

# The Sculpture Project

Passage **Bertil Vallien**



## A TIMELESSLY CONTEMPLATIVE FIGURE

The word Passage can perhaps be interpreted in several ways. On my mobile phone, it serves as the headline for four images of a sculpture, a building crowned with a head – an unknown character. A timelessly contemplative figure with a pointed cone on its head.

The work Passage cannot easily be dated.

The sender is the artist Bertil Vallien, known as the creator of glass boats, represented in many international collections. He casts his vessels in various sizes, enclosing in the glass mass a medley of stories, scenographically expressed through all the charged objects frozen in their swirling moments. Narratives that encourage private interpretations, while remaining

universal. Some of the largest glass boats are four meters long and serve as landmarks in public spaces. Others are part of large private art collections.

The work Passage opens a new stage. Seen on my phone, the sculpture's material becomes indistinct, almost difficult to perceive. It turns out to be cast aluminum in a rugged and brushed version, far from the transparency that glass conveys.

Bertil Vallien describes the transition from a glassworks to a foundry for aluminum with a mix of concern and fascination. It's a passage filled with doubt, but also growth in a new direction. Perhaps best of all, it is filled with challenges. Initially, the concern was how to tame the gray surface of aluminum. An unfounded worry that turned into joy as conversations over a coffee in the dark foundry resulted in different solutions, where materials and possibilities challenged his creativity.

Passage has both a front and a back: a figure communicating with the world in many directions. The pointed hat of the Passage figure should be interpreted as a wick to the light. The light that has been a part of the inherent attraction of glass, until now. On the back of the work, there is an important clue, an inscription: 'Time mocks everything. But the pyramid mocks time.'

The encounter with Roman antiquity began with a trip to Venice and ended with a visit to an exhibition in Lucca. There he found a sculpture

with the same poignant message about time – but, of course, in Latin. His house, the closed, almost secretive building with an inscription on the back, and a front with a portal and eight small polished square windows – or is it something else – makes him associate with Kafka in his own narrative and lightly travestied version: 'Many a House is like a key to unknown chambers within the castle of one's own self.'

Perhaps time is not mocked by Passage. The movement continues.

**Text:** Hedvig Hedqvist, Design writer, and author.

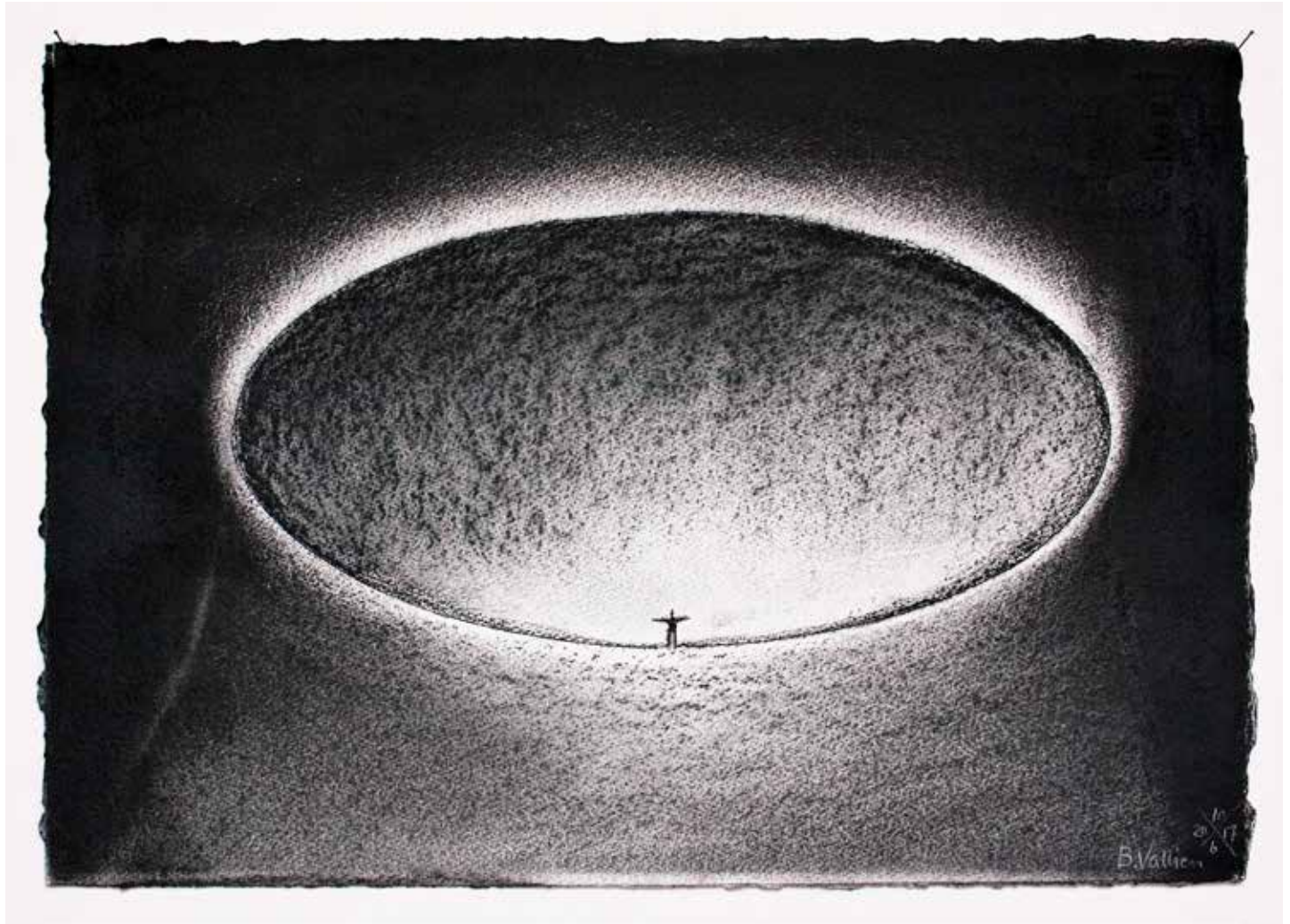


Passage **Bertil Vallien**





Bertil's beautiful charcoal drawing shows a very small figure on the edge of infinity – 'Close to the edge' – the universe embodied in the vast emptiness of the bowl.







Passage  
Limited edition of 60 sculptures  
Sand cast recycled aluminum /  
Black graphite polished mahogany

Width 20 cm  
Height 48 cm  
Depth 14,5 cm  
Weight 8,6 kg





## **REPRESENTATION, IN SELECTION**

Australia, Sydney: Powerhouse Museum  
Canada, Montreal: The Montreal Museum of Fine art  
France, Paris: The Louvre  
France, Normandie: City Hall, Roen  
Japan, Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum  
Japan, Yokohama: Yokohama Museum of Art  
Mexico, Monterey: Museo Del Vidrio  
Russia, St. Petersburg: The State Hermitage Museum  
United Kingdom, London: Victoria and Albert Museum  
Sweden, Stockholm: Nationalmuseum  
Sweden, Borgholm: Vida Museum & Konsthall  
Sweden, Växjö: Växjö Cathedral  
USA, Boston: Museum of Fine Art  
USA, Chicago: The Art Institute  
USA, Corning NY: The Corning Museum of Glass  
USA, Corning NY: Corning Incorporated Corporate Headquarters  
USA, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art  
USA, Seattle: Seattle Art Museum  
USA, St. Petersburg FL: Imagine Museum  
USA, Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art

## ABOUT

The Sculpture Project is an initiative founded on curiosity about the relationship between art and traditionally crafted products, as well as a love of new cultural trends. This project will lead to the casting of unique artworks by some of the most fascinating creative individuals in Scandinavia. The artwork will be manufactured in limited editions by experienced craftsmen at Byarums Bruk in Småland.

/ Joel & Kenneth, project founders

“Ever since 1947 we have stuck to the same principle: only to use recycled aluminium in our products and to make the moulds from a mix of natural sand from lake Vättern, clay, soot and water. This is a mix that is entirely free from chemical additives and forms a closed system so it can be used over and over again,” explains the manifesto of Byarums Bruk. Also worth mentioning: “And for the last decade we have worked closely with some of the top designers and artists in Sweden.”

Sand casting is the common factor in everything that Byarums Bruk produces. It is a technique that

requires the finest craftsmanship. The casting works is thus preserving an old craft tradition and using it to create objects for the present day and for our future. This is not the only benefit. Production is environmentally sound, since every stage builds on the principle of reuse and recycling. The raw material is, as mentioned, recycled aluminium. The casting sand is used over and over again for new moulds. Some of the grains of sand undoubtedly date back to 1947, when the sand depot was filled for the first time. The finished objects are highly durable and remain just as beautiful year after year, decade

after decade. Byarums Bruk is one of a few companies that live up to the concept of sustainable design.

The technique requires a sharp mind, extreme care and skillful hands. Just as an experienced baker tests the dough with fingertips to check if it has risen fully, the casting workers rub the sand between their fingers to check whether the moisture content is right, depending on what they plan to cast and the prevailing weather. Production at Byarums Bruk is in other words reliant on a level of craftsmanship that is becoming increasingly prized today. Deep experience – developed through

years of practice and often passed from generation to generation – is essential to achieve quality in production based on craft skills.

“Making quality products with an environmentally friendly production makes me and my staff very happy and proud,” comments Joel Enhörning, owner of the casting works. “We are lucky to still be able to practice this wonderful craft and supply these unique products to our customers. It also feels right to keep on manufacturing in Byarum in Småland.”

### THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2013

Ann Wolff is one of our most brilliant international artists and uses glass as her primary medium. Despite her success around the world she has remained surprisingly unknown in Sweden in recent decades. As a young glass artist with the former Kosta Boda AB – when her surname was Wårff – the situation was quite different. Her art glass gained a lot of publicity then and she was frequently in the spotlight. In 2011 Ann was awarded the European Culture Prize in Strasbourg, for her art, for having worked in several European countries, and for her contributions to the international success of European culture.



Aluna, 2013 **Ann Wolff**



## THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2014

Britt-Ingrid Persson, usually known as BIP, has many years' experience of working in a number of materials, such as clay, concrete, latex foam and bronze, using at least as many techniques. But aluminium was something completely new. Her ability to communicate thoughts and clearly illustrate universal problems has been clearly demonstrated in 30 or more works of public art and a long series of exhibitions. BIP's artistic creations are always characterised by simplicity, abstraction and focus.



Plexus, 2014 **BIP**

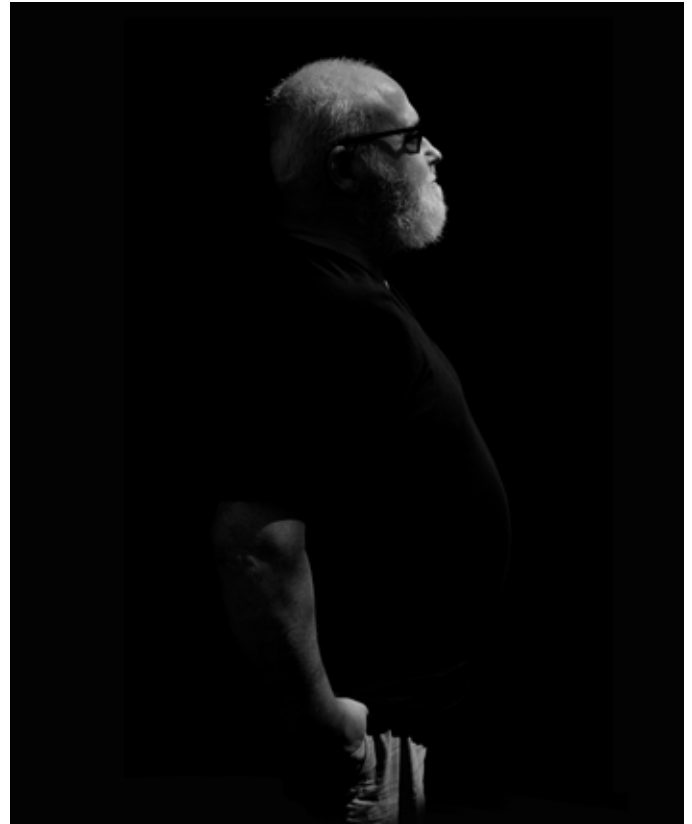


### THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2015

Kjell Engman was the third artist, after Ann Wolff and Britt-Ingrid "BIP" Persson, to be commissioned to create a limited edition sculpture in aluminium for The Sculpture Project initiative. Or more correctly in collaboration between The Sculpture Project and Byarums Bruk, since the final casting process took place at the foundry. His many years of experience in creating public sculptures in a range of materials also proved an asset. He is commissioned regularly, both at home and abroad, and has exhibited all over the world.



DO-RE-MI, 2015 **Kjell Engman**



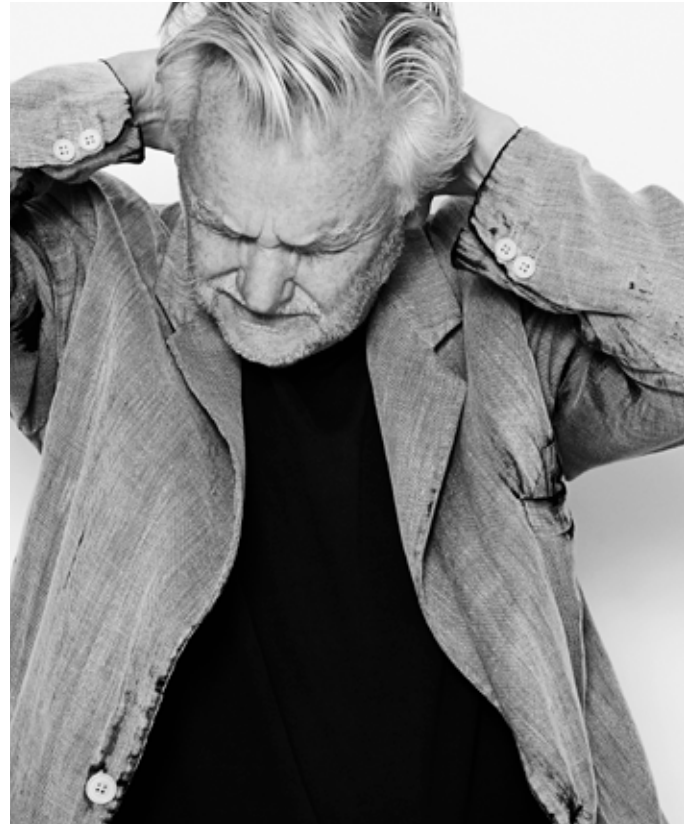


### THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2017

Nils Gunnar Zander, the artist for 2017, has worked with a variety of materials and has a unique ability to breathe life into these materials. In 2015 he had a magnificent painting exhibition at Prince Eugen's Waldemarsudde entitled "Tystnadens revir. 25 år från andra sidan" ("The Territory of Silence. 25 Years from the Other Side"), and in October 2006 he exhibited a beautiful and fascinating collection of primarily older works in clay and lead at Galleri L2 in Stockholm's Old Town.



Urania, 2017 **Nils Gunnar Zander**

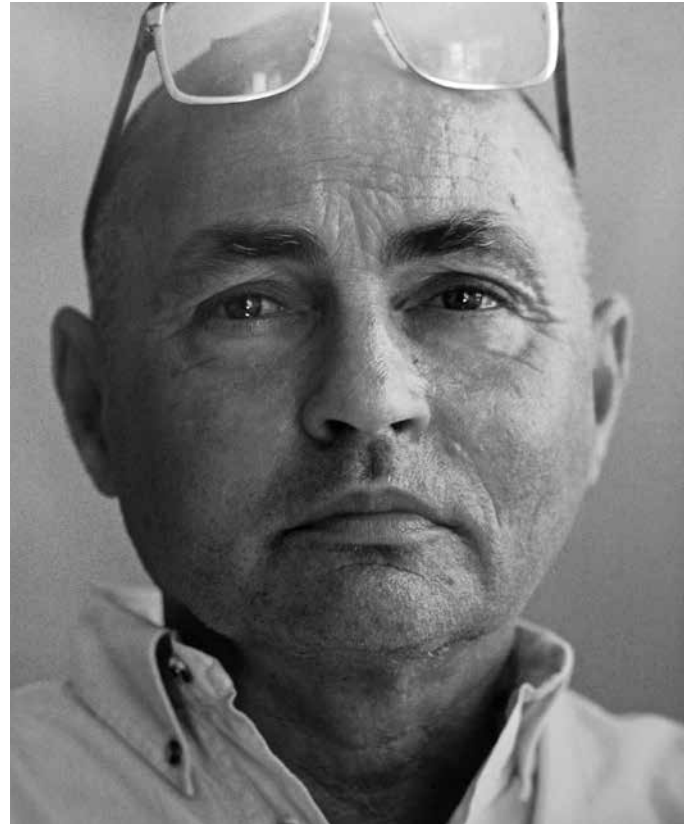


### THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2018

A tribute to Erik Höglund (1932–1998). Erik Höglund was a true artist and a source of inspiration for many of today's painters and sculptors. Since passing away 20 years ago, his work continues to amaze, and amuse. The mold for the artwork Tribute was a gift from Erik to the Ståhl family, in the beginning of the 1980s. This project was made possible thanks to the kind cooperation of the Höglund family.



Tribute, 2018



## THE SCULPTURE PROJECT 2020

The fruit of the 2020 collaboration with sculptor Lena Lervik was "Dreaming". Lena Lervik's sculptures are tactile. They exert a tangible presence. They affect the space in which they exist. Dreaming is a tribute to a mother's memory of her sleeping, dreaming baby.



Dreaming, 2020 **Lena Lervik**



PROJECT OWNER **BYARUMS BRUK**

WEBSITE **WWW.BYARUMSBRUK.SE**

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION **GRANDPUBLIC**

INSTALLATION CONCEPT AND PHOTOGRAPHY **GRANDPUBLIC**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF BERTIL **STEN ROSLUND**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF LENA **ANDY LIFFNER AND THOMAS QVARSEBO**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF ERIK **PER-GÖRAN HAMBRAEUS**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF NILS GUNNAR **CHRISTOPHER HUNT**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF KJELL **SANNA SJÖSWÄRD**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF BIP **HERZELL**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OF ANN **PETER JÖNSSON**

TEXT BERTIL VALLIEN **HEDVIG HEDQVIST**

PRINTED BY **BYWIND**

*Byarums Bruk*