The art of wax casting with glass is such an ancient process, that the head of a Pharaoh (Amenophis) was known to be cast in Egypt between 1435 and 1415.

In New Zealand, we are fortunate to have internationally renowned lost wax cast glass artist, Ann Robinson, who is known worldwide for her refinement of this technique into an art form. Robinson's vessels and bowls are renowned for their profound beauty, organic natural forms, as well as their ability to contain and transfuse a clear and pure light that seems to change with it’s surroundings, thereby emitting an almost inner glow.

Robinson’s glass originates from the internationally renowned cast- glass New Zealand company ‘Gaffer Glass’, They specialize in lead crystal glass which is produced in several vibrant colours, that seem to reflect the clear light intrinsic of the New Zealand landscape. Robinson herself says:

“The New Zealand light is reflected in my work. Sharp, clear, even hard, colours: strong sun yellows, yellow green forest, dark copper blue evening skies, light blue summer skies, deep blue-green seas.”

Similarly, New Zealand’s botanica and landscape are echoed in her glass pods and vessels, with many reflecting the forms and shapes of New Zealand flora. The New Zealand Nikau palm and the Phormium (flax) can be seen in her organic repeating patterns and shapes held in each piece. She has stated, “I like the idea that my pieces encapsulate the music of the forest.”

Transforming glass through the process of wax casting glass, to produce such artworks of intrinsic beauty is no mean feat. In her refinement of this technique, Robinson somehow transcends the weight of glass and produces receptacles of exquisite beauty, despite their mass and scale.
Pour melted wax into the plaster mould

Soak plaster piece mould in water

Construct mould parts together

Mould full of melted wax

Pour melted wax into the plaster mould
Open mould when wax is cool

Remove wax

Work on wax, adding elements if necessary, perfecting the surface
Invest wax in a one part refractory mould i.e. mould made of materials that can withstand the kiln heat.
Steam out wax

Set mould up in kiln with a crucible of glass sitting above the open floor

Heat kiln and hold until the glass has all run into the mould. Add extra glass if needed.

Open kiln when cold

Fired mould with glass overflow
Break mould away from the glass and wash surface.

Cold work abrasives such as diamond and solocon carbide, to bring surface to the desired finish.
Hand finishing with diamond pads and final polish by emersion in acid (not shown)
Ann Robinson
Curved Vase Series, 2013
Semillon 45% Crystal Glass
530 x 340 x 340mm