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Steven Weinberg, Blue Square, 2000

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Steven Weinberg
American (b.1954)
*Blue Square*, 2000
Cast and molded glass
4 ½ in. square
Gift of Mrs. Ray Smith, Jr., 2005.26.388
All objects reveal more to the viewer than the external surface - light penetrates the surface and
presents to the viewer a combination of lights from many different levels. Stone itself admits
the passage of light, whether from the Michelangelo Pieta (bronze copy in the Haggerty) or
the marble facade of the Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University. Glass, that unique
form notably molded by the craftsmen at Murano, can offer the full transition from the opaque to the
transparent, with resplendent result.

The Martha W. Smith collection of glass at the MU Haggerty Museum of Art represents as fine a sampling
as one would probably would find anywhere, including most larger museums. Like any well thought out
collection of artistic glass, a museum collection should represent a variety of styles and techniques which
nonetheless retain solid aesthetic qualities.

I am sure there are many ways of critically approaching these objets de verre. While consideration should
be given to the shape, surface, and form of the glass, these in themselves do not lend themselves to as much
reflection as do those objects where color and form and finishing are incorporated as well. Many minds may
have different, defensible preferences. To this writer, three pieces offer opportunities for examinations that
go beyond that object itself. The first, is by Steven Weinberg, who presents incidentally a play on the name
of physicist Steven Weinberg whose efforts deal with the remote properties of matter far beyond possible
human contact. In Blue Square, Weinberg creates the near perfect sphere emerging from the creative blue
surface, which potentially represents the beginning of space itself. The object invites us to examine it closer
and from any perspective available to us. One has an almost demanding desire to imagine what this is
telling us about space and nature.

Plato is reported to have said that God constantly geometrizes. That apt phrase is certainly relevant to
Pavel Tomecko, and his Opal Dream. The full chromatic spectrum is present at every view, along with the
geometries of reflected sizes. As seen, the top surfaces also bring the lighting of the display space into view
and thereby combining our external space with the tetrahedral internal space in repeated arrays of triangular
shape and color.

Zoltan Bohus’ Concentric Phenomenon, as displayed in the 2002 Haggerty exhibit, surprisingly shows us
that the object has not only its own form and identity but also that it can reflect and incorporate images
from its surroundings as well. Clearly this is not limited to this single piece but could be applied to many
of those in the Martha W. Smith collection. These many pieces are not only enjoyable individually but also
incorporate a deeper potential for including their environment in each one’s own display. As such, they can
be part of our memory of their presence. Their public display can cause the observant passer-by to stop and
reflect on what it means to see in nature what can be made into art.

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