

The glass workshop and the ascesis



Introduction

I've always felt that the fire workshop inspires my process of ascesis a lot. I can say they go hand in hand. But I could not say exactly how and why. This writing is the result of some reflection about it, and of the review and organization of my personal notes.

Although at first I wanted to look at my whole process with the craft of fire, it soon became clear that my first profound experiences with the ascesis coincided with my first experiences with the glass workshop, so here I am only looking at the relationship between the glass workshop and the ascesis.

In the craft of fire, the making of the first furnaces, the conservation and production of fire, the melting of bronze and iron were somehow related to the question of where we came from. These works were accompanied by myths, ancient blacksmiths, the knowledge and transformation of materials, the rise of the temperature, the images and registers of becoming a man. A lot of energy, high temperatures, heavy materials, the world of "lower" regions.

Working with glass is more about where we're going to. Liquid glass is clean, shiny, untouchable, intangible, mobile. It is always connected to images and registers of "higher" regions.

For sure, becoming moved by the craft of fire is also a question of personal habit, but I was inspired by it right away. Even on Hajógyári Island, when I first made an oven and then lit a small fire in it, I wrote, "I can face death easier now after having seen the fire burning in that little furnace." So there is some basic compatibility between my inner world and the symbols, allegories and processes of the craft of fire.

The question

Why do I feel that my experience in the glass workshop is so close to my experiences of my asceticism? Why do I feel they are made of the same "material"? Why does the glass workshop inspire me so much?

With this question I began to look at my previous notes, and from one point of view I found the answer very soon.

In January 2016, when we melted glass with Ariel in La Reja, I described this inner recognition.

"When I tried again to make a drop, I felt that the drop was the extension of my body, and I was a little bit there in every drop. It was a very special feeling. And when the drop is stretched down, it's an inner movement too. It is a very special moment, when the external and the internal are fully interconnected. I have recognized that there is always only one material I work with, and that is my inner world. "

So in the workshop, the essence of the intensive work is to work with my inner world. It's all about that. As I approach the glass, as I want to shape or blow it, as we prepare the furnace or the crucible, it is always clear that the essence of all of these things is to transform myself, ourselves.

This answer could be enough, but as I read my notes and reflected about it I could find some more common characteristics.

The emotional tone

I remember very well a special experience from my first glass workshop with Ariel in Punta de Vacas. We were a lot of people and most of the participants I met for the first time. On the second day of the workshop, when I woke up and saw these people almost unknown to me, I felt such a deep love that I was completely surprised. It's as if we've had such a special experience together that it brought me so close to them.

This intimate, loving tone is almost always present in the glass workshop. We do the best things together, we are sharing very important experiences together, the common expression of our best endeavors is glassing. Here I often feel the "WE" instead of the "I". When we are standing in front of the melted glass, when I see the deep concentration or enthusiasm of others, I often feel grateful to those who have made this possible: to Silo and others, thanks to whom I have come to know the sacred spaces that have transformed my images about life and death.

The workshop as an external and internal space

One of the repeating experiences is that the outside world is eliminated during glassing, only the workshop exists. From the moment we start the furnace, an inner world is created. The outer walls of the workshop (even if they are imaginary in Mikebuda, under the bower) create an interior space that is very different from everyday space. This space is full of symbolic content for me.

Everything is done within this space. In this spiritual and physical space, nothing is about everyday life, something very special is happening here. Here, there is the essence of everything. Here, I am always in touch with the very deep aspirations of the human being. We transform the material to transform ourselves and surpass our limits.

Internal laboratory

Each time we're glassing, my everyday climates and tensions also appear. Others are much more skillful, I cannot do it, I deceive myself, I'm impatient, I have no inner faith. In my everyday life, these climates and tensions are often elusive, unnoticeable. In the workshop, they are concentrated, they invade me in minutes or in hours. It's like looking at the roots and expressions of my inner contradictions in a laboratory, but also the responses to them. And since there is a generally inspired state, sometimes I can give a non-mechanical answer. It also helps that there is often a goal beyond the specific glassing. For example, when I ask for someone and in an object I try to express my best feelings for him or her. Whenever there is such a goal, it always works as an internal reference, it helps me to stay connected with the essentials. In this case, the glassing could be an internal journey as well.

Evolutionary jumps

It has happened several times that I would like to do something in the workshop, such as a flask, a cup or a sphere, and by accident, I make something nice, I can do what I wanted to do. Then, I start to think that I know now how to make a cup or a flask. But the next time I try, I can't do it. And this continues, I can't do it again for a long time. Sometimes, thanks to the coincidences, something succeeds, but that does not mean I know the exact steps to achieve this and that I can repeat the process.

And this is like in my ascesis: I was able to contact the deep spaces, immortality, the meaning of everything, but afterwards, for a long time I could not succeed in repeating and integrating these experiences. Sometimes the future, something that works deeply in me shows itself, but they are only signs that encourage me to find the secret that made them possible.

Symbols and allegories

The furnace: the source. It feeds everything, it transforms the material as the Purpose transforms everything. An important part of the workshop is to make, improve and perfect the furnace. When the furnace works well, it is possible to move forward and work. When the furnace does not work well, nothing is possible. It's like the Purpose. A clear Purpose is the source of inspiration, the driving force that transforms everything. But when the Purpose is not clear, the only thing I can do to improve the Purpose.

Glass: my inner world. I cannot touch it directly. I can transform it with indirect, subtle movements, only through inner intuitions and understandings.

Permanent instability: nothing in the workshop is ever sure. Can we reach the required temperature? Will the crucible break? Will the items remain whole? Can I blow a sphere? Can I do anything with the glass? Nothing is ever sure. Everything is a continuous intention, but there are very few external handles. In the face of all the continuous failures, only the internal search is permanent. In the process of my ascesis I feel constantly that I'm not sure about anything, I do not know anything. And the biggest trap is when I think I've experienced something, I've understood something, and I lose my

inner humility and register of failure. In that case I always get stuck, and I always have to remind myself that I do not know anything. Just like with the glass, I do not know anything about it.

Objects charged with content

I am an "object believer", I do not know why. In my everyday life or in the practice of ascesis it helps a lot when I take out objects that are meaningful to me. Glass objects are a bit difficult to carry with me, some have been broken in my bag, but somehow I figure it out. :)

There have been many objects made in the glass workshop that helped me to be in touch with my best intentions as I made them, or I had some nice experience connected with it, an asking, a deep love for someone, or a nice teamwork with someone in the workshop. Or perhaps it is simply the joy of creation that I missed in my life when I was a child because I did not have any affinity for either drawing or any other art. This inner resonance has little to do with the aesthetics of the object—sometimes I'm glad to have a nice cup to use, but I do not have an emotional attachment to it in the way that I can connect deeply with a clumsy, awkward flask made in the workshop.

Although I give away most of these items, some are always with me. When I get them, they help me get in touch with the good feelings they've been made with. Almost every time I sit down to practice my ascesis, I take some of the objects that create the spiritual space that helps to meditate.

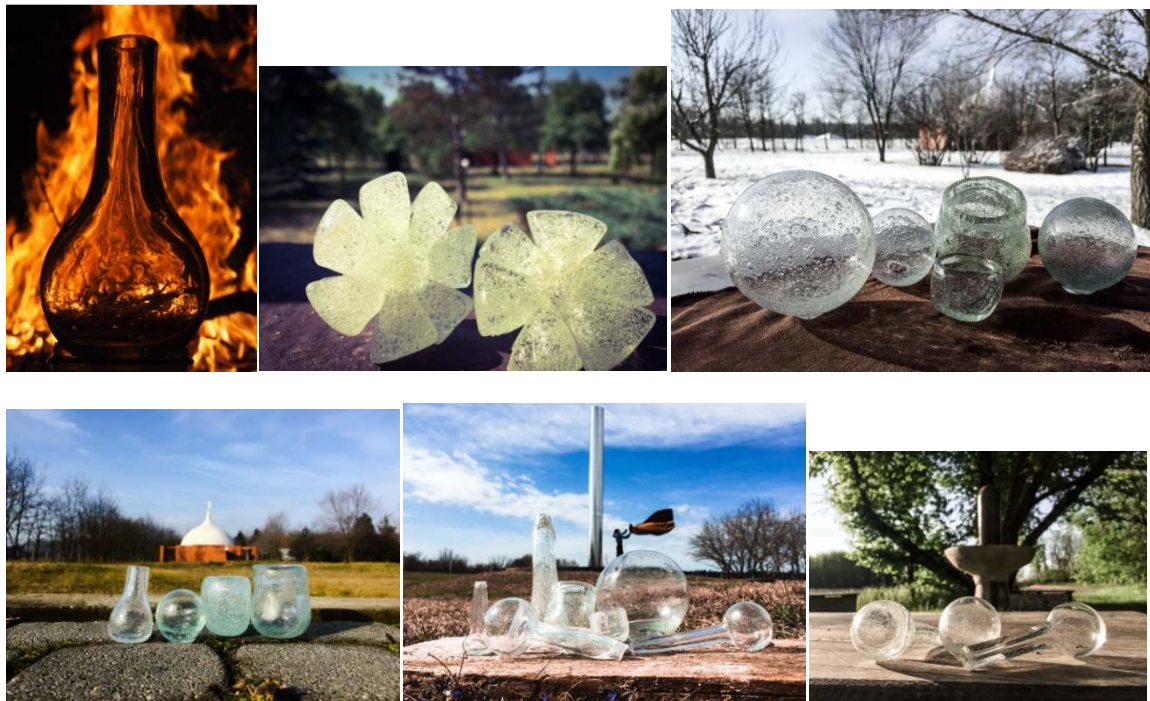


Summary

The emotional tone, the creation of the external and internal space, the symbols and allegories, the continuous work with my inner world, the ambit where we work with others, are all elements of the glass workshop that are present in the practice of ascesis. Sometimes glassing is like an active practice of the ascesis where I go through an inner path that takes me to secret times and spaces.

The inspiring and symbolic images of the glass help to enter to the profound. The transformation of liquid glass evokes inspirational images that sometimes take me far away.

When I'm thinking of others during glassing or asking for others, this inspires me to explore inner roads, where at the end I always realize I'm not the most important thing and that there is this common Purpose, something we all share.



Some experiences

Finally, here come some experiences when the glass workshop and the practice of the ascesis met in time and space. These are details from my personal notes.

5 November 2017 - The sphere



We were glassing in groups and while the other group worked I went to the Sala to meditate. Meditating in the hall suddenly the feeling of complete failure invaded me: I never really felt that anyone or anything was more important than me. But that would be the most important thing in life. And then the purpose which somehow I perceived as eternal, bright, divine love filled me and I let it take me. It was as if a huge force from the bottom starts upward, taking me up to the bright heights where there is certainty.

Then I felt sincere regret that I was such a bad person and I apologized to all my loved ones whom I had hurt.

I went back to the workshop, and after a while our group came to the furnace. I wanted to make a sphere, but this time I did not feel any compulsion. I just felt how good it is to work with others and somehow I felt perfect harmony with Magi, and with complete confidence, I was happy to make every step with him. This was a new register for me, a profound pleasure for common work.

July 21, 2018 - The clumsy, awkward flask



After a long time we could finally work with glass again. I felt the same happiness and inspiration I've always had when working with melted glass.

There is always an object that inspires me the most. With the glass it is now the small flask. This subject had a major role in the discipline, for sure that is why it resonates so much within me.

In the first few hours I could not do anything that satisfied me. But I was inspired, so I went to the hall to meditate.

As I was meditating on the Purpose, I came to an inner state, into an inner silence when I felt I do not know anything. With clarity, without any preconception I could ask myself: what is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of existence? There was just this question, and I observed the feelings and images that appeared. In a moment my daughter's face appeared, and I could not say exactly why, but I knew that the unconditional love I sometimes feel for her has something to do with the meaning. Then I just let the images and feelings come and go.

Then the image of my daughter appeared again and as she was very kindly smiling to me, she said: I was always here. And then the feeling of love seemed to become independent from me and from her, it was timeless and everything started to move. Perhaps I have never felt with such clarity that

the Purpose is not a state, but rather a continuously evolving intention, the essence and the driving force of the inner search. And it manifests itself in the internal search itself.

I was touched by this experience because I felt that I was in contact with a very profound truth.

After a while I went back to the workshop and felt that I wanted to manifest this experience in an object. And when I did something flask-like that resonated in me, Juci asked if I wanted to work on its opening because she could help in transferring the object to another pipe. This was what I had wanted to try for some time, but I did not want to disturb others for help so late. Finally, I felt some great inner satisfaction with the object, and though I knew it would only have a very short in the cooling oven, I was sure it would not break. And in the morning it was there, whole, without any cracks, and it is here with me now.

June 2, 2018 - The thick-walled sphere



On Wednesday evening when we worked with the glass, I had an interesting register: I had to be very focused, attentive on my internal center when working with glass because there is no direct connection to the glass, so the "control" has to come from somewhere inside. I blew a small sphere that was connected to this register.

When I sat in the hall on Saturday, I put my little sphere next to me, I recalled the purpose and tried to be focused, in my center. I let all the outer and secondary things come and go, I just listened to my inner center. It took quite a while before I could get quiet internally. As the internal noise became quieter, the internal center of gravity became stronger. And suddenly I entered into another reality, a reality of a sci-fi story. This story was formulated in me afterwards:

"It was always dark, always night. He was walking distracted on narrow paths, all the noises coming from the forest were filled with fear. He was completely lonely and felt like a stranger. The darkness of the sky made his loneliness more depressing. He was looking for some way out, some relief, but he did not know how to get it. He had a glass sphere with him, but he did not remember what it was for, how he got it, but he knew he should not lose it. The days were spent in constant wandering, with the obsessive searching for something that he did not know precisely.

He was preparing to sleep one day when the sphere seemed to have switched on. He did not know why, but from the first moment he was sure that what was happening was thanks to the glass sphere.

Inside, some kind of brightness began to grow. Not eye-catching gloss, but soft and joyful. When he opened his eyes, it was as if everything had changed. There were many different creatures, beings and deities among the stars. Everything was moving, changing, developing. Worlds and planets were created and disappeared, but all were joyful, all of a kindness of goodwill. He felt at home on his own planet and felt at home in the universe. He understood that he had never been alone in his life and would never be alone in the future. He is surrounded and protected by something much more than himself. He belonged to where the creatures, beings, and gods were.

He understood that the infinite loneliness he'd always felt was the loneliness of solitude after death. But where he belonged to now, in his home, there was no death and no solitude existed."

"Do not imagine that in your death loneliness will become eternal."

September 16, 2018 - The cradle of life



After we had modified and improved some things on the new glass oven, we went to the Park on a Friday night to try it out. We managed to heat up the glass to 1050 degrees Celsius, which is not optimal, but we could work with it very well nonetheless. There were only four of us in the workshop, so we didn't have to wait long for our turn at the oven.

Working with glass is always very inspiring to me, but this night was exceptionally special. As if the essence of certain previous experiences were condensed into one.

Antecedents

The day before was my Mom's birthday, and that day was the first anniversary of her death. I thought a lot about her in those days, she was very present and I was overwhelmed by a deep gratitude to her.

In the previous weeks, the theme of expectations had appeared several times in my meditations. I observed how much tension it causes and how it makes internal quiet difficult when I'm full of expectations. On the other hand, when I sometimes managed to get rid of these expectations, it felt like the doors to the depths of my internal world opened.

These experiences were always joyful and liberating and they left a feeling of, "I am not the most important" behind them.

A couple of days earlier, when I was reading the Ceremony of Well-being at our messengers' meeting, this sentence caught my attention: "We have faith that our call for well-being will reach them." More specifically, this first part: "We have faith..." I noticed that I usually do not care whether or not my askings reach my loved ones. So, I meditated about my beliefs, my askings, the Ceremony of Wellbeing. And I observed that if I really ask for others with faith, the askings are so much stronger, they have so much more energy.

We also studied the principle: "When you force something toward an end, you produce the contrary."

These were the themes present when we started the work with the glass. And I believe it is thanks to them that this interesting internal journey happened. What happened inside was closely related to the external process of making a glass flask.

The experience

When I first stood in front of the oven, I formulated an asking for two dear friends who wanted to have a baby. And inside, I dedicated this glass work to this baby-to-be. This asking was present until the end of the work. I wanted to make a nice flask which expresses my best wishes for them.

In the first experiment I made all the well-known mistakes; the glass is not even; my movements are fragmented; I don't have a clear image of what I should do and how I should do it. The well-known tensions also appeared: I'm not able to do this anyway; I don't have enough patience; I will make a mistake again, but instead of accepting it I will try to save whatever I can.

This went on during the following experiments, but each time I started again, I reinforced this asking for the baby-to-be, this inspiring image of a new life, my best wishes for my friends. Suddenly, I started to feel profound gratitude towards them, I remembered a lot of memories and inspiring moments together. I was grateful to them for certain beautiful experiences in my life.

I tried another flask but failed again. Tensions and expectations again.

"We have faith that our call for well-being will reach them."

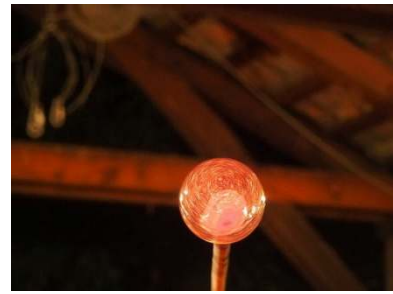


I just wanted to believe and trust, leaving my personal pettiness behind. A kind of certainty started to grow in me. I could feel this profound and spiritual joy I felt when my daughter was born. Life is sacred, the infinite evolution of life is sacred. Life will always find a way to grow. I wanted to make a real effort, to do my best for a perfect flask without any expectations.

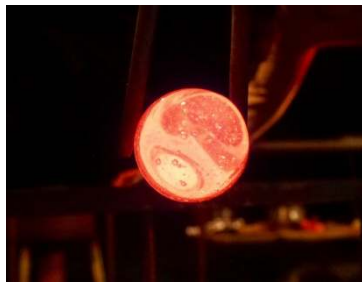
I attempted another flask, but this time I spent a lot of time making the glass even on the tip of the rod before blowing air into it. I heated the glass up several times and I sat on the bench to even out the glass with the wooden tool. With one hand I was turning the rod, with the other hand I was trying to make the glass even, but my two hands did not cooperate very well. I failed, but I did not mind. I

felt a profound joy in trying my best. It was as if more and more energy was being liberated in me, accompanying my asking. Serving life is the most coherent action of all.

I attempted the next flask, I sat on the bench, and suddenly, the turning back and forth, the angle of the wooden tool and the delicate movements were in total harmony, there was no fragmentation in my movements, I was one with the rod and with the glass. And all of a sudden, there was a completely even piece of glass on the tip of the rod. I went back to the oven in order to heat up the glass again, and I started to blow air into it gently, while permanently turning the rod.



And I could see how perfectly even the glass was and how symmetrical the bubble growing inside was. Everything was so neatly in the center. I heated it up again, and I sat on the bench to make the neck. I was turning the rod on the bench, and I was pressing the tool at a perfect angle and with the perfect pressure, so the neck started to grow. I repeated this step a couple of times, feeling an increasing joy, trust and inspiration. Everything was in equilibrium, in harmony without the slightest tension, without the slightest fear of losing it or failing. The object was in the center, the symbol of life was the priority.



This was an ethereal dance around a new life, a dance inviting this new life onto this planet, which creates the form in which it can be born. Here, accompanied by the soft and beautiful melody of the universe, everything was moving together in perfect harmony to serve life. Here was joy and beauty and all the light of the world was concentrated in this form, so that life can be born. Here everything was protected for eternity.

The cradle of life

The following night, during my meditation I decided to fill the flask with the water of the fountain. And when I did so the next morning, when I was at the fountain with the flask and the water of the fountain in it, I felt complete certainty that this new life is going to be born.

December 3, 2018 - The Yonilingam



I went glassing with a clear plan to try to make a Yonilingam for Roberto. I had tried already with a sand mold before, but it was a complete failure. And I wanted much more to do it "by hand", but I had no idea how. But now I had some ideas.

I was very surprised when, with the first attempt, I could make a pretty nice object. But for that I had to pull and push the glass very hard and strong, and I was sure it would break. And I was right, it quickly broke in the cooling oven. But the temptation was there to do something "nice,, so I tried a few more times in the same way, but they all broke almost instantly.

And then I stopped for a moment and reflected a little. I noticed that I was pushing something, I was forcing things to make a nice yoni. I was not concerned about why I want to do it, but I was focusing on the object compulsively. I took a breath in my heart and recalled my best feelings with Roberto. The gratitude and joy that we share this internal path, all the inspirations that have come from him, the trust in him. And suddenly there was a great silence inside, everything seemed to be so simple. It does not make any sense to do something that creates internal noise, but only what leads to inner peace. What matters, what is important, is to have good feelings for others.

I had another idea how I can try the yoni. When I tried this other way, I did not feel that I was forcing the glass, I did not try to force the glass to do something it is not capable of. I just did fine movements, without much pressure or pulling. And although the object was not so beautiful, I felt a sense of inner satisfaction and I knew it would not break. Again, I was surprised how much the work outside was closely related to my inner state. How different it is to work with inner silence rather than inner noise.

Then after we finished the glassing, I went to the hall with this inner joy and freedom. With the feeling that everything is so simple. I felt the Purpose in my heart as if it was a tangible material that operates and works. And as I quietened my mind, this “material” seemed to separate from me and start its journey in time. It followed human history and showed me how many different ways the human being has tried to express this Purpose without knowing what it was. And meanwhile I was feeling how easy it is to see it, we just have to turn our look a little bit toward the inside, we just to have to tune ourselves a little bit.

Tamás Csefkó

csefkotamas@gmail.com

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