

THE JAMAICAN-BORN ARTIST HUGH FINDLETAR IN A MURANO GLASS STUDIO WITH SOME OF HIS MOST RECENT FLOWERHEADZ VASES.



## ART SCENE

# Face Value

Glass sculptor *Hugh Findletar* turns heads with anthropomorphic vessels of exuberant spirit and beauty

**H**and-blown in the form of friendly faces, Hugh Findletar's signature glass vases are so full of personality that he refers to them as Flowerheadz. "I'm creating a population," reflects the Jamaican-born artist, now based between Milan and Venice and working out of the historic Murano ateliers. "The glass takes on its own form based on the heat, so the control you have is limited. One brother will come out a certain way, and its sister will come out looking a little different. It becomes like a family."

Trained as a fine-art photographer, with a focus on floral still lifes, Findletar arrived at his current calling thanks to a vision. After returning from a trip to Kenya, where he picked up a number of wooden masks at a Maasai market, he was inspired to sculpt his own versions

from glass, one of which he set on his bedside table. "I was lying down one day, and the mask started talking to me," he recalls. "It was like, 'Oh, my goodness, if I was on a vase with flowers on top it would be wow.'"

When he approached the island's master artisans with the idea, he recalls, "everything was a 'No, we can't do it.' So you go, 'Yes! Let's do it!'" To create a single vessel—which can weigh up to 50 pounds—requires the labor-intensive help of eight craftsmen, with each step veiled in secrecy. "The person who mixes the formula will never tell you his family recipe,"



# DISCOVERIES



1. AN ASSORTMENT OF HIS LATEST FLOWERHEADZ VASES, SO NAMED FOR THE BOUQUETS HE ADDS TO THEM. 2. IN A DEPARTURE, NEW PIECES ASSUME ANIMALISTIC FORMS, LIKE THIS HORSE-SHAPED VESSEL.

a piece after attending an exhibition in Paris in 2019. Findletar's creations have also taken center stage in the windows at Dolce & Gabbana and Pomellato boutiques around the world. "My girls are working like models," jokes the artist, who has tapped leading international floral designers like Eric Buterbaugh and Stéphane Chapelle to style the works. "It's like having Jimmy Paul coming in to do the heads."

On the horizon is a collaboration with French candlemaker Buly 1803, as well as tumblers, which, Findletar explains, will be made especially for whomever is drinking from them. ("Each family member will pick their color. It'll take two weeks and then ships.") He's also been exploring animalistic forms, such as owls like the one who would seemingly call his name from outside his grandparents' window in Jamaica. "Hoo, hoo, hoo," he echoes. "I was frightened out of my mind. Then I grew up and realized this bird is about wisdom." *Findletar is represented by The Spaceless Gallery; thespacelessgallery.com*

—JANE KELTNER DE VALLE

says Findletar, noting that one collaborator is a sixth-generation glassblower. Compared to that, he laughs, "I'm in kindergarten, even after 10 years."

Taste-making collectors might beg to differ. Miuccia Prada was among the first to discover Findletar's work, after a mutual friend bought a vase en route to dinner at her home. Then came the Missonis and Naomi Campbell, who commissioned

## THINK PIECE

# Dream Team

"Savoir is the emperor of beds," says none other than Dame Zandra Rhodes, the pink-haired English fashion and textile designer. As the latest creative force to team up with the U.K. brand, she has reimagined her famous 1971 field-of-lilies motif (worn by everyone from Twiggy to Lauren Bacall to Carrie Bradshaw) for Savoir's beloved beds. Clad in luxe cotton-velvet or textured linen, the design is available in eight hues (and custom colorways) including the grassy green that Rhodes chose for her own colorful London penthouse. As she gleefully reports over Zoom from a pile of pillows, "the bed is very happy here." *savoirbeds.com* —HANNAH MARTIN



SAVOIR: ALEXANDER JAMES