

# Hans Frode's experiments led to unique style

After finishing his formal art education, Swedish artist Hans Frode began painting in oil on canvas. Then he started to experiment with different printing techniques and began using glass plates. When painting on glass, he discovered the transparent quality and the light it brought to the picture. Frode was intrigued by its possibilities and lit his paintings with artificial light behind the glass plates. He tried to learn more, but in Sweden only sign makers worked with neon light, Frode's choice of illumination. Instead he moved to New York to seek inspiration and education. After a while he found a small glass workshop that was about to expand and move to larger premises on Mulberry Street. "If you help us move, we teach you about glass," the manager told Frode who happily accepted. Step by step he grew with the workshop.

Today Frode has exhibited his original glowing glass still life in several places across the United States and Europe. The workshop is now famous and has some 50 artists working in spacious warehouse like premises in downtown Brooklyn. Today the area is crime infested and the borough of Brooklyn tempts new tenants with special deals, such as free gas and electricity for five years.

Frode is tall, thin and wears black pants, a black leather jacket and a grey turtle neck sweater. His hair is combed back in a 1920 fashion. He has the looks of a sensitive artist, and fits well into the graffiti clad building where he works. He was born in Gothenburg in 1951, but grew up in Västerås where he also went to art school.

## The lost wax method

"It's the lost wax method," he explains and point at one of his creations. It features a blue drinking glass, a peach colored illumined bottle and a red, Absolut vodka shaped bottle on a glass plate. He grounds his glass plates with enamel colors. Then he adds oil color and later glass applications made from recycled glass. The applications have different textures depend-

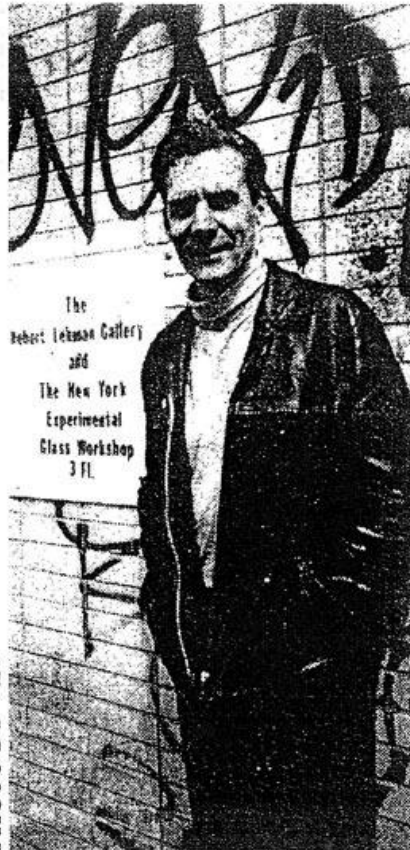


PHOTO BY V.S.

*Swedish artist Hans Frøde had to change country to work with his medium of choice.*

ing on where the original glass came from. A fruit bowl looks almost like wax. The surface is dull except for a few iridescent spots. Some of the glass came from lamps shades that had a pearly surface, Frode says.

The lost wax method means that first Frode creates his motif in wax. Then he adds plaster and melts out the wax so he has a mold to put glass in. It is very important with temperatures. Thick creations can take up to 48 hours to cool. Normal glass takes about 8 hours and lenses for NASA telescopes, 12 feet by 4 feet, can take up to a year because the needs of precision.

## Next stop Atlanta

Right now Frode is preparing for an exhibition in Atlanta, GA in May. His one-bedroom apartment on Lafayette Street in SoHo is filled with still life waiting to go south. In November he will exhibit in Bremen, Germany at show celebrating 100 years of electricity.

After ten years in his own medium, Frode has gained recognition in art circles. He doesn't need to knock on doors to get to show and sell his work. He gets invited personally to show his art. In New York he is represented by Gallery Heller in SoHo and Leo Kaplan on Madison and 76th Street. He has also exhibited several times at Galleri Händer in Stockholm. He likes Sweden and spends summer in Öland where he has built a house with 24-foot ceilings built "like a New York loft."

*Veronica Stolt*