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[LR] Can you summarize through a quick overview what you did at Cirva and how you achieved it?

[JT] This is the fourth time at Cirva for me and the third time working on this body of work which I started in 2017. It was based on my desire to be closer to the process of glassblowing. Considering the pandemic it delayed the things of a couple of years, three workshops have been spread out over five years. I developed a way of working where I would create molds that were more or less improvised using common materials found in the Cirva workshop: bricks, refractory ceramic tiles and shelving to make molds. The team here would blow glass into the molds and it would yield unique vessels.

[LR] Could you recall the context of how your residency at Cirva started?

[JT] My first time at Cirva was in winter 2016. It was a bit atypical for how the Cirva works: the residency was relatively short and it was intended to be just a one and a half week residency. It was arranged by a partnership between the French consulate in New York City and a group called Wanted Design. They arranged a "Transatlantic Creative Exchange" where they paired American designers with French manufacturers. I was paired up with Cirva, at that point I had never heard of it before. The first installment of the residency was under the previous director, Isabelle Reiher. At the end of the first day, it was pretty clear, to her at least, that one week was not long enough. The nature of glass blowing is... it just takes a while. You blow things on Monday, you don't get to see what you did until Tuesday. You have to reflect on it for an hour and then you start doing it again. That week really flew by. At the end it seemed like a fruitful collaboration so I was invited back to do a proper residency the following year. That is when this body of work really started.

[LR] We can distinguish three main outcomes throughout your residency: *Prototypes de luminaires*, *Béton Brut* and the last body of work which is not named yet. Could you quickly pitch me each of these projects? How did they come along or not in the process?

[JT] The first time I came here was short. I had never worked with glass before so it was very foreign to me. My approach for that one initial week was a bit conventional. It was within the ways that I'm comfortable working. It involves making drawing profiles. I worked on some lamps and bowls. It was really eye-opening to just see how these objects are produced and what is involved in it. However, it took just about a couple of hours with the glass blowers, David and Fernando, to realize that. I was definitely on the outside of the process. My expectations versus reality were pretty much shocking. It was kind of a revelation and the work I developed over the last three visits was a direct response to that. So, for my second venue in 2017, I made it a goal of mine to somehow get involved in the creation of these objects. Thus, I found that making molds by hand, laboriously one at a time, was a way that I felt closer to the action. I was just more integrated into the process of making. I would spend an hour or two making a mold my hands and knees on the floor. Then the technicians would blow glass into it and the mold would be destroyed as you pulled the glass piece out of it. One mold would yield one piece of work. With this process each mold was unique, so there was no opportunity to learn from doing for the technicians. If you were blowing glass into the same mold over and over again, eventually after five or six times you would learn how hot the glass needed to be, how to prepare the mold, how much glass to use, how long it had to stay in the mold, etc. I would have one chance to make the mold and they would have one chance to blow glass into it. If they miscalculated, if it was slightly off, maybe too little glass, too much glass, then there would be a failure: the glass would crack or it would not emerge as intended, etc. In that way I felt I was assuming as much risk as they were. They were taking a chance for the first time and I wanted to feel like I was invested in the same way.

[LR] Could you describe the Cirva workshop? How do you perceive it on a personal and sensitive scale?

[JT] There is so many things about working with glass that are just terrifying to anyone, whether it's an artist, a designer, an animal or whatever. There is a lot of fire, heat and potential for you to injure yourself in a very primitive and intense way. I felt on the outside avoiding that type of danger. Moreover, the glassblowing is a very well oiled machine. It takes at least two to three people depending on the scale of the work. It is like a beehive, there are subtle cues and language that I'm not really privy to. That really made me feel not included. So, I naturally wanted to feel closer to the process. That is why I developed my way of working here as a collaboration with the blowers. It is not an industrial facility here as the glassblowers are not doing the same thing over and over again. They will be doing glassblowing with a designer for some weeks, then another one will come in and do slumping or thermo-forming. So, that is all to say that collaborating with a new designer include a new learning curve for both parts.

[LR] Where did your inspirations ground their roots? What lead your instinct in the making process?

[JT] I've always been sort of drawn on architecture as an inspiration. My father's an architect and I thought I would go into architecture, but part of it was turning me off. I was playing with legos and things like that. I liked the technical aspects of building spatial thing, relating to people. But it felt completely overwhelming to imagine creating an entire building. Part of me also wanted to do sculpture, but it was a little too nebulous. So I naturally gravitated to furniture design. Furniture allowed me making things with my own hands, and it was also related to architecture. The realist, cynical side of me said, "Hey, Jonah, if this art thing doesn't work out you'll have some real life skills." Thankfully, it worked out.

I was familiar with Le Corbusier's work in board formed concrete. That is an obvious reference for the work that was created here using ceramic tiles, bricks and things from the workshop to make molds that had a texture imprinted on it. It was dealing with negative space and the approach of the concrete architectural forms to constructing the molds.

The second time working on this work was in 2022, it took me three years to get back here with the pandemic. I wanted to push the work a bit farther, creating more assemblages, larger works that comprised several different vessels and different textures.

[LR] As you define yourself as a product designer I wonder how do you relate to this kind of craft production? What is your stance toward a production made of unique pieces while you're used to work with industrial series? How do you perceive the outcome and in which kind of field (art, design, craft, etc.) does it belong for you?

[JT] It is really refreshing to me working in this context. I have never done it before and all I can do at this point is to speak about the collaboration. Thus far the work has never really been shown in any meaningful way to the public. So whether it is in the context of a gallery, a trade fair or an editorial magazine shoot, I'm not really sure how it will be received or positioned in the world.

In terms of working here it was very refreshing and still is kind of terrifying. In my usual work, designing for industry, it is constantly about choosing your battles, trying to create some framework for how things get produced. You cannot get everything you want. People are constantly saying no to me. I am like: "Can I make it green?", and they are like: "no.", "Can I make it this size or a little bit bigger?", "No, that will cost too much for shipping.", etc. There are a lot of constraints and that is part of my job. While here, the amount of freedom... it is generally speaking a lot more free. Everything is on the table. That freedom was a little bit terrifying or intimidating to me. If I was like "Make it bigger", they are like "okay, sure", nothing is impossible. If I ask "Okay well, can we try to break it?", they say "okay, whatever you want." I was scared at first and then you get into it and start to embrace it. I would like to work more in this manner. I'm curious to see how this work will be received and exhibited. People usually associate me and my creative output more as product oriented. Thinking about work in a gallery, I am not sure. I don't know how it will be received, if it will be seen as just more of stuff that I usually do or if it will be sort of elevated somehow. It was born different than I usually work but it all comes from the same place whether I'm doing this or drawing a chair.

[LR] Is there any striking memory coming in mind If you think about your time spent at Cirva?

[JT] There are so many things that come to mind... It is a really magical place. There is a movie called *Night at the Museum*, two kids get locked in a museum at night and then it is all magical. It is like a fantasy. I think about that all the time when I am here because I spend all day in the shop, I am eating, I am drinking, we are talking about art, talking about design. Then, I walk up two flights of stairs and I am in the flat, and if I cannot sleep in the middle of the night I can just run downstairs, sit there and look at the work and the kiln glowing. It is warm and it is very magical. Marseille in general has just been full of surprises to me. I had never been there before and I just fell in love with the city itself.

[LR] What did this residency bring you on a professional scale? Are you leaving with learnings, new openings, different point of view?

[JT] This experience is so new to me. I have never had a residency. I have never applied to a residency. It was not something I was seeking out at all. Eventually it is a lot to digest. It will probably take a while for me to fully unpack what happened. I think maybe my approach will become a little bit more codified, it will just be like "Oh this is my intention, this is the outcome and I achieved what I wanted." I don't think painterly is the right approach, but it is just so different than how I usually work. That was exciting, beautiful and terrifying about the process. So it was, in my own special way, just about my desire. I just wanted to be as close to it as I could.

[LR] How do you perceive time when working at Cirva?

[JT] It is a mix of things feeling very slow but then, the days going, a workday is feeling very fast. Time definitely slows down here. It is a relief not to be looking at the computer all day, just to have a very tactile experience and be dealing with real materials.

[LR] This body of work really stands out from what you've achieved along your career. How do you perceive it in relationship to the rest of your work?

[JT] I like playing in bands and making music. I always felt that was an antidote or almost a really strong counterpoint to the work I usually do. When you are playing music with friends you cannot really think about anything else. You are just very focused on what is happening. Just like when you are skiing down a hill. There is no room to think of anything else. Then, you get on the chairlift and you can sit and look around.

My experience at Cirva is very similar to these experiences. It has always been a highlight on my calendar. I just knew that I will get to go to this place and do something drastically different where there is no expectation of commercial viability. It is kind of therapeutic to me. After spending two weeks here I feel rejuvenated. It is the slowness, the pace of things and the openness to failure.

The way that I have been working have been punctuated with moments of sheer delight, amazement and also the unpredictability of glass.