

In fragile glass, an artist reflects on a departed mother's love

By Stephen Crafti

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ART

[In My Mother's House, Nocturnes](#)

Hedspace Projects, Toorak, until May 16

In the mid-1990s architect Gary Catt designed a lavish apartment. It was filled with adventurous, vibrant 1970s furniture, including pieces by Gaetano Pesce and Pierre Paulin, as memorable as the Japanese-inspired interior.

A quarter of a century later the house is still owned by the same family – but stripped of chic furnishings it has been [transformed into an exhibition](#) by daughter, Hedy Ritterman, dedicated to the memory of her mother.



Glass shadow on embroidery: an image from *In My Mother's House, Nocturnes* *Credit: Hedy Ritterman*

The rooms are filled with glass, photos of glass and extraordinary images of the play of shadows against the glass objects – Ritterman's mother owned a glassware store, Picasso in Malvern. The artist says she wanted to use the objects to “try to fathom the woman who was my mother”.

As soon as one passes the threshold there's a delicately embroidered tablecloth, one of Ritterman's mother's favourites. It's displayed like art on the wall, with a singular wine glass suspended from the ceiling creating a delicate silhouette, not dissimilar to Dutch still-life paintings.

The real feast is in the adjacent living room, benefiting from views of Melbourne's skyline, where a dining table brims with glass from the post-war period to the more recent past. There are duelling glass figurines, chunky 1960s glass bowls and plates, and unusual glass cheese boards: some resembling a slice of cheese, others more abstract. They are crammed together, piled high and exquisitely lit.

The home's central passage, winding past former bedrooms, is now lined with Ritterman's images including her *Fantasie Impromptu*. These large black and white canvases capture the movement of light across the glass surfaces.

Pairs of wine glasses capture the relationship between mother and daughter, with the fragility of the material alluding to mortality, and the character of memory. Glass is a paradox: both fragile and strong. Ritterman's mother was a concert pianist in Poland before fleeing Nazi Europe with her family. Her glass stands on a balcony, standing up to the elements beyond its control. The music of Chopin, a composer loved by Ritterman's mother, plays in the background.

A set of stairs lead to a courtyard garden where a life size portrait of Ritterman's mother is suspended on glass goblets. Ritterman – who studied psychology, photography, interior design and fine art – brings together her enormous talent in this experiential exhibition, reminding us not only of the precarious nature of life but the strong mother-daughter bond and memories of a daughter's love.

- For bookings visit hedyritterman.com. The exhibition closes May 16