



**TITLE:** "Trefoil Looking Glass" (Deaccession 2023.0421.01)

**ARTIST:** ESTAR(SER), with special acknowledgment to the Committee on Vitreous Phenomena (Justin Ginsberg and Anna Riley)

**YEAR:** year of manufacture unknown; deaccessioned from the "Frye Trunk" in 2023

**MEDIUM:** glass (conveyed with a bespoke stand of wrought iron and wood)

**SIZE:** 4.5in X 4.5in X 2in (11.5cm X 11.5cm X 5cm)

**PRICE:** \$2000

**ABOUT ESTAR(SER):** The "*Esthetical Society for Transcendental and Applied Realization (now incorporating the Society of Esthetic Realizers)*" is an established body of independent scholars and amateurs who work collectively to recover, scrutinize, and (where relevant) draw attention to the historicity of the so-called *Avis Tertia*, or "Order of the Third Bird." Associates of ESTAR(SER) have presented their work at a variety of institutions over the years, including Manifesta 11 (Zurich), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), MoMA PS1 (New York City), the 33<sup>rd</sup> São Paulo Biennial (2018), and the Institut für Raumexperimente (Berlin). For more information, consider: Burnett, Hansen, and Smith, *In Search of the Third Bird* (London: Strange Attractor, 2021). [www.estarser.net](http://www.estarser.net)

**ABOUT THIS WORK:** This piece was part of THE THIRD, MEANING, an ESTAR(SER) exhibition at the Frye Art Museum from October 2022 to October 2023, where it was presented as having been found in "The Frye Trunk," a diverse collation of "Birdish" materiel and archives, seemingly indicating longstanding Avian communities in the Seattle area. Details of the object, and its acquisition by ESTAR(SER), are published in "The Frye Trunk: Opening a 'Pandora's Box' in the Archives of Attention," *Proceedings of the Esthetical Society for Transcendental and Applied Realization*, New Series VIII, Supplement (2022).

That monograph has been included with the object in its conveyance to the Frye in December of 2023, but it reads in relevant part as follows:

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Trefoil Looking Glass

Resembling a glass finial or ornamental knob, this handmade trefoil lens stands out as a charismatic object within the richness of the Frye Trunk. Supporting documentation permits us to state with confidence how this unique attentional prosthetic was to be used. Indeed, with the help of the exhibition design team at the Frye Art Museum, we have endeavored to erect the glass on a stand in the primary gallery space so that visitors may themselves experiment with it. In brief, the three fused optical lenses of the Trefoil Glass are configured in such a way as to "entriplate" any view. By this we mean that the trefoil glass, held before a unitary object or prospect, delivers to the eye a *triadic constellation* — the world reproduced in treble glory. As detailed in the introduction to this volume (and as thematized in *THE THIRD, MEANING* exhibition as a whole), three-fold visual experiences appear to have played an important role in the attentional life of the several communities of radical attention-practitioners associated with the Frye Trunk. A subset of these individuals took a special interest in "thirdness" and in the general situation of "threeing." Their reasons for this preoccupation would seem to be rooted in an eclectic array of triadic source-material: Neoplatonic doctrines of the three loves, "Trinitarian" philosophical systems like those of Fichte, and folk ideas about thirds. It stands to reason that the "thirdness" of the "third bird" itself (and its symbolic function as a bird "of attention" or a bird that "discovers" aesthetic experience as such) also played a role in this palpable *three-o-phia*. Having ourselves experimented with the Trefoil Looking Glass, we confirm that, given suitable time and attentional commitment, it can indeed produce hypnotic effects. How was it used by the associates of the Order connected to the Frye Trunk? The most elaborate and best documented occasion saw a *volée* of six Birds, each holding a small version of this transparent shamrock before the eye, gathered for hours to give their sustained attention to a large, amethyst-colored Japanese fishing float recovered in 1952 on the far side of Camano Island. The object is telling: there is evidence that the present Trefoil Glass was made by an artisan of the Northwest Glass Co., a Seattle company that made glass fishing floats for regional use in the 1930s and '40s.

It had been the intention of the researchers of ESTAR(SER) to fold the entirety of the Frye Trunk and its contents into the "W-Cache," the extensive collection of Bird source matter and material culture of which ESTAR(SER) is the custodian. However, it is the obligation of the "Committee on Holdings (W-Cache Subcommittee)" vigilantly to assess (and to reassess) the authenticity and provenance of every object in the collection, in view of the long history of pranks and malfeasance by (presumed) associates of the *Avis Tertia*.

In November of 2023, this Committee met, and determined that the "Trefoil Looking Glass" shown at the Frye in 2022-2023 is in fact an extraordinarily skilled *forgery* of an original, now lost. For this reason, the object has been deaccessioned from ESTAR(SER)'s holdings, and was offered for sale to any interested party, in keeping with the practices of ESTAR(SER). It has been acquired by the Frye Art Museum itself.