experiment to demonstrate the science behind how light waves create the colours in both our sky and opaline glass (see ‘Other Resources’ in SECTION 5 for the full listing).

AC9AVA8D01

AC9AVA10D01

LIT, NUM, CCT

Science – properties of light; Earth and space sciences; properties and material composition of glass; particle theory; Tyndall effect; Rayleigh scattering.

## B. AT THE EXHIBITION

- The main aim of Loughlin’s artworks is to “...create a sense of stillness... an atmosphere of contemplation... a place for the viewer to take notice of their own mind” .

VIEW the exhibition and engage with each artwork, thinking about how they make you feel.

CRITIQUE the success of these artworks against the artist’s stated aims.

*Do the artworks make you feel a sense of calm, quietness and stillness? Do the artworks encourage you to stop and be present in the moment? Do you get lost in your own thoughts while viewing the artworks? If so, how does she achieve these things? Does the artist achieve her goal? Why/why not?*

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D01; AC9AVA8D02; AC9AVA8P01  
AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10D02; AC9AVA10P01

CCT, PSC

English – descriptive language; critical review writing; specialist and technical vocabulary; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

- CHOOSE the artwork that most successfully engages your emotions.

IDENTIFY the **elements of art/design** used in this piece that appeal to you.

*Think about colour, line, shape, space, texture, contrast, balance, scale, light and shade...*

EXPLAIN why you think these things resonate with you.

*Does the artwork remind you of something else?... something in nature, textures, music, movement... Do they make you feel a certain way? Why do they have this effect on you?*

\* Possible extension: write a short poem to express how this artwork makes you feel.

AC9AVA8D01; AC9AVA8D02  
AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10D02

CCT, PSC

English – descriptive language; specialist and technical vocabulary; analysing, interpreting and evaluating; poetry writing.

- OBSERVE one of the freestanding 'receptor of light' pieces. Slowly, and carefully, move around the work observing the subtle changes in colour and composition as the light hits the glass from different angles:
  - left to right
  - close to far away
  - front and back

\* Extra care must be taken when completing this part of the activity in order to ensure the safety of the artworks and other people in the space.

RETURN to these pieces after some time to see if their predominant colour has changed.

CONSIDER the way you have engaged with these works. Do you agree with the following statement?

*"No matter how many times one views the works, they change as they respond to many variables - the colour and type of light, the way one moves physically in relation to them, the movement of other people in the space. **Here the work shifts from object to experience...**"*

\* Possible extension: explore Installation Art.

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D02; AC9AVA8P01  
AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D02; AC9AVA10P01

LIT, CCT

English - specialist and technical vocabulary; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

Science - properties of light; properties and material composition of glass; the use of scientific understanding in our daily lives.

- OBSERVE the lighting used in the gallery space.  
*Has natural or artificial lighting been used - or do elements of both exist in the space? What angle has each work been lit from? What colour or tone (i.e., cool, natural or warm) of lighting has been used? Is the lighting fixed or does it change in intensity, angle, colour or tone?*

CRITIQUE the success of the exhibition lighting strategy.

*Consider the importance of light to the effect produced by these particular artworks. How does the lighting interact with the artworks? How does the lighting impact on the effect of each piece? Would different lighting better enhance the works? How would you light these pieces?*

AC9AVA8P01  
AC9AVA10P01

CCT

English - critical review writing; specialist and technical vocabulary; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

Science - properties of light; Earth and space sciences; the use of scientific understanding in our daily lives.

Design and Technologies - combining characteristics and properties of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment to create designed solutions.

## C. AFTER THE EXHIBITION

- Time consuming and repetitive manual processes, such as hand grinding, create a meditative space for Loughlin to think and feel present in the art making process. This is a practice she shares with one of her artistic influences, Richard Long. Long uses walking as a way to think about the landscape around him, collect natural materials and create artworks - Long's work comments on the way that humans have moved through the land leaving marks of their existence throughout history.

WALK through your local environment (under teacher instruction) and think about the landscape and the people who may have moved through this space before you. Collect materials along the way until you reach a suitable space to create your artwork.

CREATE an artwork that represents your passage through this place.

**\* Student safety must be considered before undertaking this activity.**

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D01; AC9AVA8D02; AC9AVA8C02  
AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10D02; AC9AVA10C02

CCT, PSC, EU, IU

HASS - changes to place and society throughout history; the importance of place to people; the interconnections of Australian First Nations Peoples to Country/Place; features of the natural landscape; the importance of environments to people and animals; management of Australian environments.

Geography - water in the world; landscapes and landforms; place and liveability; changing nations; environmental change and management.

History- Australian history, including First Nations Australian experiences and perspectives.

Health and Physical Education - making active choices.

- Loughlin has invented an innovative technique of painting with glass, by using water to disperse ground glass particles across the surface of a piece of sheet glass. She then allows the water to evaporate before **fusing** the glass together in the kiln. She may repeat this process several times to achieve her desired effect. The result is a soft, cloudy haze that glows with different qualities of light - for example: *incorporeal* (2020), *unfolding continuum iv* (2016), *unfolding continuum v* (2017) and *virga ii* (2016). Loughlin refers to this process as letting "...the material speak for itself..."

EXPERIMENT with this technique of letting sediment drift and settle at random. There are many different ways to recreate this process, including:

- Drop ink/food dye in water and watch how it moves through the fluid.
- Drop ink/food dye onto a wet paper/fabric surface and gently tilt the material to disperse the ink.
- Pour different layers of coloured sand into a clear vessel of water and allow to settle at the bottom (you can find DIY coloured sand instructions on the internet). Let the water evaporate leaving only the sand layers.
- Pour a sand and water mixture over a concrete surface and allow the water to evaporate away leaving only the sand.

\* Possible extension: photograph the results and print onto a transparency that can then be projected or held up to the window to capture the light effects. Cut-up and arrange different transparencies to create a new composition.



AC9AVA8D01; AC9AVA8D02

AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10D02

CCT

Geography – water in the world; properties and composition of different materials; the use of scientific understanding in our daily lives.

Design and Technologies – combining characteristics and properties of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment to create designed solutions.

- READ '[Theme Three – Painting with Light](#)' in SECTION 2 to explore how Loughlin and other artists have used light in their work.

EXPERIMENT with layering different materials to create a range of light effects.

*Source a range of materials, for example: plastic bags, cellophane, different thickness of paper, fabrics, lace or crochet, paper cut-outs/perforated paper, plastic sheeting, transparencies, leaves, petals... Think about the properties of the materials you use – opacity, transparency, colour, texture, pattern – and the effects created by combining them.*

ILLUMINATE your samples, by holding them up to a window or light box, to see the results.

Try a range of light sources to observe different effects.

*What is the effect of the different combinations – what mood or idea do they suggest? Why do you think they have this effect?*

CREATE a colour and light composition that you feel expresses a particular mood.

AC9AVA8D02; AC9AVA8C01; AC9AVA8C02

AC9AVA10D01; AC9AVA10C01; AC9AVA10C02

LIT, CCT

Science – properties of light; properties and composition of different materials; the use of scientific understanding in our daily lives.

Design and Technologies – combining characteristics and properties of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment to create designed solutions.

- Loughlin's work is often referred to as minimalist. In the context of Visual Art, the terms *minimalist / minimal / minimalistic* all refer to the art movement **Minimalism**.

READ '[Theme Five – Minimalism and Meaning](#)' in SECTION 2 to learn about Minimalism and how it relates to Loughlin's art.

Having learnt about Loughlin's work and viewed it in person, do you agree with the assessment made by the author of Theme Four?

*You may need to research Minimalism further to increase your understanding.*

CRITICALLY ANALYSE one of Loughlin's artworks from the exhibition and identify which elements could suggest minimalism and which elements do not.

*Think about the title, techniques, intention of the artist...*

\* The concepts explored in this activity are challenging and, therefore, more suitable for older year levels (11-12).

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8D02

AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10D02

LIT, ICT, CCT

English – specialist and technical vocabulary; the meaning of words in different contexts; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

History – post WWII America.

Science – properties and composition of materials

- In her Honours thesis, Loughlin commented that Rover Thomas' paintings "...hold the power of a place, of its landscape and its memories". A Kukatja and Wangkajunga man, Rover Thomas Joolama (1926-1998) had strong ties to the Great Sandy Desert in Western Australia, where he was born, as well as the Kimberly region of Western Australia where he spent most of his adult life. His artwork expresses his cultural and spiritual connection to these lands and their histories.

For Loughlin, Kati Thanda appears empty and silent, allowing her to process her own thoughts. For the Arabana people, traditional owners of Kati Thanda, this landscape looks and feels very different.

WATCH *Arabana Songlines* to gain some insight into the Arabana people's connection to Kati Thanda (see '[Other Resources](#)' in SECTION 5 for the full listing).

\* Use a mouse or the arrows in the top left-hand corner of the video screen to navigate around the 360° views of the landscape.

DISCUSS how our individual cultures and histories influence the way that we perceive place.

*Why do you think Loughlin experiences the salt lake landscape in the way that she does?*

AC9AVA8E01; AC9AVA8E02

AC9AVA10E01; AC9AVA10E02

LIT, CCT, EU, IU

English: personal histories; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

HASS: the importance of place to people; the interconnections of Australian First Nations Peoples to Country/Place, features of the natural landscape; the importance of environments to people and animals; management of Australian environments.

Geography – water in the world; landscapes and landforms; place and liveability, the spiritual, aesthetic and cultural value of landscapes and landforms for people; cultural connectedness of people to places and how this influences their identity, sense of belonging and perceptions of a place.

History: deep time history of Australia.

Languages: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

- Loughlin studied the Japanese art of **Sumi-e** for six years of her childhood.

READ '[Theme Two – The Influence of Zen](#)' in SECTION 2 to explore Sumi-e and how it has influenced Loughlin's art making.

VIEW a range of *Sumi-e* artworks and reflect on the visual and conceptual links between these works and Loughlin's art (see 'Sumi-e' in SECTION 5 for some useful online resources).

*Think about both the aesthetic and conceptual aspects of her work and the processes she uses. Consider the subject matter, style and atmosphere.*

Sumi-e is a highly specialised artistic practice that is taught by teachers who have spent years studying the craft, however, you could try incorporating some of its principles in your artistic practice.

EXPERIMENT with using breathing exercises to help focus your artmaking. Try [‘Mindful Breathing’](#) before you begin your next art session, to help clear your mind, connect mind and body and allow this to flow through to your mark-making (see the State of Queensland’s Department of Education’s Wellbeing Activities for Students in [‘Other Resources’](#) in SECTION 5 for the full listing).

*Did you notice any difference in your approach, productiveness or mood during this session?  
How do you think the mindful breathing exercise affected your artmaking?*

[AC9AVA8E01](#); [AC9AVA8D02](#)

[AC9AVA10E01](#); [AC9AVA10D02](#)

LIT, ICT, CCT, PSC, IU

HASS – diversity of cultural, religious and/or social groups and their importance to identity.

History – Asia-Pacific world.

The Arts – traditional Japanese dance, theatre and music.

Health and Physical Education – breathing exercises, meditation and mindfulness as strategies to self-manage emotions and promote health and wellbeing.

Languages – Japanese.

- Loughlin’s artistic influences are wide ranging in medium and subject matter. These influences manifest in her work in very nuanced ways.

READ/WATCH the following interviews with four of Loughlin’s main artistic influences:

- **Agnes Martin** (1912-2004)  
[‘What We Make, Is What We Feel’: Agnes Martin on Her Meditative Practice, in 1976](#), John Gruen, 2015.
- **Brian Blanchflower** (b. 1939)  
[Brian Blanchflower in conversation with Chris Malcolm 9-9-20](#), Chris Malcolm, 2020.
- **James Turrell** (1943)  
[James Turrell: Second Meeting](#), Ian Forster, 2013.
- **Richard Long** (b. 1945)  
[Ideas Can Last Forever: A Conversation with Richard Long](#), Ina Cole, 2016.  
(see [‘Artistic Influences’](#) in SECTION 5 for the full listing of each interview)

DISCUSS how these artists may have influenced Loughlin’s work.

*Think about subject matter, material, colour palette, composition, style, concept...*

\* Possible extension: students choose one of these artistic influences to research in more detail and then compare and contrast their work to that of Loughlin.

[AC9AVA8E01](#); [AC9AVA8D02](#)

[AC9AVA10E01](#); [AC9AVA10D02](#)

LIT, ICT, CCT, IU

English – comparative writing; analysing, interpreting and evaluating.

## SECTION 5

### FURTHER RESEARCH

#### FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



#### FURTHER READING ON JESSICA LOUGHLIN

##### CURRICULUM VITAE

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Left: Jessica Loughlin with *traces of light*, 2016, photographer: Rachel Harris

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#### OTHER ARTISTS and AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

**Australian National University (ANU) School of Art and Design:** (also known as the Canberra School of Art) the art and design faculty within the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. Provides studio-based teaching across visual arts, contemporary craft and design as well as The Centre for Art History and Art Theory devoted to theoretical and curatorial skill development. <https://cass.anu.edu.au/disciplines/art-and-design>

**AUSGLASS (The Australian Association of Glass Artists) Limited:** a not-for-profit membership organisation that includes both glass artists and supporters of Australian glass. Through its programme of activities, including biennial conferences and a series of national glass awards, prizes and exhibitions, AUSGLASS aims to encourage dialogue amongst the diverse participants of the studio glass movement in order to foster growth and excellence in the Australian contemporary glass community. <https://ausglass.org/>

**Blue Pony Studio:** collaborative glass art studio in Adelaide, established in 1997 and closed in 2011. Members (or 'ponies') included Gabriella Bisetto (Founding Member), Clare Belfrage (F.M.), Matthew Larwood (F.M.), Deb Jones (F.M.), B. Jane Cowie (F.M.), Jessica Loughlin, Tom Moore, Tim Edwards, Mandi King, Christine Cholewa, Karen Cunningham and Penny Fuller. Belfrage, Clare, Bisetto, Gabriella, Cholewa, Christine, Cowie, B. Jane, Cunningham, Karen, Edwards, Tim, Fuller, Penny, Jones, Deb, King, Mandi, Loughlin, Jessica, Larwood, Matthew, and Moore, Tom. Blue Pony. Members of the Blue Pony Studio: Adelaide, S.A., 2012.

**Bullseye Glass Company:** glass manufacturer based in Portland, Oregon, U.S. Founded in 1974 by art school graduates Dan Schwoerer, Boyce Lundstrom, and Ray Ahlgren, the company originally intended to make coloured sheet glass for the stained-glass industry. However, after a fortuitous meeting in 1979 with Klaus Moje, kiln formed glass artist and Head of the Glass Workshop at the Australian National University (ANU) School of Art and Design, Bullseye accepted the challenge to invent a palette of 'tested-compatible' glasses for creating glass artworks in a kiln. Bullseye is a leader in the production of quality coloured glass for art and architecture and continues to collaborate with clients to explore the possibilities of kiln-glass. They are also active in the promotion of glass art through their research and education programmes and the exhibition of innovative glass art in their Portland gallery. <https://www.bullseyeglass.com/>

**Corning Museum of Glass:** a non-for-profit organisation (established in 1951) in the Finger Lakes Wine Country region of New York State (U.S.A.) dedicated to the exploration of glass. The centre houses a comprehensive glass collection and library and an internationally renowned glass working school. <https://home.cmog.org/>

**Deb Jones:** is an Adelaide-based artist working in a range of mediums. Jones studied Graphic Investigation and Sculpture at the Canberra School of Art, completing her Visual Arts degree in 1989, before enrolling in a Graduate Diploma in the glass studio. She then moved to Adelaide in 1993 to train in glassblowing at the JamFactory, eventually taking on the position of studio designer in the JamFactory glass studio from 2008 to 2012. In 2012, Jones began pursuing her personal artistic practice on a full-time basis, working from Gate 8 Workshop and starting a public art partnership, CHEBart, with fellow artist Christine Cholewa. Jones was a founding member of both the Blue Pony Studio and Gate 8 Workshop. She enjoys the process of 'making' and seeks out innovative yet simple resolutions that emphasise the qualities of the materials used. <http://www.chebart.com/>

**Gate 8 Workshop:** a non-for-profit artist run studio, based in an old church in Thebarton, S.A. Founded by Jessica Loughlin and fellow glass artist Deb Jones in 2007, the workshop encourages cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst its members. Other members include glass artist Christine Cholewa, graphic designer Rachel Harris and jeweller Lauren Simeoni, [www.facebook.com/Gate-8-Workshop-1626878554253371](http://www.facebook.com/Gate-8-Workshop-1626878554253371) [@gate8workshop](https://www.instagram.com/gate8workshop)

**JamFactory:** Adelaide-based not-for-profit organisation that supports and promotes the work of innovative and outstanding artists working the fields of craft and design. The centre houses four studios (Ceramics, Glass, Furniture, and Jewellery and Metal) and a gallery and a retail space designed to champion the value of craft and design in our everyday lives <https://www.jamfactory.com.au>

**Mangala Studios:** established in 1970 by Dorotea Mangiamele in Carlton, Victoria. The studio specialises in teaching creative dance, yoga and Tai Chi and incorporates a range of techniques in order to help students develop their 'inner awareness'. <https://www.mangalastudios.com.au/>

**Pilchuck Glass School:** International centre for glass art education, established in 1971 in Stanwood, Washington, U.S.A. The centre also has offices and a gallery space in Seattle, Washington. Pilchuck offers a range of glass working courses varied in subject and length and residencies for both emerging and established artists. <https://www.pilchuck.org/>

**Project 2 Project:** an Adelaide based public art cooperative founded in 2015 by Jessica Loughlin and Rachel Harris. P2P use a range of mediums, including large-scale graphics and moving image projections, to create installations that slip seamlessly into public spaces and subtly alter the viewer's perception of the world around them. Often bringing the natural world into the urban environment, their installations are designed to capture attention, challenge perceptions and ignite imaginations. <https://www.project2project.com.au/home> <https://www.facebook.com/project2project.art.and.installation/>

**Rachel Harris:** is a graphic designer based in Adelaide, S.A. She is the director of Bit Scribbly Design, founding partner of the Project 2 Project public art cooperative and member of the Gate 8 Workshop. Harris creates unique designs that look at the world differently. <http://www.bitscribbly.com/>

**Richard Liddicut:** artist and founder of Behold Art with Yoga, Brush & Ink, in Melbourne. Liddicut has been studying eastern art and spiritual practices since the early seventies. He now lives between Melbourne and Nara, Japan, creating ink brush paintings and calligraphy works and teaching yoga, Sumi-e and shodo. <https://beholdart.com.au/>

**Sabbia Gallery:** art gallery in Redfern, N.S.W., that exhibits glass, ceramic and fibre based contemporary art. It represents Australia's leading contemporary ceramic, glass and fibre artists (including Jessica Loughlin), including First Nations Australian artists from remote communities. Opened in 2005. <https://sabbiagallery.com/>

**Stephen Procter (1946-2001):** self-taught glass artist from West Sussex, England. Procter moved to Australia in 1992 to take on the position of Head of the Glass Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, following the retirement of Klaus Moje. His artistic practice was concerned with glass as a medium for sculpting light.

## SECTION 6 GLOSSARY

### EXPLANATION OF **BOLD** TERMS



Some of these definitions have been informed by the sources listed under '[Terminology Sources](#)' in **SECTION 5**.

**Aesthetic:** relating to the appreciation and critique of beauty or good taste (adjective); a particular taste or style of visual composition (noun).

**Abstract Expressionism:** an art movement (specifically painting) that originated in New York after World War Two and became the dominant artistic movement during the 1940s and 1950s, establishing New York as the new centre of the art world (which had previously been Paris). Abstract Expressionist painters varied in artistic style but shared the motivation to create a highly expressive form of abstract art dedicated to the expression of raw human emotion. They typically worked on large canvases and used very bold and gestural application techniques. Two main schools emerged from this movement – action painting (e.g., Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning), which focused on spontaneous and gestural mark-making as a way to capture the artist's impulses, such as pouring or flicking paint onto the canvas (which was often placed on the floor) and colour field painting (e.g., Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman), which composed large areas of colour to create an atmosphere of contemplation or meditation as a way of invoking the same sort of spiritual response one experiences in a place of worship.

**Ambience:** the mood or feeling of a place – similar to atmosphere.

**Anneal:** the process by which a finished glass object is slowly cooled to room temperature in a kiln so that it does not become structurally strained. Strained glass is highly likely to break either during the cooling process or later on if exposed to a physical knock (mechanical shock) or rapid temperature change (thermal shock).

**Art object:** an object that is considered to have the special qualities that constitute an artwork, but may not assume the traditional form of a painting or sculpture. What special characteristics are needed for an 'art object' to be different to any other object in the world is a question that forms the basis of much debate and enquiry in the art world.

**Casting:** the process of forming glass objects by using a mould and kiln. There are a range of different casting techniques which use moulds made of different materials. Some techniques involve pouring molten glass into the mould and then annealing while others fill the mould with cold glass chunks or powder which is then heated in the kiln.

**Cold working:** the process of altering a glass object once it is cold. There are a range of cold working techniques including cutting, grinding, polishing, sandblasting and engraving. These techniques may be used to create a textured, matte or polished surface finish, decorate glass or alter the form of the glass object. Specialised machinery can be used to perform these techniques, such as saws, lathes, grinders and drills. These machines often have diamond powder attached to their cutting, engraving or grinding surface, as diamond is one of the few materials hard enough to cut through glass, without causing cracking or chipping, and creates a smooth, clean cut. Water must be used with these machines in order to regulate temperature – if cold glass is heated to quickly it will chip and crack. The fine particles of glass, or ground silica dust, that are produced during these cold working processes are very dangerous to human health if inhaled. While special masks must be worn and extraction fans used in the cold shop (workshop used for cold working processes), the water also helps to catch and wash away these dangerous particles, preventing them from becoming airborne.

**Delimited:** to set a boundary in place.

Left: Jessica Loughlin, *reflected light*, 2022, photographer: Grant Hancock

**Diamond grinder:** machine with a rotating disc covered in diamonds that is used to remove the surface layers of glass. If it is a fixed position grinder, the glass is pressed against, and carefully moved back and forth across, the rotating disc. If it is a portable/hand-held grinder, the disc is carefully pressed against the glass and moved back and forth. Discs of varying degrees of abrasiveness can be used to achieved different effects.

**Divine:** relating to God or any other spiritual deity.

**Elements of Art/Design:** visual conventions including (but not limited to) point, line, shape, form, tone, colour, texture and space.

**Emotional register:** (metaphor) in music, a register is the range of notes that an instrument or voice can produce. The sound of each note, or combination of notes, has specific qualities that stimulate different responses in the listener. In this context, we are using this concept as a metaphoric idea of a register of emotions. Like finding the right tone in music, the artist is finding the right combination of visual elements to convey a specific 'tone' of emotion.

**Ephemeral:** existing for a short amount of time.

**Esoteric:** abstract concepts that are only intended, or likely, to be understood by a select group of people with specialised knowledge.

**Ethereal:** something that is so delicate, light or refined that it does not seem to be of our world and evokes a spiritual or celestial (of the sky or heaven) quality.

**Existential angst:** a deep sense of anxiety or despair caused by the uncertainty of human existence and realisation of one's own mortality along with the belief that life has no meaning.

**Firing or fired:** the process of heating glass in a kiln to perform fusing or forming techniques. The glass goes through four stages – heating, forming, annealing, cooling. First, the glass must be heated slowly enough to ensure that its exterior and interior heat and expand at the same rate in order to avoid breakage. The rate of temperature increase will depend on the thickness of the glass being fired. Once the glass is uniformly soft and elastic, the temperature can be increased in order to completely melt the glass in order to fuse layers together or form the glass using a mould – the maximum temperature will depend on the desired result. Next, the temperature is dropped suddenly to stop the forming process. However, this causes the external surface glass to cool and contract more than the internal glass centre, which creates structural stress. To overcome this, the glass is then held at the same temperature for a lengthy period of time to allow the glass to equalise in temperature throughout the piece and stabilise. The temperature is then very slowly reduced to maintain equal temperature between the glass interior and exterior. It is vital that the kiln is never opened during this stage as this could cause a sudden temperature change which can cause structural stress in the glass and lead to breakage. By this point, the glass has become brittle again. Eventually, the kiln can be turned off and allowed to cool naturally. This process of heating and cooling the kiln from room temperature to a maximum heat and back to room temperature is called a firing cycle. The specific temperatures required for each stage of the firing cycle form the firing schedule and can be programmed into electronic kiln controllers.

**Fusing:** the process of heating two or more layered pieces of glass in a kiln until they melt and bond together.

**Grinding:** a cold working technique that uses an abrasive to remove the surface of the glass, creating either a textured or matte finish. There are a number of ways to grind glass: using diamond hand pads or cloths, silicon carbide paper, a machine with a rotating diamond disc, belt or wheel, applying diamond paste or a mixture of loose grit powder and water to rotating discs, belts or wheels or using a grit and water mixture applied by hand. Grit powders range in their abrasiveness. To achieve a smooth matte surface or fine polish, a number of grit powders must be used in succession. Grinding processes can take hours of work to achieve the desired result. After grinding with a fine grit or smoothing pad, pumice can be used to create a satiny matte finish or cerium oxide (and water) can be used to polish the glass so that it becomes clear and shiny.

**Grit:** a fine, abrasive powder (often made of diamond or silicon carbide) used to grind glass surfaces. Grit powders range in abrasiveness from very rough to very to very smooth.

**Hand-held grinder:** a portable machine with an abrasive, rotating disc. The machine has a handle so that it can be held and manoeuvred by hand. The disc is pressed against the glass and moved back and forth in order to remove the surface layer of the glass. Discs of varying degrees of abrasiveness can be used to achieved different effects.

**Impressionism:** an art movement that originated in France during the late nineteenth century. The Impressionists were interested in capturing everyday life and the changing effects of light throughout the day. They painted outside *en plein air* (in the open air) in order to capture their direct observations of Parisian life and the natural landscape. In order to capture the ever-changing effects of light and vibrancy of modern life in front of them, the Impressionists developed a new technique of rapidly applying un-mixed dabs of paint to the canvas. The way the colours combined on the canvas through this broken style of brushwork gave the 'impression' of the scene. This practice was a clear rejection of the established artistic conventions of the day which involved the depiction of historic or mythical scenes in a highly realistic style working from sketches in the studio.

**Installation art:** a three-dimensional form of art involving the arrangement of materials in a space. Installation art can be mixed-media (composed of different materials or media), site-specific (designed to exist in a specific location) and, or, temporal or ephemeral (only existing for a limited time). An installation is the resulting work of art.

**Intangible:** not tangible; something that does not exist in a physical form; something that cannot be physically touched or experienced.

**International Style:** A style of modern architecture that emerged in Europe (principally Germany and France) in the 1920s and 1930s. Historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock and architect Philip Johnson coined the term 'International Style' to describe this plain architecture that favoured boxy structures, lack of decoration, and the use of materials such as steel, concrete, and glass. The style transformed the skylines of many major cities around the world.

**Introspection:** the process of looking inwards and analysing your own thoughts, beliefs and feelings.

**Kiln:** a type of oven that can produce high enough temperatures to melt glass (approximately 1400°C to 1600°C).

**Kiln forming:** the process of heating glass in a kiln in order to fuse pieces of glass together or transform a body of glass into a particular shape (usually by placing it in or over a mould).



**Lathe:** machine with a rotating spindle to which different glass cutting wheels can be attached. Glass is carefully pressed against the spinning wheel in order to cut or grind the surface of the glass. Different effects can be achieved using different wheel shapes. Wheels can be either stone or diamond.

**Linguistic:** relating to language.

**Minimalism:** an art movement that originated in the United States during the 1960s. Minimalists rejected all previous art history and theory in the aim of creating a 'new' art that represented the truth, or reality as it is, rather than representing or symbolising something else (i.e., objects, people, landscapes or emotions). This idea manifested in the reduction of a medium or material to its essential qualities with the intent that the viewer would only see exactly what was there.

**Monochromatic:** (in art) an artwork that only uses one colour.

**Objective reality:** a factual, or unbiased, understanding of what is 'real' within a specific society or group; the opposite to subjective reality which is influenced by personal emotion and belief.

**Objective thought:** intellectual thought processes that deal with factual information, such as reasoning and analysis; not influenced by personal, or subjective, feeling or bias.

**Opacity:** the quality of not transmitting light; the state of not being transparent or translucent.

**Opaque:** something that does not transmit light and cannot be seen through (i.e., not transparent or translucent)

**Primacy of feeling:** (in this context) the recognition of 'feeling', or emotion, as the most important quality in art and art-making.

**Quasi-religious:** something that exhibits characteristics of religion; something that seems to be, or resembles, religion in some way, but is not officially religious.

**Reductive:** describes something that has been significantly simplified; something that is composed of a minimal number of parts or elements.

**Resonate:** to connect with someone on a personal or emotional level; to have a particular significance for someone.

**Romantic:** of Romanticism. Romanticism was a movement in art and literature that focused on human psychology, personal expression and an interest in the natural world (especially wild, untamed nature and uncontrollable events such as storms). Romanticism rejected the values of classical and neo-classical art – such as rationality, order and harmony – and embraced the emotional, spontaneous, irrational and transcendent. The modern idea of the artist as a person of great individual sensitivity and original creativity (rather than a focus on their technical ability) originated out of this movement. Romanticism was at its most popular between 1780 to 1830 but continues to influence artists and writers to this day.

**Romantic Sublime:** (in art) the term 'sublime' has a meaning beyond something being exceptionally beautiful – it implies that a work contains a certain esoteric quality or effect that hints at things beyond the reality of the world, a sort of transcendence or spiritual awareness that cannot be described. Various philosophers have put forward different theories of the sublime that attempt to

describe this effect and why we feel it. Here we are specifically considering the Romantic version of the sublime which was influenced by philosopher Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Burke defined the sublime as an artistic effect that could arouse the "...strongest emotion the mind is capable of feeling". He believed that beauty was irrelevant to the sublime, rather, it was an emotion that consisted of a combination of awe and fear so that 'whatever is in any sort terrible or is conversant about terrible objects or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime'. The perception of something as infinite (such as the ocean or the universe) was particularly potent at arousing a feeling of the sublime.

**Sandblast:** coldworking technique. The removal of layers of glass via a process of erosion. Glass is placed inside a sandblasting cabinet, which is then sealed. Compressed air is used to propel fine grains of sand around inside the cabinet in order to slowly erode the surface layers of the glass object. This technique can be used to remove sections of glass or create a matte finish. Tape can be strategically applied to the glass in order to control which areas are removed during sandblasting.

**Scheme:** (in art) composition; the way that visual elements are arranged.

**Sheet glass:** flat glass sheets that are manufactured using rollers. The rollers draw molten glass up out of a tank and roll it vertically. The glass sheet is then turned horizontally to be cooled. This is a low-cost process that produces glass of a lower quality than other flat glass products – they are thinner, smaller in area and have a poorer quality of clarity. This process has been largely superseded by the float process. Float glass is made by 'floating' molten glass over molten tin. It is then carried by a specialised air conveyor system or ceramic rollers to cool, producing a long strip of solid glass that is cut into smaller lengths. This is a much easier and more efficient process that produces a higher quality product that is also easier to transport. Both sheet and float glass are commonly used for residential windows, the glass in photo frames and table tops.

**Slumping:** kiln forming technique. The process of heating cold glass over a mould in the kiln until it softens and flows into, or over, the mould, thereby taking on the shape of the mould.

**Sumi-e:** (also known as Suiboku-ga) Japanese monochrome ink painting, a technique first developed in China during the Sung dynasty (960-1274) and taken to Japan by Zen Buddhist monks in the mid-14th century.

**Tangible:** something that exists in a physical form and can be touched or experienced.

**Transcendence:** an experience that is outside the normal reality of the physical world; the state of being transcendent.

**Translucent:** semi-transparent; something that is clear enough to transmit diffused light and allow somewhat blurry or hazy vision but not clear enough to transmit a direct beam of light or facilitate clear and detailed vision – for example, frosted glass.

**Transparent:** completely clear; something that is able to transmit light so that detailed imagery can be seen behind it – for example, water.

