

Light IN TUBES

Special glass tubing from Schott is used by the Swiss glass artist and graphic designer, Josef Andraska, to create glowing spatial objects.

“GLaS” is the short name Josef Andraska has given to his studio. For him glass has always been much more than just a simple combination of basic chemical elements. This transparent material is shape and color, fire and heat: “Glass means art, poetry and happiness for me – values that come to life in a playful way with the help of natural or artificial light.”

Playfulness with light

And it is exactly the play with light that make his objects so unique. The Schott AR or “Duran” glass tubes he uses refract natural and artificial light sources, changing their appearance depending on the spectator’s point of view. The 150x150 cm pictures created by the Swiss-based designer are framed in aluminum and consist of tubing which collects light, livening up the geometric color surfaces of the back wall.

Yet he creates more than just pictures in the classical sense. A room partition made of glass tubing is one such work. Interesting light effects are created by attaching glass rings to the tubes. When lit from both ends, the light is refracted by the rings, creating a one-of-a-kind partition.

Glass school in Hungary

As a young man, Josef Andraska discovered his love for glass. He finished his high school education specializing in glass, then attended the Budapest Art Academy. Apart from his interest in

graphic design, he remained fascinated with glass and its numerous design possibilities. Later, as a designer working in Hungarian glass factories, he was able to convert his ideas into reality. Exhibitions of his works followed soon thereafter. In 1970, Andraska and his wife emigrated to Switzerland, where



Using a single light source, the artist achieves a fascinating light reflection in “Duran” glass tubes.

he found employment as a graphic designer and later, as an art director in various leading advertising agencies.

Around his 50th birthday, Andraska rediscovered his old passion for glass. Since then, he regularly sketches working processes in his Uetikon studio. His sketches become reality in Hungarian glassworks. While 70 percent of the finished objects are true to his original detailed plans, the remaining 30 percent are products of chance. It is with the smaller objects – vases, bottles or decorative bowls – that Andraska often feels like an alchemist. Colored minerals like blue cobalt or white opal are added to the glowing, 800°C molten mass, using a sort of centrifugal process that gives the treated glass attractive, Japanese-looking surfaces.



patron sitting in the pleasantly lit bar when, after looking at his wine glass, he slowly moves his eyes upwards to see the glass glowing in the ceiling ■

Creatively placing artistically transformed "Duran" glass tubes beside and behind each other and illuminating the piece with "Spectraflex" light conductors, Andraska achieves an interesting, 3-D effect.

Light and space

The artist combines his sense for glass and light with a feeling for space when creating larger works from industrial glass. Like his smaller creations, these are objects that can be used in everyday life. The "halogen lamp" beside an armchair, for example, can also be used as a reading lamp. He attached about fifty "Duran" glass tubes, each 14 millimeters across and 150 centimeters high, to a marble pedestal and made it glow using only one light source, a halogen lamp. The overall impression is that there is a single, separate lamp within each glass tube.

"Spectraflex" fiber optic light guides made by Schott allow numerous glass tubes of various lengths to glow, part of the ceiling illumination of a work he named "Bar". A sky filled with fluorescent tubes opens up to the



Josef Andraska *A Life with Glass and Light*

1944 Born in Dés (Hungary)
1965–1970 Fine art studies in glass design and graphic design at the Budapest Art Academy
1970 Emigration to Switzerland
1970–1984 Graphic designer and art director in various large advertising agencies
1984 Freelance graphic designer working out of his own studio, first in Zurich, then in Uetikon am See

His most important exhibitions since 1994:

Meilen, Zurich, Budapest, Uster, Maur, Brugg, Toronto, Geneva, Erlenbach, Szentendre, Herrliberg, Hiddenhausen, Lutry



The artist frames the glass tubes in aluminum and lines them up so they refract light. The geometric colored areas he paints on the back create highly interesting effects.