

Glorious Glass Exhibitions

CGS and The Biscuit Factory Gallery Working Together

by Pam Reekie



Like many other organizations, the Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) had great plans for 2020. In 2017, the foundation marked its 20th anniversary as the principle supporter and promoter of artists and collectors of contemporary glass in the United Kingdom. Over the next three years, CGS celebrated this landmark birthday with a series of linked open exhibitions held at venues around Great Britain.

This celebration and the goal of raising awareness of the glory of contemporary glass culminated in a collaboration with The Biscuit Factory, the U.K.'s largest independent contemporary art, craft, and design gallery set in the heart of Newcastle's cultural quarter.

Discovering the Glory of Contemporary Glass

The aim of the *Glorious Glass* exhibitions was to demonstrate how utterly glorious and amazing contemporary glass is so that everyone can appreciate and enjoy its magical colors, textures, use of light, and variety of techniques. They were also intended to help local patrons where the various exhibitions took place to discover their own nearby glass artists.

With 2020, unfortunately, also came the pandemic and the closure of all nonessential establishments, including The Biscuit Factory. Undaunted, we collaborated to discover ways in which CGS and The Biscuit Factory could continue our mission to promote

contemporary glass. The joint solution we came up with was to create quarterly mini exhibitions of CGS members' work within the gallery so that CGS would have an ongoing presence there for a year. This would be both online as well as a physical presence once the galleries were able to reopen.



(Top to bottom)

Helen Grierson, Rockpool 3.

Photo by Northumbrian Images;

Penny Riley-Smith, Shades of 2020.

Photo by the artist.

As Rachel Brown for The Biscuit Factory explained: “We are pleased to announce a new collaboration with the Contemporary Glass Society as we work together to provide a platform for contemporary glassmakers from across the U.K. Featuring sculpture and functionware, we will showcase the work of makers in seasonally changing exhibitions.

“With the first show launching online, CGS and The Biscuit Factory are working with the makers to ensure that viewers can still purchase and receive pieces from the collection during our physical closure. This is a strange time indeed, but a wonderful opportunity to bring the work of these glass artists to our audience.”

Planning a Return to In-Person Viewing

The first online exhibition includes the work of eight makers—Catherine Mahe, Helen Grierson, Kate Henderson, Morag Reekie, Pat Marvell, Penny Riley-Smith, Stevie Davies, and Sue Woolhouse. Their work is now live on The Biscuit Factory’s website.

The good news is that The Biscuit Factory is anticipating reopening on April 14, 2021. After that date, Contemporary Glass Society members’ work will be able to be viewed both virtually and in reality.

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The CGS is the U.K.’s foremost organization for supporting established artists as well as supporting up-and-coming makers and for promoting contemporary glass in the wider art world. Visit www.cgs.org.uk for a look at all of the offerings available from the Contemporary Glass Society and information on how to become part of CGS.

Visit www.thebiscuitfactory.com/blogs/news/contemporary-glass-society to learn more about the participating artists and view their work.

(Left to right) Morag Reekie, On the Edge; Catherine Mahe, textured yellow and pink drop-out vessel. Photos by the artists.

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