

Showhaus Project

Artist Statement - B. Jane Cowie

In *Kuo Chuan Lifestyle* B. Jane Cowie juxtaposes fragile glass figures with raw concrete and reinforcing steel to create works that deal with the lives that surround, lives that are *lived in the air*. The foundation is the familiar house form, cast in concrete, heavily textured with an embossed Asiatic pattern, while the delicate glass figures are held precariously aloft with reinforcing steel, in a tenuous metal cradle.

The works speak about a living environment that is high above the ground, almost floating or flying, living with the clouds. Lives, lived in these lofty homes Cowie wonders how the relationship between people and the ground has changed and how relationships to those living above and below them will eventually change. With limited land, the built environment offers a limited cubic area of space for each individual to inhabit, in which to live, sleep and eat.

The figures that depict the lives that are lived in the air appear beautiful and calm, transparent and air like, untouchable, separated and swaying precariously in 'temporary' homes. How will this relatively new way of life, a result of the technical developments in the construction industry with tempered glass and reinforced concrete, influences the development of new cultures, creating new ways of relating? How will these living situations influence the way people are, what they think and how they interact together on the ground?

Interestingly, Cowie when looking for a place to live in Singapore followed her strong desire and longing to be close to the earth and decided to live on the ground in Kuo Chuan Avenue, land that is solid and firm, 'real and original Singaporean earth' not 'reclaimed new land'.

About the Artist

B. Jane Cowie has been working with glass for over 20 Years. She studied at Sydney College of the Arts, and was awarded a Degree in Visual Arts in 1983. Her strong commitment to art making, desire to learn and passion for glass has inspired her to travel extensively. Cowie has worked in numerous glass making studios and factories in England, Europe, USA, Japan and South East Asia to develop technical skill and an intimate understanding of glass.

Cowie owned and operated her own hot glass studio, *Spinifex Glass*, in South Australia (1992), founded the *blue pony* glassmaker's studio in Adelaide (1997) and recently established the *East Coast Studio Glass* workshop in Singapore (2003).

She has been a Board Member of the *JamFactory Craft and Design Centre*, *Craftsouth: A Contemporary Craft and Design* organization and was President of *Ausglass: the Australian Association of Glass Artists Ltd*. She has co-ordinated art glass conferences, curated and toured contemporary glass exhibitions and taught extensively in Australia, USA, Germany and Turkey, while all the time pursuing her practice as an independent artist.

Cowie completed a Masters of Visual Arts Degree, at the University of South Australia with a thesis that used her tacit knowledge of glassmaking in an investigation of the *History and Practice of Studio Glassmaking in South Australia*. She continues to exhibit regularly in Australia, Europe, Japan and South East Asia and is included in numerous public and private collections. More recently she has designed, created and installed artworks into The Majestic Hotel, Raffles City - Stamford Café and the Circles Restaurant in Manila Shangri-la.

Relocating to Singapore in 2003, Cowie has embarked on a new adventure to learn more about glass, art and culture within the South East Asian region. Living on the ground in Singapore she works as a glass artist, designer, teacher and glassmaking consultant within the greater region of South East Asia, as her passion for glass and art making continues unabated.