

# FRAME

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The Great Indoors

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FASHION STORES  
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STUDENT WORK 2012

# the making



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## Exhibition Hot Tools

**Design** ECAL University of Art and Design Lausanne

**Materials** Glass (final product), glass powder, wooden moulds, leather, copper, a.o.

**Price** £1500 each

**Edition** 12 examples of each of three designs

**Gallery** Libby Sellers (libbysellers.com)

Sellers saw the show as the chance to tell a story.

# Blown Away

Find out why Libby Sellers showed the work of eight students at her London gallery.

Words Alexandra Onderwater  
Photos Nicolas Genta

**T**he coolest (well, not really) part of Hot Tools, an exhibition hosted by Gallery Libby Sellers this past September, was the video. Visitors viewed a blend of roaring, clanking machines as a backdrop to close-ups of master glass-blower Matteo Gonet manipulating his blowpipe, swaying, dipping, twisting and inserting great dripping globs of sizzling molten glass into moulds – as students from Swiss art and design school ECAL, in a role similar to that of Willy Wonka's team of Oompa-Loompas, aid him in his magnificent effort to give birth to their designs. It's a magical world, that of glass-blowing, and it's exciting to watch the contemporary ideas and methods of young designers applied to an age-old craft.

Interestingly enough, both the video and the glass-blowing technique itself – the topic of a workshop led by Gonet and French designer Ronan Bouroullec – formed an intrinsic part of the exhibition. Of the eight students who were involved in the project, three presented glass objects at the show. Twelve examples of each design – Stein, Mould in Motion and DYI Mould – were for sale in London, at a price of £1500 each.

London gallerist Libby Sellers had already discovered the results of the five-day

workshop in Milan last May. With the London Design Festival in mind, she saw her gallery – a venue well known for the work of up-and-coming creatives poised on the cusp of art and design – as an ideal platform for these rising stars.

The show does raise a question, however. Should the gallery be a highway to success for graduates fresh from the design academy? After all, can we really expect youngsters saddled with student debt to resist the temptation to make impressive sums of money? Sellers claims to have no interest in offering them a fast track to wealth and fame; she doesn't believe that giving new graduates a place to show their work allows them to ignore 'the rigorous demands of the consumer'. From her perspective, it's an entirely different situation: the gallery provides an alternative platform to fledgling

designers and, at the same time, forces them to question their work. She reminds us that a shop is filled with all sorts of merchandise, 'all fighting for attention. The story of an individual piece often gets lost. Here, there is a chance for the story to be revealed.'

These are noble thoughts: the art gallery as a place that helps design students to develop their careers, and the gallerist as agent. Why not? Maybe because we've been blown away in recent years by the prices paid for limited editions of design objects preening in galleries. And maybe because we stopped to ask ourselves if *this* was really what the world had been waiting for. Aw, what the heck! Let's move over and give the latest graduates all the room they want – if not now, when? Surely the prices we saw at Libby's won't break the bank. —

[vimeo.com/40223178](http://vimeo.com/40223178)

