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\$9.00 U.S. \$10.00 Canada  
Volume 37 Number 4



Paul J. Stankard

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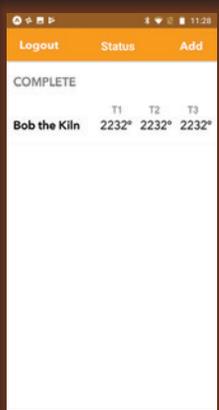
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**Volume 37, Number 4**

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**Glass Art®**

ISSN 1068-2147 is published bimonthly

by Glass Patterns Quarterly, Inc.

8300 Hidden Valley Road,

P.O. Box 69, Westport, KY 40077

**POSTMASTER:** Send address

changes to Glass Art®,

8300 Hidden Valley Road,

P.O. Box 69, Westport, KY 40077

**Telephone:** 502-222-5631

502-222-4527

**Website:** www.GlassArtMagazine.com

**E-mail:** info@GlassArtMagazine.com

**Subscriptions:** United States, one year

print and digital combo subscription \$52;

one year digital subscription \$52;

Kentucky residents

add 6% state sales tax.

Foreign (U.S. Funds): one year print

and digital combo subscription \$67;

one year print and digital

airmail combo subscription \$136.

Available Back Issue Print Copies

\$9 plus shipping.

Single Back Issue Digital Copy \$9.

All subscriptions must be paid in

U.S. dollars with an international

money order or with a check

drawn on a U.S. bank. Credit card,

debit card, or PayPal also accepted.

Periodicals Postage Paid

at Westport, KY 40077

and additional mailing offices.

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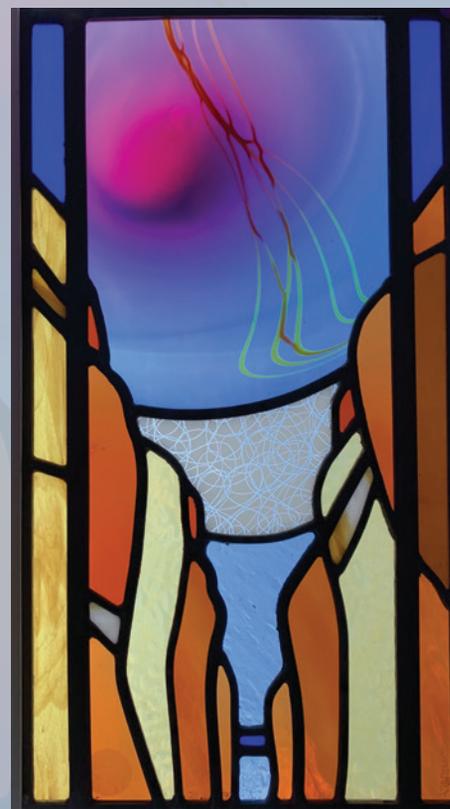
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(Above) Troy Moody, Jordan Collection AGG Auction Panel. Photo by Kathy Jordan.

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**September/October 2022**

Editorial Due June 20, 2022  
Ad Closing July 20, 2022  
Ad Materials July 30, 2022  
Issue Mails August 23, 2022

**November/December 2022**

Editorial Due August 20, 2022  
Ad Closing September 20, 2022  
Ad Materials September 30, 2022  
Issue Mails October 25, 2022





**PAUL J. STANKARD**

THIS MOMENT YEARNING  
AND THOUGHTFUL

by Dr. Julie Anne Denton

Paul J. Stankard is a man who single-handedly changed the centuries-old tradition of paperweight making forever. Not only did Stankard challenge the angle from which we view the paperweight, but he also created an inspiring, enchanting, mythical, and thoughtfully authentic artistic language. This language, which has been influenced by his love of the poetry of Walt Whitman, has never before, nor since, been matched in this genre. In fact, no other has even gotten close to the originality of Paul Stankard. Why? Because his intimate relationship with nature that he is able to translate into visual poetry takes the purest type of sincerity to develop.

The myriad museums and private collections his work adorns both nationally and internationally are a testament to this 79-year-old New Jerseyite artist's skill as a craftsman and his transcendence as a self-taught dyslexic artist. One doesn't get collected this widely unless the viewer can taste the sublime.

### In Paths Untrodden

It's important to understand a little more about the historical significance of Paul Stankard's paperweight trade. The French firm Baccarat, which is still based in the region of Lorraine, is possibly the most well-known of the French paperweight houses, although there was also Cristallerie de Saint-Louis (est. 1767), Cristallerie de Pantin (est. 1850), and Cristallerie de Clichy (est. 1837). When founded in 1764, the firm was initially called Verrerie de Renaut by request of the Bishop of Metz to Louis XV. After the French Revolution, the company was renamed Verrerie de Baccarat. Their golden years of production were between 1846 and 1855.

I had assumed that all paperweight components were flameworked in those great houses until Paul shared more about their techniques. "The designs were constructed at a torch, but thereafter they brought those flameworked components to the hot shop where they encapsulated the florals into clear glass. Much of the French paperweight production was millefiori paperweights that were completely furnace worked. They made the millefiori canes in the hot shop, sliced them up, and arranged the cane pieces in a pattern. Then they were encapsulated. Compared to what contemporary flameworkers can do, it is so far beyond what the French were able to achieve.



*(Far left) Paul J. Stankard, close-up of  
Homage to Walt Whitman: Morning Glory  
Bouquet Orb before encapsulation, 2019.  
Photo by Jeff DiMarco.*

*(Top) Paul shaping the glass before it is  
pressed into a cube.*

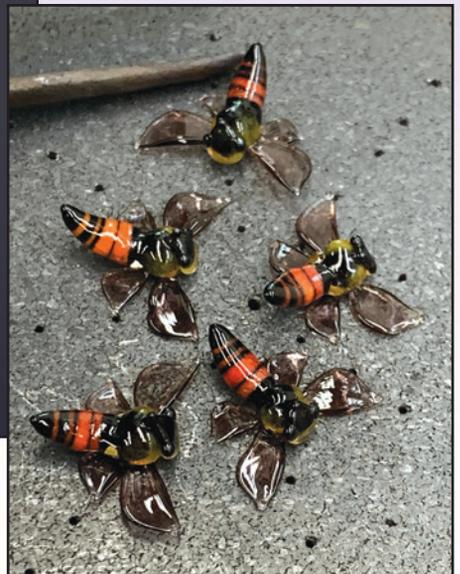
*(Bottom) Paul J. Stankard, Emily Dickinson's  
Garden Cluster, View B, 4" diameter, 2022.  
Photo by Jeff DiMarco.*



(Above) Paul J. Stankard, Walt Whitman's Garden Bouquet with Honeybees, 4" diameter, 2019. Photo by Jeff DiMarco.



(Top right) Floral cluster to be encapsulated.



(Bottom right) Honeybees preheated on a carbon plate to be picked up with molten glass.

"It is interesting how my work is mimicking furnace work. I ball up clear glass, and I am then encapsulating the colored glass in clear. The tradition of the paperweight has its roots in furnace glass. My flameworking is mirroring what previously happened in the hot shop, but by using flameworking for the entire process, I can craft more detail into my pieces."

Before Paul J. Stankard, these designs were considered the best to date. "The French flameworked floral designs were stylized, and they integrated murrine slices into the flower patterns. From my perspective, the French floral paperweights are rather basic. At the start of my career, I was trained to do fine work for the electron optical industry working with precision borosilicate tubing and tight tolerances. When I brought those scientific skills over to the creative side, I was able to fashion very detailed creations, and that constituted a fresh interpretation of nature never before seen." In essence, the knowledge Paul gained from working in scientific glass truly helped to inform his paperweights and enabled him technically to innovate. It still does to this day!

## Earth My Likeness

In terms of visuals, Stankard's palette is associated with his deep love of poetry, art, and appreciation of aesthetics. "My work is influenced by my childhood memories growing up in rural Massachusetts, things like picking flowers for my mom. I began my creative journey by encapsulating animals in paperweights. I worked on elephants and horses and birds for about six months, but when I made my first flower, friends became excited and that inspired me. First, I made a simple daisy bloom, then another daisy with a simple stem, then two blooms, and sometime later came roots on one of the little plants. The inclusion of roots was the first moment my work began to become referential as opposed to perfectly accurate. From those early stylized flower successes, I started to focus myself on botanical intelligence, and I wanted my work to celebrate the characteristics of the native flowers. It was such a challenge to make, for example, a blue-eyed grass *Sisyrinchium angustifolium* appear visually convincing or make a mountain laurel *Kalmia latifolia* look like a mountain laurel.



Paul J. Stankard, Celebrating Walt Whitman's Garden, 4" h x 2-3/4" w x 2-3/4" d, 2021.  
Photo by Jeff DiMarco.



Paul J. Stankard, Earth Cluster Orb, 4" diameter, 2020.  
Photo by Ron Farina Photography.

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Paul J. Stankard, *Walt Whitman's Garden Party 03*, 4" h x 3" w x 3" d, 2021.  
Photo by Jeff DiMarco.

"In the mid-eighties, it became less important for me to make my botanicals perfect copies of nature. I wanted the work to speak its truth on a deeper referential level while simultaneously retaining its honesty and biological credibility. Many people who observe my work today ask for the names of the flowers in my paperweights. I enjoy fabricating my own Latin names, so my romantic blossoms *Venerum flores* gain some semblance of a history, even if it is made-up.

"I think of my work as poetic. I am inspired by the grace of poetry and particularly Walt Whitman, America's leading poet. Interestingly, for forty years I have been listening to books on tape, and at a certain point I became interested in the Western Canon."

The Western Canon is the body of cultural works that includes high literature, philosophy, music, and art that are classically valued in the West. Included in this collection are also works that do not find their origins in the West but are considered classics by Western consumption. This intellectual tradition in philosophy moves from Plato to Nietzsche, and from Chaucer to Cervantes in literature.

"One of my particular favorites is *Ulysses* by James Joyce. My family heritage is Irish, and I empathize with the story that follows a day in the life of Leopold Bloom in Dublin. I can also relate to this book through my own work, because Joyce takes a single mundane day and turns it into an existential work of modern fiction. I take flowers that some may consider ordinary, and I elevate my subject to be more than its component parts.



(Above) Paul sealing the two halves of the design together in preparation for forming the cube.

(Right) Shaping the core center into a cube.



## Pioneers! O Pioneers!

Back to Paul's process and what he considers important to making great work. "It always has been, and it still is to this day, imperative for me to take risks and encourage spontaneity! To push the process! To be willing to fail! That is one of the reasons my work stands out, because I am not afraid to blow a week's work on a risk endeavoring to push the envelope of my bliss. I would rather take the risk with the very real chance of failure and execute something special than produce consistent, safe mediocrity.

"When I am developing a new design, I see an opportunity to make it more intelligent by changing the geometry of the composition. It is then that it is important to test out the theory, even if it means spoiling the piece. I also incorporate a lot of clear glass in my designs, which in a paperweight equates to negative space, and I simply love the dialogue it creates."

To date, even those who walk in the footsteps of Paul J. Stankard do not come close, because Paul's work is personal. Paul does not take shortcuts, and therefore he remains top drawer in the field. I observe that Paul has a few exceptional characteristics, including the skill in his fingers to carry out his designs and the temerity and obsessive compulsion to continue searching until his subject is exhausted. The pièce de résistance is that his work transcends the everyday floral. The paperweights of Paul J. Stankard are spiritual and magical havens that have been trapped in time and space, engaging observers in a visual communication akin to speaking with God, however one perceives that entity. "My interest in art, literature, and poetry has nurtured my artistic maturity, and the harmony I achieve with my work is a result of that."



Paul J. Stankard, Homage to Walt Whitman, Morning Glory Bouquet Orb, 6" diameter, 2019.  
Photo by Jeff DiMarco.



Paul J. Stankard, Green-Banded Bouquet Cube with Masks and Pineland Flowers plus detail photo of masks, 3-7/8" h x 2-5/8" w x 2-5/8" d, 2003. Photo by Ron Farina Photography.

Paul J. Stankard, Walt Whitman's Garden Party 03, 4" x 3", 2021. Photo by Jeff DiMarco.



## For Him I Sing

Stankard thinks of himself primarily as an artist/craftsman while fostering a deep respect for the paperweight tradition. "For ten to fifteen years, I made my paperweights from a bird's-eye perspective like they have always been made. One day I realized that if I turned the paperweight 180 degrees, it was akin to observing something backstage. I decided to create a second design for the underside." Even as a younger glassmaker, I am aware that this was, at that time, an unconventional innovation in the tradition. "It was completely new and a breakthrough for me personally. It allowed me to include more visual information in my work and also adjust the form from spherical to rectangular."

Stankard is arguably most notorious for his inclusion of root people in his paperweight forms, and I wanted to know their story. "The figures! The figures were a wonderful addition. My root people were inspired by the mandrakes illustrated in medieval herbals."

Herbals date back as far as 600 AD, but the golden age of these manuscripts is reported to be in the 16th and 17th centuries due to a revived interest in botany in Europe. "I began to play with my roots by making them anthropomorphic. The idea of camouflaged root people expanded my visual vocabulary greatly. If I created a single human, people were so curious. If there were two, they started to question, and if I created three, it was a sexual orgy." Here, Paul let out a genuinely mirthful, jolly laugh and smiled at me with a cheeky twinkle in his eye.

"The human forms were so successful for me that I actually became tired of them, and I searched for something else that would bring a human attitude into my floral designs without the use of mandrakes. This breakthrough took the form of masks. Originally, I was inspired by African masks, but my audience was reminded of death masks, and I found that very interesting. Initially my masks weren't a hit, but now they are very popular."

Paul Stankard's botanical studies put me in mind of the Upper Paleolithic cave paintings in Lascaux in France. The animals created from the imaginations of those hunter-gatherers 17,000 years ago are not perfectly accurate, and yet the mammoth is as real to me as if I saw it with my own eyes, in fact more so. That direct perceptibility is a testament to the credibility of the cave paintings, and one feels that same authenticity when apprehending the work of Paul J. Stankard. "It's not scientific. It's poetry! In my studio I feel like a monk. I come in every morning, it is silent, and when I work it is like my prayer to the divine. Transcendence is tangible when apprehending beauty."

## Song at Sunset

More recently Paul has been working on a long-awaited and striking new book. After two years of extra tweaking and editing of his text, he is rather excited about its final release in April 2022. Paul's inspiring book is called *Inspiration from the Art of Paul J. Stankard: A Window into My Studio and Soul*. Not only is this page-turning tome filled with images of Paul's stunning paperweights, but it is paired with his insightful words, written for those who seek and appreciate creative energy. To further preserve his legacy, the artist is considering taking his teaching skills online toward the end of 2022. Watch for further details on Paul's website. **G&A**

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Paul J. Stankard, Pegasus Paperweight, 1-1/8" h x 1-3/4" diameter, 1969. Created by the artist before his commitment to flowers. Photo by Ron Farina.



Paul J. Stankard  
[www.paulstankard.com](http://www.paulstankard.com)

Scientific glassblowing master Paul Stankard building a glass vacuum system for Rohm and Haas research department, 1970.

03/26/19 Tuesday 05:24 pm

<b>Control</b> Control Mode: <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Manual</span> Current Temp: <b>68 °F</b> Manual Set Point: <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 %</span> Output: <b>3.0 %</b>	<b>Process</b> 	<b>Sequence of Operations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Valve(s) Proven Closed</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Heat Requested</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Blower Energized</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Air Pressure Switch Satisfied</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Valve(s) Energized</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Ignition Transformer Energized</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Flame 1 Established</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Flame 2 Established (if used)</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Fault Detected</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: x-small;">■ Flame Quality (0-58 microamps; &gt;49 indicates good flame quality.)</p>
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Dr. Julie Anne Denton received her doctorate in the combination of sandcast and flameworked glass for artists from the National Glass Centre, UK. She has learned from and worked with the best flameworking artists in the world including Emilio Santini, Lucio Bubacco, Vittorio Costantini, Gianni Toso, Shane Fero, Loren Stump, and Sally Prasch, to name just a few. She rounded off her education with Bertil Vallien of the renowned Swedish design house Kosta Boda (est. 1742).

Julie settled in Zürich, Switzerland, in 2010. From the center of the city she runs her design firm, [www.Atelier315.ch](http://www.Atelier315.ch), and her online learning platform for sculptural flameworking skills, [www.ZurichGlassSchool.com](http://www.ZurichGlassSchool.com). She works with a small team beside her who all care deeply about quality education, creativity, and business.

Dr. Julie creates glass and bronze work that resonates beauty, workmanship, and authenticity. Her key themes are people, folklore, nature, and counterculture. She has also received worldwide recognition for her storytelling skills as an artist and her technical skills as a glassmaker.

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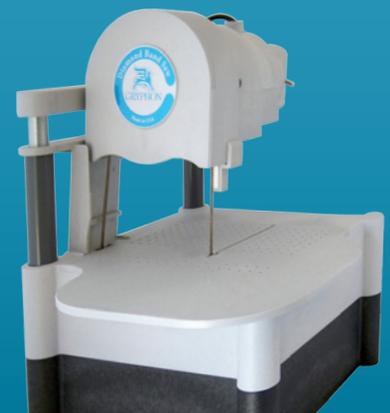
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# Fall and Winter 2022 Residencies at The Studio of The Corning Museum of Glass

**CORNING  
MUSEUM  
OF GLASS**

*by the Staff of The Corning Museum of Glass*

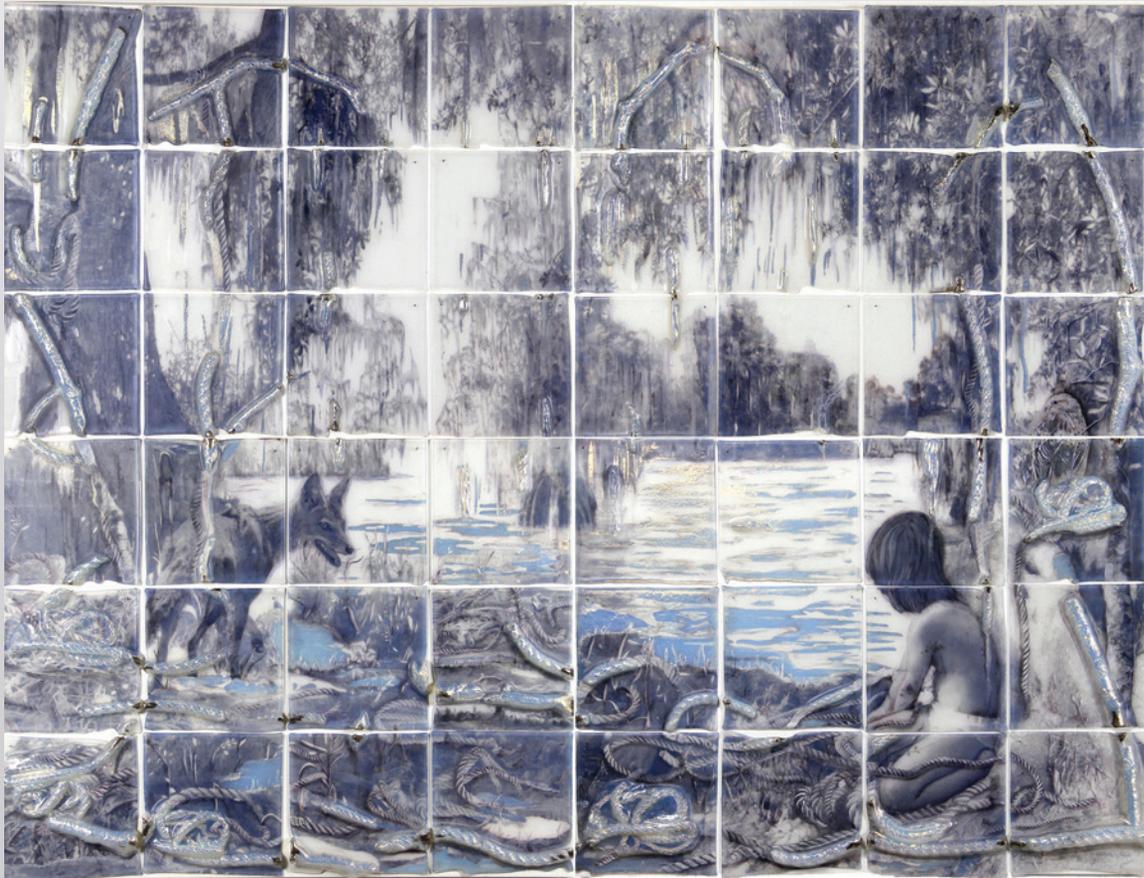
Photos Courtesy of the Artists

At the beginning of the year, thirteen artists from around the world were invited by The Studio of The Corning Museum of Glass to participate in The Studio's Artist-In-Residence program that brings artists from around the world to Corning, New York. The four remaining 2022 Residencies will begin in late September. Transportation for the artists, as well as room and board, will be arranged, all basic supplies will be provided, and The Studio will be made available whenever classes are not in session.

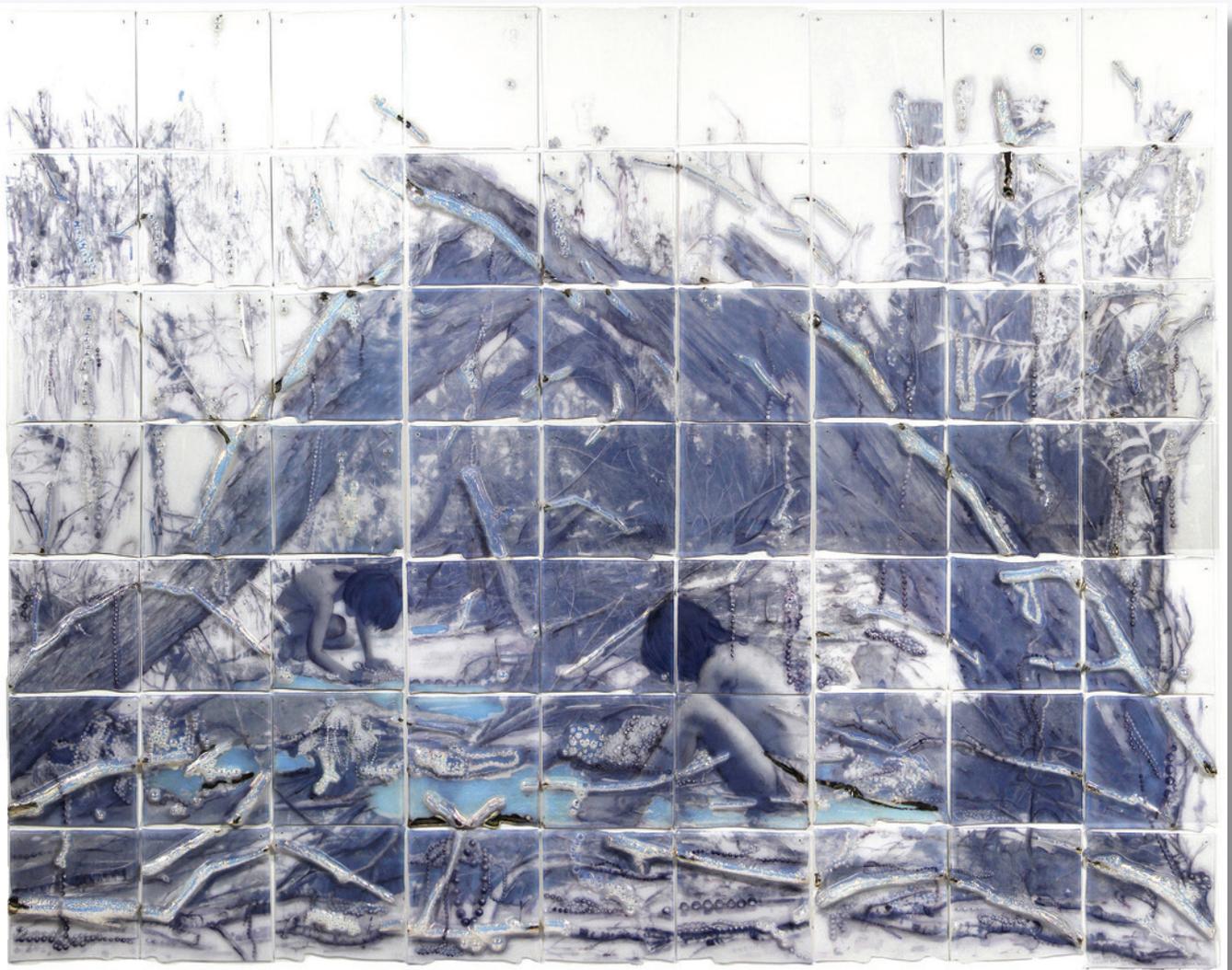
Sibylle Peretti, Austin Stern, Stine Bidstrup, and Yukiko Sugano will spend a month at The Studio exploring new directions in glass art or expanding their current bodies of work using the immense resources of the world's leading glass museum. They are invited to utilize the resources of the Museum's campus including The Studio, the extensive collections and archives of the Museum, and the Rakow Research Library. At the end their residency, the artists will give a presentation about their work during a free public event in The Studio Lecture Room.



Urban Foxes



Tchefuncte



Mississippi Banks

## Sibylle Peretti

September 26 – October 28

Sibylle Peretti was born in Germany, where the rich tradition of glassmaking influenced the direction of her artistic training and the abundant Bavarian forests inspired her choice of landscape as a predominant theme in her work. Using two-dimensional kiln-formed panels and three-dimensional lost-wax castings, Peretti composes narratives about the beautiful and poetic yet disrupted relationship between humans and the natural world. "I like to invite the viewer to journey into an unknown, undefined place of possibilities, mystery, and beauty where we find moments of clarity, solitude, and introspection."

Peretti earned her MFA in Sculpture and Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Cologne, and a master's degree in Glassmaking and Design from the State School of Glass in Zwiesel, Germany. Her work has won numerous awards, including grants from the Pollock-Krasner and Joan Mitchell Foundations. Her work is represented in the collections of the Toledo Museum of Art, The Hunter Museum of American Art, The Speed Museum, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and The Corning Museum of Glass, among others. She works and lives in both New Orleans and Cologne, Germany. During her residency, Peretti will research the history and formulation of gold ruby glass to incorporate as themes in her future work.



Snow Child III

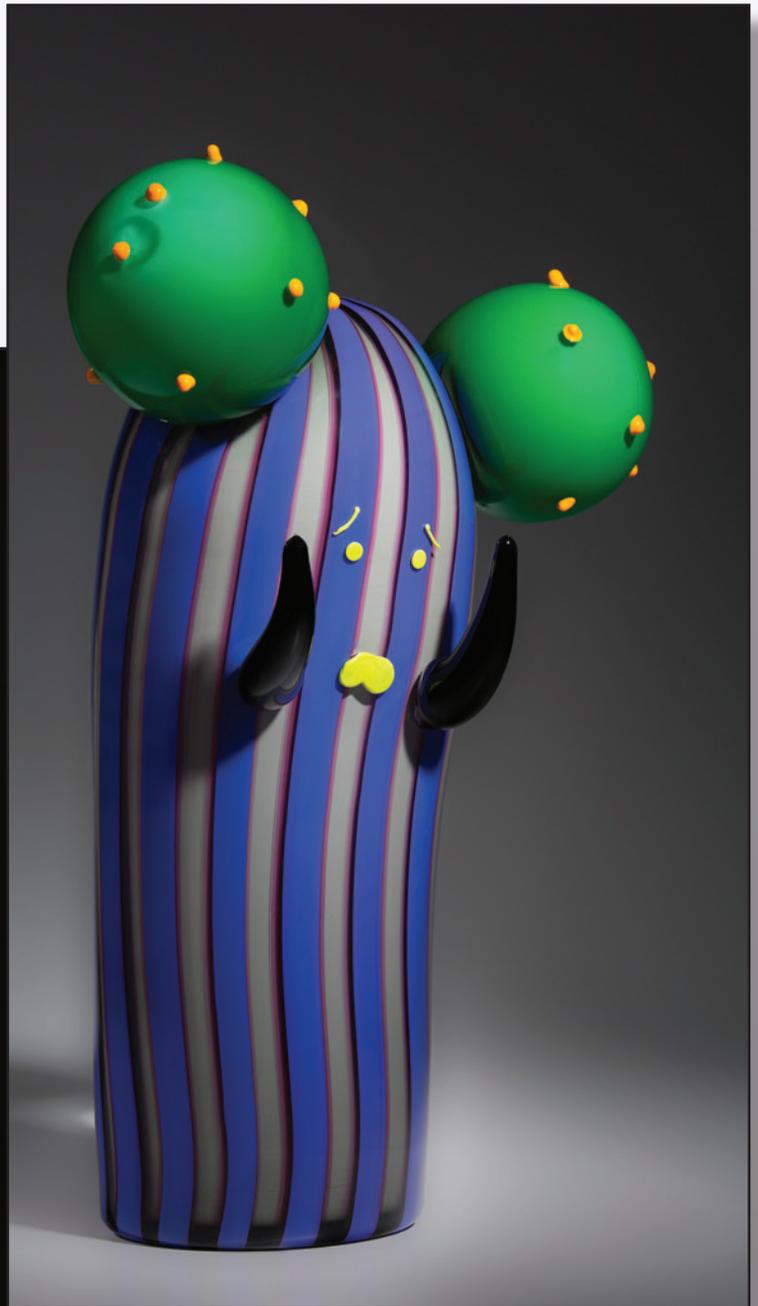
## Austin Stern

September 26 – October 28

Austin Stern's glass sculptures are seemingly innocent creatures that examine visceral emotions such as comfort, sadness, and even anxiety. Inspired by the highly saturated colors found in the toys and cartoons of his childhood, he reinterprets traditional Venetian glass techniques to explore interpersonal relationships and mental health. "The ways in which we support each other, take care of ourselves, and cope with various anxieties and fears are all concepts my work explores through a cheerful lens of brightly colored, playful creatures."



Sharing Is Caring



Worry Warts



Red Fatty



All Wound Up



Creeps

Stern started blowing glass as a high school student in Palo Alto, California. After earning a degree in glassblowing from Emporia State University in 2013, he moved to Seattle to find a place in its glass community. Since relocating to Seattle, he has worked with an array of notable glass artists, taught glassblowing workshops both nationally and internationally, and exhibited his work in Sweden, Thailand, and throughout the United States. Stern was also selected as one of the 100 artists to be included in *New Glass Now*, a global survey of contemporary glass, which opened at The Corning Museum of Glass in May 2019. During his residency, he aims to create glass sculptures with mixed media components to explore concepts of fear and superstition.

## Stine Bidstrup

October 31 – December 2

Stine Bidstrup is a Danish artist whose work explores optical phenomena and interprets ideas about utopian visions through glass sculptures, installation, and video. By using spatial and tactile experiences, she creates works that interject cultural layers of memories and events. "These sculptures pursue an aesthetic based on the complexity and diversity of the crystalline. They are about a search for ways to represent a multitude of possible viewpoints and not a single universal one."

Bidstrup graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2006 and has taught nationally and internationally since 2007 at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design, and the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has taught in several summer programs as well, including Pilchuck Glass School and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. She maintains a studio in Copenhagen, Denmark, goes to Småland, Sweden, to blow glass, and is represented by Heller Gallery in New York and Gallery FUMI in London. The artist was also selected as one of the 100 artists to be included in *New Glass Now*, a global survey of contemporary glass, which opened at The Corning Museum of Glass in May 2019. During her residency, Bidstrup will focus on explorations of glass colors by the layering of color with interchanging layers of opacity and transparency.





## Yukiko Sugano

October 31 – December 2

Japanese artist Yukiko Sugano utilizes mixed metals, flame-working techniques, and personal memories to translate the “texture of emotion” into something tangible. “I mix my memories and emotions to make works with people and other living things as motifs to express a sense of memory that cannot be controlled by reason,” said Sugano.

A resident of Hyōgo Prefecture in Japan, Sugano attended and graduated from the Notojima Glass Studio in 2012. Since that time, she has worked in multiple Japanese glass studios before joining the Kanazawa Utatsuyama Kogei Kobo in 2019. In July 2019, Sugano won the Kogei World Art Competition in Kanazawa, Japan.

During her residency, Sugano intends to expand on her expressive drawings by experimenting with a variety of new materials including fusing glass stringers to create two-dimensional works.

**GA**

Visit [www.cmog.org](http://www.cmog.org) to learn more about The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass, its various programs, and upcoming events.

Unexpected Wind Blows



Glide



Deep River



Piece of Memo



Pretending to Be Asleep

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# Creativity

## IMPLOSION AND COMPRESSION



*Implosion Crab*



*Implosion Coral Reef Marble*



*Implosion Turtle*

by *Milon Townsend*

One of the most mystical properties of this remarkable material that we use—glass—is that it becomes very nearly invisible under many circumstances. It is ideally suited to the creation of detailed inner imagery, which may be viewed through the outer surface of the object. I have always been fascinated by the idea of encasing finely made figures inside a mass of clear glass.

The two methods I'm going to describe are very different than the vacuum method that I had used before. Implosion and compression are better suited to borosilicate glass than vacuum encasement, where the inherent stiffness of the glass is such a significant obstacle to overcome. Implosion and compression are the perfect means to obtaining a colorful, highly detailed composition within a mass of clear boro. There are many different ways of accomplishing this, but these are two of my favorites.

### **Implosion**

Many years ago I had the good fortune to have Joe Peters do an internship in my studio. I always learn something from my students, sometimes something incredible, and Joe showed me how to do an implosion. In order to create an implosion, the artist blows a clear bubble and then embellishes the outside with any number of elements. These can be rendered as drawn lines using stringers composed of multiple layers of color—frit picked up from a marver,

dichroic coated glass strips melted onto the surface, murrine chips with specific images, or any combination of all of these and more. Once the external surface of the bubble is fully embellished, the artist melts all of the elements in until they are flush with the surface, coats the outside with a layer of backing color, and opens up the inner surface of the bubble. Filling this with clear glass magnifies the detail, as well as making it appear larger.

I have been a scuba diver for many years, am naturally drawn to the colorful chaos of the coral reef, and have done many coral reef implosions. However, I have discovered that blank implosions can also be created, which can then be used in a multitude of ways.

Borosilicate glass makes it easy to combine and recombine elements in many ways. Sometimes they can be used in the simple teardrop form of a pendant. Other times, I stretch and shape them into a sea turtle or manta ray or a blue crab with the ocean inside its shell. When I have the gumption and focus, I can incorporate six implosions at a time into a massive marble with different images in each side of the sphere. The only real limit to using them is your own imagination.



*Compression Blue Floral Marble (detail)*



*Compression Blue Floral Marble*

*Compression White Floral Marble on outside*



*Compression White Floral Marble (detail)*

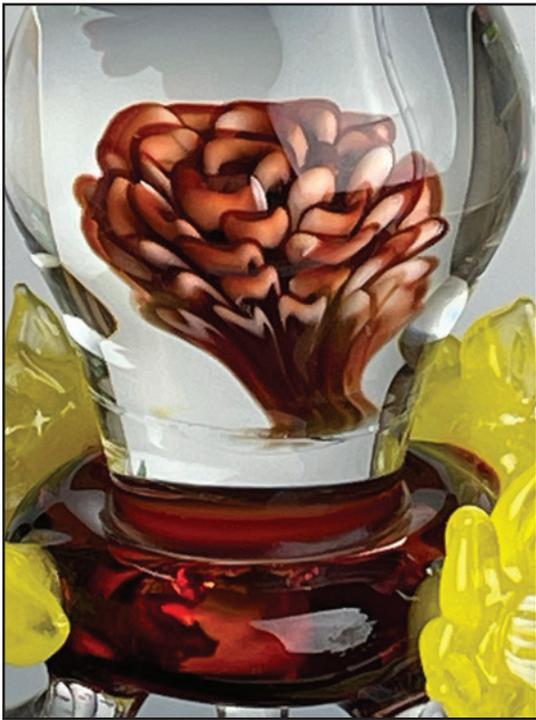
## **Compression**

This technique is quite different than implosion, although the uninformed viewer could look at an implosion and a compression piece and think that they were made in the same way. Instead of blowing and embellishing a little bubble and going through all the steps I described above, you start by pressing a wide disc on the end of a pretty big rod of clear glass.

The design is drawn in two dimensions on the bottom surface of the flat disc. Heating the disc and using the force of gravity and pressure, you then shrink down the design drawn in two dimensions until it begins to rise up inside the mass of clear glass. Very similar to kneading dough for dinner rolls, you are heating the outer layer of glass so that it falls down around the center, allowing the center to elevate inside the mass. This process converts the disc into a sphere and changes the two-dimensional drawing into a three-dimensional object. It is as remarkable as it sounds, and there are artists, such as John Kobuki, who have made this the base and foundation of their entire career in glass art.

I enjoy making the occasional little floral piece with compression, just for the fun of it. It's a simple matter to make these into pendants and incorporate a murrine cane of appropriate design—butterflies with flowers, fish with a coral reef—to enrich and make the piece more interesting. I like the idea of making six serious components, then going all out to combine them into a marble with multiple panels. I often use frit backing to separate them from one another in the marble, which gives them each their own little space to inhabit.

You're always a little bit freaked out to go ahead and risk all the time and effort you put into making the elements. The finished piece isn't always perfect, but I personally think it's worth it to try and a healthy thing to challenge yourself beyond what might be reasonable. You just might end up with some remarkable work. That surely won't happen if you don't at least give it a go, right?



Compression  
Hummingbird Feeder  
(detail)



Compression Small  
Flower on Leaf



Compression Hummingbird Feeder

## Finding New Ideas in Everyday Places

I was making some cute little hummingbird feeders and putting little yellow flowers outside in much the same way that the feeders are designed in real life. It came very naturally to mind that it would work to use a flower built into the central mass of the feeder, using compression to make the flower. We've had real success with this design idea, as it enriches the concept by providing an additional level of detail.

A customer looked at one of those hummingbird feeders and mentioned that the flower inside reminded her of a brain. She was pretty much joking, but I lit right up. I immediately made a brain using the compression method, as the design of a brain is perfectly suited for the technique. I had an idea of what I was going to do with it but that didn't work, so I used an extra brain I had lying around the work area. It had, in fact, cracked due to a bubble I'd allowed into the piece while making it. I broke it apart along the base of the brain and used it to build a plinth on which I put a little version of Rodin's *The Thinker*, sitting on his brain.



On the Cover of the Summer 2022 issue of The Flow®, Elena Hernburg.

Above, Paula Bonnafant.

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*Compression Thinker with brain*

I received lots of interesting and amusing commentary from the patrons who've seen it. Now the brain image is in the back of my mind, waiting for a real occasion for it to be used. I've also found that by making a nicely detailed and complex implosion composition and adding a large mass of clear glass to the top of it, I was able to make a pretty substantial and interesting paperweight.

Using implosion and compression has provided a great way of making fairly small, very detailed imagery with which to form a pendant, paperweight, or element that may be added to a larger sculpture. Implosion and compression give the artist a way of drawing the eye in to a smaller and smaller level of detail, adding something like a fractal's ever dividing and multiplying field of vision and form. Gotta thank Joe for that. I've added quite a few of my own twists and turns, and I greatly enjoy working with the possibilities that these techniques offer.

**G&A**



*Milon Townsend is a self-taught artist with over 45 years of experience in the field of glass artwork and education. He is known for his torch and kiln worked sculpture featuring the human form. Visit [www.intuitiveglass.com](http://www.intuitiveglass.com) or Google "Milon Townsend images" to view more of his work and go to [thebluemoonpress.com](http://thebluemoonpress.com) for his educational materials. You can also e-mail [milontownsend@gmail.com](mailto:milontownsend@gmail.com). The sequence presented here is excerpted from Milon's upcoming book on Creativity.*

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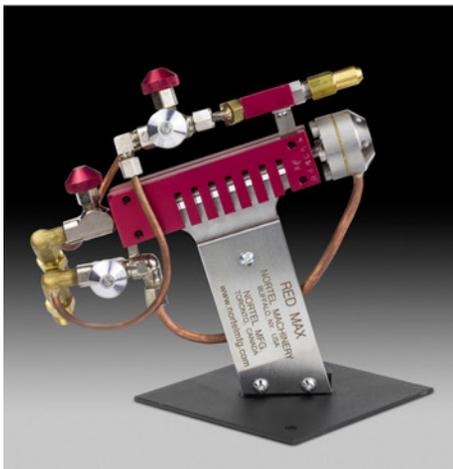
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## CGS and the Craft Centre and Design Gallery Celebrating the Joy of Glass in Leeds



Verity Pulford, Algae Bowls. Photo by Stephen Heaton.

by Pam Reekie

The Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) is working in partnership with the Craft Centre and Design Gallery in Leeds, UK, to present *The Joy of Glass*, a joint exhibition of contemporary glass. This is a double celebration for the two organizations, with the CGS marking its 25-year anniversary and the Craft Centre and Design Gallery reaching 40 years in 2022.

### Supporting New and Established Artists

Two exhibitions under the banner *The Joy of Glass* will be presented in a beautiful Victorian building located close to Leeds City Centre. CGS approached the Craft Centre and Design Gallery in Leeds for this collaboration because of its reputation for supporting both new and established artists and for bringing together the best of handmade contemporary art and crafts.

The exhibition includes work from a total of 25 artists that will be shown in two parts. Part One ran from April 23 through June 4, 2022, with Part Two beginning on June 11 and continuing through July 23, 2022. The selected artists in Part One included: Karen Beggs, Gina Clarke, Rachel Elliott, Magda Gay, Hannah Gibson, Nanu Hodson, Claire Lake, Brett Manley, Susan Purser Hope, Morag Reekie, Rebecca Rowland-Chandler, Sue Sinclair, and Kathryn Webley.

The work of artists Effie Burns, Kate Jones/Stephen Gillies, Steven Graham, Catherine Mahe, Caroline Moraes, Katherine Park, Verity Pulford, Karen Redmayne, David Reekie, Penny Riley-Smith, Elizabeth Sinkova, and Samantha Yates will be displayed in Part Two of the exhibition.

### Celebrating Variety and Imagination

Both organizations are pleased to be able to showcase the work of so many outstanding glass artists. CGS Chair, Susan Purser Hope, commented, "It is extremely exciting to have the opportunity to exhibit in such an impressive location as part of our celebratory tour around Great Britain. It was exciting viewing the work of a range of artists demonstrating such variety and imagination. We are all really looking forward to the rest of 2022, which is continuing our dazzling year for contemporary glass!"

Florence Hoy, Director of the Craft Centre and Design Gallery, Leeds shared, "As it's a very special anniversary for both of us this year and it's the International Year of Glass, we jumped at the chance for this fantastic opportunity to bring some outstanding glass to the city of Leeds and to give it the spotlight it so rightly deserves."

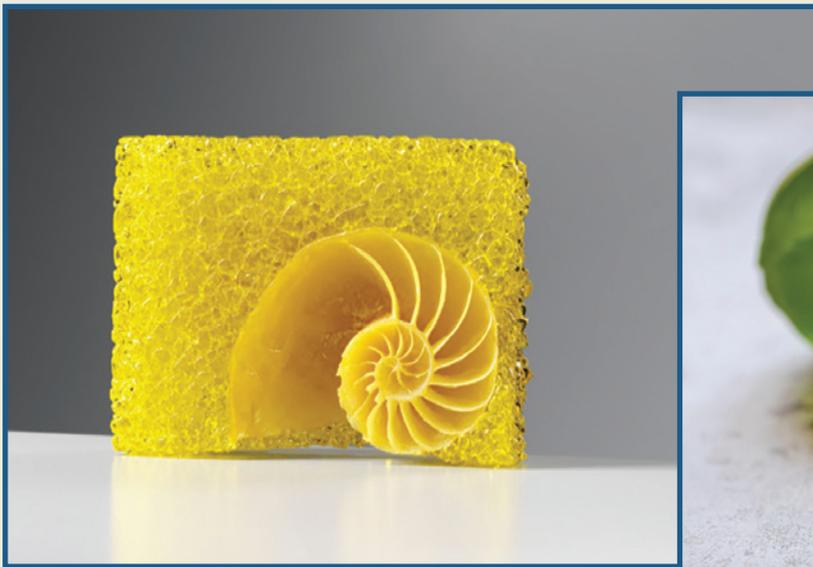
G&A



Steven Graham, Bee-Golden Weave. Photo by the artist.



David Reekie, Venus Off Balance III. Photo by the artist.



Rachel Elliott, Seclusion. Photo by Shannon Tofts.



Effie Burns, Lemon Ceri Oakes. Photo by the artist.

For a virtual tour of Part One of the Leeds exhibition, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnqBZwolZeQ&t=6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnqBZwolZeQ&t=6s).  
More on the artists and photos of their work can be found at [www.craftcentreleeds.co.uk/contemporaryglasssocietysowcasethejoyofglass](http://www.craftcentreleeds.co.uk/contemporaryglasssocietysowcasethejoyofglass).

# *Flameworking Artists in Murano*

## Discovering Ways to Survive the European Gas Crisis

by Sara Sally LaGrand

The town of Murano, Italy, has been in the news lately. Almost every news source from the BBC to NPR has covered the growing energy crisis in Europe and specifically its effect on glass production on the island of Murano, the site of glass production for eight centuries.

Murano has seen hard times before. After Napoleon conquered the Venetian Lagoon in 1797 and imposed taxes and tariffs on glass produced there, many glassmakers ceased production, thus losing many techniques to history and resulting in a shift to beadmaking, a practice that requires less energy consumption. It looks as if that spirit of survival will be required again soon.

### **Decreasing Artists and Rising Prices**

“The lampworkers will be okay,” says Glass Master Davide Fuin of Murano. “The island will turn into an island of beadmakers.” I spoke with Fuin and his American wife Amy West recently at a famous Kansas City haunt, The Classic Cup. Amy is from the Kansas City area, although Murano has been her home for the last 17 years. After the gas prices soared to untenable heights recently, Fuin decided to shut down his furnace and go on an American tour. He posted his idea in a private Facebook group called Glassies, and the invitations and requests poured in.



Maestro Davide Fuin at the furnace.  
Photo by Amy West of Amy West Design Studios.



Maestro Davide Fuin,  
Pauly Model Candlesticks, 1930s design.  
Photo by Amy West of Amy West Design Studios.



Fuin, who is indeed a card-carrying glass master, popped out his phone and showed me a screenshot of a kind of “report card” that shows the factories where he has worked and how he moved from the status of *servente* to *maestro* as the years progressed. “I am not an artist,” he says. “I am a glass master.” That is a title you cannot award to yourself independently. It must be bestowed.

Davide worked for a handful of factories for many years before deciding that he wanted to work for himself, a decision he does not regret even in the face of current difficulties. The problem now is that there is no organized group to advocate for the needs of the glassworkers to negotiate the gas prices. That is partially because all of the artists are doing their own thing and partly because the interest in creating glass for a living has waned over the centuries. “More than 50 years ago, we had over 15,000 people working glass in the area,” he laughs. “Now we have four cats,” he says, quoting a local expression. “There is no one to pass down our techniques to,” he laments, noting a recent apprenticeship that just did not work out. The decrease in workers is not a new problem, but the soaring gas prices are compounding that problem.

## Challenges Facing the Murano Glass Industry

One question on everyone’s mind is whether the problem of increasing gas prices has anything to do with the current war happening in Ukraine. Lucia Santini, artist and lifelong resident of Murano, is famous for her enamel paintings on glass. She shared her belief that “the price increase is due, in part, to the dependence of the ever-growing demand for natural gas from China and India, as they have exceeded all requests. That has caused fixed prices on the stock exchange to rise.” However, the war is making things worse.

“Russia is a source of gas,” says Fuin. Some sources site that 40 percent to 70 percent is supplied by Russia. The added problem of having no organized group to voice the artisans’ and glass factories’ concerns is that Murano does not have a renewable source like wind, solar, or even nuclear power. “Environmental groups are afraid to drill in the Adriatic Sea,” says Fuin. “There is also no nuclear power here, and we are dependent on other sources, not only from Russia but other places like Tunisia.”



*Marianna Oliboni and Chiara Lee Taiarol working together at the El Cocal all female frameworking studio. Photo by Stefano Giulio Pavesi.*



*Blown glass vessels created by El Cocal Studio. Photo by Stefano Giulio Pavesi.*

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*Mauro Vianello  
creating a flameworked  
octopus sculpture.  
Photo by  
Michael Zennaro.*

*Mauro Vianello, flameworked octopus sculpture.  
Photo by the artist.*

According to Amy West, “Many places in Italy use other energy sources, but not on a grand scale. On Murano and Venice, these types of alternative energy are not an option. We are not allowed to install other energy bases.” Fuin added the fact that they are “green,” but that reality also comes at a cost, literally and figuratively. The cost is that when a crisis hits, there is no plan B, which means that there is no way to turn the industry on a dime and pursue success in a new direction.

## Searching for Solutions

Fuin has no answers for solving the crisis, but shutting down his own furnace and coming to America is a creative solution. “I am renting the studios, traveling around to do demos and teach,” he says. Fuin is teaching at Third Degree in Saint Louis, Missouri, and a private studio in Boston, Massachusetts, and demoing at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia. He is also working with the studio owned by Sam Stang in Augusta, Missouri, and another in Richmond, Virginia. “But the gypsy life is not for me,” he says, and he planned to return to Murano in mid-May 2022, even if the future is very uncertain. Right around September 2021, the region of Veneto was granted three million dollars to divide among all of the industries in the Veneto region, not only glass furnaces. However, the grant quickly ran out in February. It was a temporary solution, not a permanent one.

*Lucia Santini examining one of her recent enamel painted vases.*  
Photo by Gianluigi Bertola.



*Lucia Santini showing a fish done in collaboration with Mauro Vianello.*  
Photo by Gianluigi Bertola.



Chiara Lee Taiarol and Marianna Oliboni, co-owners of El Cocal, a new all-female hot shop, have also found themselves in the news. That is partly because of the crisis but also because of the fact that they are the sole female-only furnace operating on Murano. “The money from Veneto is over now, and there is different help for the future,” says Chiara. “We are searching for a new solution in order to bring some innovations to Murano with the hope that this art/craft will not end soon.

“The gas prices rose 40 percent more from October 2021, then became 400 percent more, and now 800 percent more. There was no way for us to keep going. Everyone was hoping the price would return to normal in March 2022, but now there is the war. We need to find a better solution.” In the meantime, Chiara and her partner have been invited to teach elsewhere in Europe, an idea that they are considering, since they were forced to shut down their own furnace as well.

## Holding On to Hope

Fuin says there are still furnaces operating in Murano, especially the ones owned by multinational and international conglomerates who own other businesses and can keep operating despite the price spikes. Both he and Santini cite that orders and requests for product have improved since Covid-19 shut the world down. With the increase in gas prices, however, the cost to produce the products will increase as well. They feel that the increase in price may scare buyers away.

Flameworker Mauro Vianello echoed Fuin and Santini. “Energy prices have increased a lot. I am lucky because I don’t buy oxygen for production. Oxygen and transport costs have doubled. Producing a glass object in Italy costs a lot! Not many lampworkers are able to produce oxygen due to a lack of space or the high initial cost of the machinery needed for the production and storage of oxygen, so the purchase of oxygen in tanks is very common. The cost of electricity has also increased, so even producing gas costs more but is less than buying it and having the transport costs.”

So what is the solution? Honestly, no one really knows. If necessity is the mother of invention, a mother is needed right now. Glass artists are scrambling to create the next step while hoping that time will correct this current stumbling block. If nothing else, the artisans and glass factory workers are tenacious. You have to count on them finding a way to continue. After all, they survived Napoleon.

G&A

*Sara Sally LaGrand, award-winning artist and author, has had the great fortune to study glassmaking with many gifted teachers, both in America and Italy. She holds a BA in Glass Formation from Park University, Parkville, Missouri. Honors include awards from Art Westport, State of the Arts, The Bead Museum of Washington, D.C., Fine Line Gallery, Images Art Gallery, and the Kansas City Artists Coalition.*

*LaGrand has taught flameworking all over the world and has work published in many books and magazines. Her art can also be found in international public and private collections. Visit [www.sarasallylagrand.com](http://www.sarasallylagrand.com) to find out more about the artist.*



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## The American Glass Guild Expanding the Glass Community



Patrice Schelkun, AGN Exhibit Panel

by Kathy Jordan, AGG President

There is still time to join the American Glass Guild (AGG) and network with the glass art community during our 2022 Summer Conference, July 14–17, at The Corning Museum of Glass (CMoG). The museum is a nonprofit educational institute that preserves and expands the world's understanding of glass. Visitors can explore 45,000 objects representing 35 centuries of glass art and history, a floor dedicated to glass science and innovation, a Contemporary Art + Design Wing, and the largest hot glass demonstration space in the world.

### Live In-Person Presentations

If traveling to the conference is not in the cards, don't worry. We want to make our conference experience available to a larger glass audience. With help from CMoG, the AGG is planning an amazing day of presentations and panels on Friday, July 15! Corning Museum's Auditorium is a multiuse facility with state-of-the-art sound, lighting systems, and camera crews. We will capture the entire day of activities and make them available through our website with all proceeds going to the James C. Whitney Scholarship Fund of the American Glass Guild. Since its inception, the JCW Scholarship has awarded \$158,000 toward glass education in the United States and abroad.



Don Burt, Crane Collection auction panel



Kathy Barnard, AGN Exhibit Panel



Sylvia Nicolas, Fode Collection auction panel

Our Retrospective Exhibition is a tribute to Mary Clerkin-Higgins, who was the founder and past president of AGG, and a renowned conservator of stained glass. The exhibition will feature many panels from prior *American Glass Now* juried exhibits and auctions and will be on display in the lobby of the museum throughout the event. Saturday's activities and presentations will unfold at the Radisson Hotel. The conference crescendo on Saturday evening will be our annual Banquet and Live Auction. Sunday morning, we will enjoy a breakfast together and present a tribute to our Senior Advisors.

### Expanding the Glass Community

It is exciting to know that we can offer the AGG Conference experience to a much larger glass community. This is a very special conference for so many reasons. We are emerging from a two-year pandemic to celebrate the International Year of Glass. The AGG will be hosting a prestigious list of glass luminaries, leaders, and scholars who hold doctoral degrees and are referenced in the *Who's Who in the World*. These individuals, who have shaped the course of glass art and research, will be teaching our future glass artists and scientists. We have invited historians and authors, as well as recipients of Getty and Guggenheim Grants, National Endowments, Fellowships, and Art & Film Festival awards. Their works are owned by museums, installed in public spaces, and are part of private collections. Many are traveling a great distance and bring extraordinary talent, elite resumes, and international recognition, and will humbly talk, teach, and share their passion for glass.

The underpinning vision for the AGG conference will be the celebration of an historic year in glass. The United Nations (UN) has declared International Years since 1959 to highlight industries, concepts, or ideals that promote its objectives. This year marks the first time that the UN has recognized a material with the International Year designation. We join many around the world in showcasing its artistic, economic, and cultural impact. From highly technical to purely aesthetic, glass is a medium that is defined by opposing terms—hot and cold, liquid and solid, strong and fragile, transparent and opaque. No other material so uniquely brings together art, beauty, and culture with function and engineering. This wonderful material continues to inspire emerging artists and scientists to dedicate their lives to working with glass.

A long overdue reunion of our membership and the exciting prospect of meeting and networking with new friends within this profession is finally happening at The Corning Museum of Glass. Please join us in-person and learn more about its makers, teachers, conservators, and curators, along with the vast history and contribution that glass has made and will make for generations to come.

G&A

Visit [www.americanglassguild.org](http://www.americanglassguild.org) for more details on the numerous presentations, plus lots more information on the full program. It is sure to be a feast for glass artists and enthusiasts.

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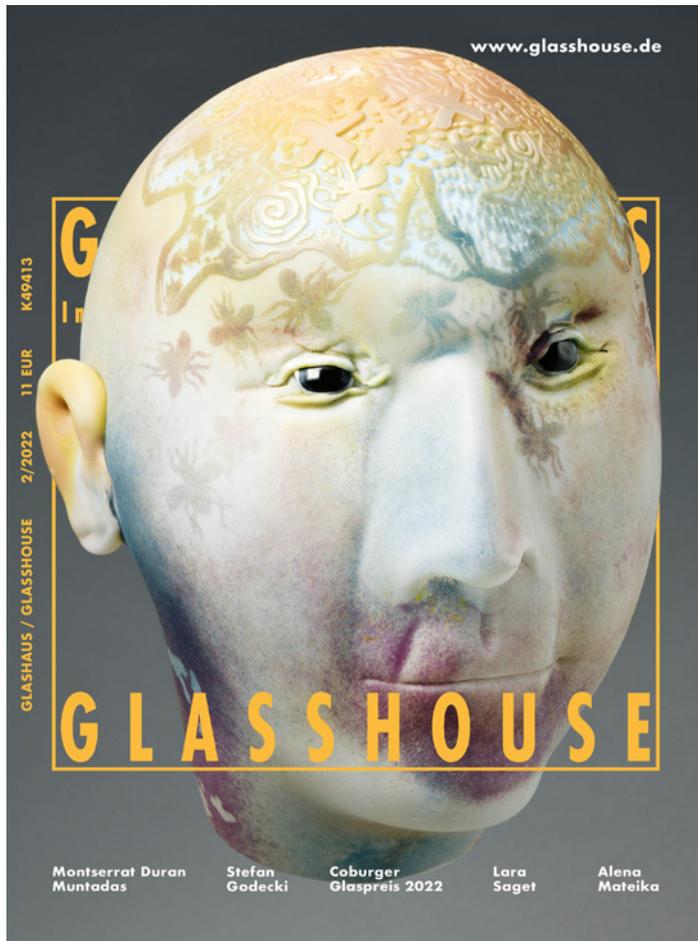


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## Upcoming Conference Highlights

### July 13–14 Workshops

- Stained Glass Painting with Debora Coombs
- Stained Glass Painting with Lyn Durham & Steven Cowan
- Stained Glass Painting with Indre McCraw & Jon Erickson
- Design Circuit with Tim Carey, Debora Coombs, & Petri Anderson
- Iron Oxide Image Transfers in Fused Glass with Troy Moody
- Photo Imaging on Stained Glass with Dan Maher
- Glass Repairs for Conservation with Amy Valuck
- Condition Assessments for Conservation with Roberto Rosa

### July 14 Thursday Evening @ the Radisson Hotel

- Welcome Cocktail Reception/Cash Bar/Hors d'oeuvres
- Pizza and a Movie: *Holy Frit* (Meet Tim Carey & Justin Monroe)
- **Silent Auction Opens!**

### July 15 - Friday @ CMOG

- Kathy Jordan: Rose Window – A Dichotomy of Two Painting Approaches
- Dr. David Pye: Glass Art/Glass Science – Cross Talk!
- Dr. Manoj Chaudhary: Indispensable Material for Sustainable Development
- Co-Keynote – Narcissus Quagliata: A New Language for Glass
- Co-Keynote – Thomas Denny: New Windows in Ancient Buildings

Lunch included

- Helen Whittaker: The Stevens Competition by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers
- Judith Schaechter: How to Stay Relevant in These Weird Times
- Panel: Brush with the Best Q&A with the Top Glass Painters
- Joseph Barnes Award Presentation
- The Mary Higgins Retrospective Exhibit at CMOG

### @ the Radisson

- Evening Cocktail Reception – Hors d'oeuvres/Cash Bar
- Silent Auction & Armonica Music with Dennis James

### July 16 Saturday @ the Radisson

- Peter Swanson: Windows of Rowan LeCompte/A Never Before Seen Kiosk: Unparalleled Detail
- Laura Buchner: Faceted Glass, Future Conservation for a Modern Material
- Sofia Villamarin – My Quest for Glass Education & Training Around the Globe
- John Reyntiens – The Reyntiens So Far
- Josh Probert: The Visual Rhetoric of Romantic Religion in Tiffany Landscape Windows
- AGG Business Meeting/Lunch/Richmond 2023!!
- Art Femenella, Brianne Van Vorst, Roberto Rosa, & Drew Anderson: Trinity Wall Street, Collaboration/Conservation/Competency
- Tim Carey: Workshops in the Age of Covid
- Panel: Glass Art Education Across the Domain
- Dinner Banquet/Cash Bar/Live Music/Live Auction

### July 17 – Sunday @the Radisson

- Farewell Continental Breakfast

30

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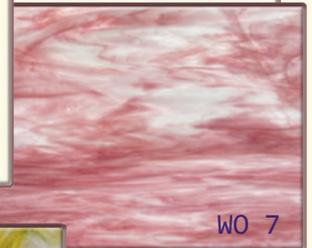
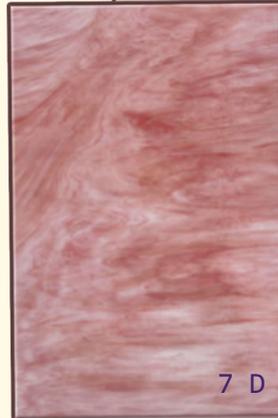
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# CONNIE VETTER-JOHNSON SHARDS OF CREATION



Connie Vetter-Johnson, Gabriel, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 31" x 24", 2017. Photo by Diana Kiester.

by Joe Samuelson III

With a rich history spanning ancient cultures around the globe, mosaic art is among the oldest art forms. While no inhabited continent is without mosaic art history in some form, the oldest mosaics found in Mesopotamia date back nearly 4,000 years and are composed of stones, shells, and ivory. The art form flourished in Greek, Roman, African, and South American cultures with an explosion of creations that accompanied the spread of the major monotheisms of the world.

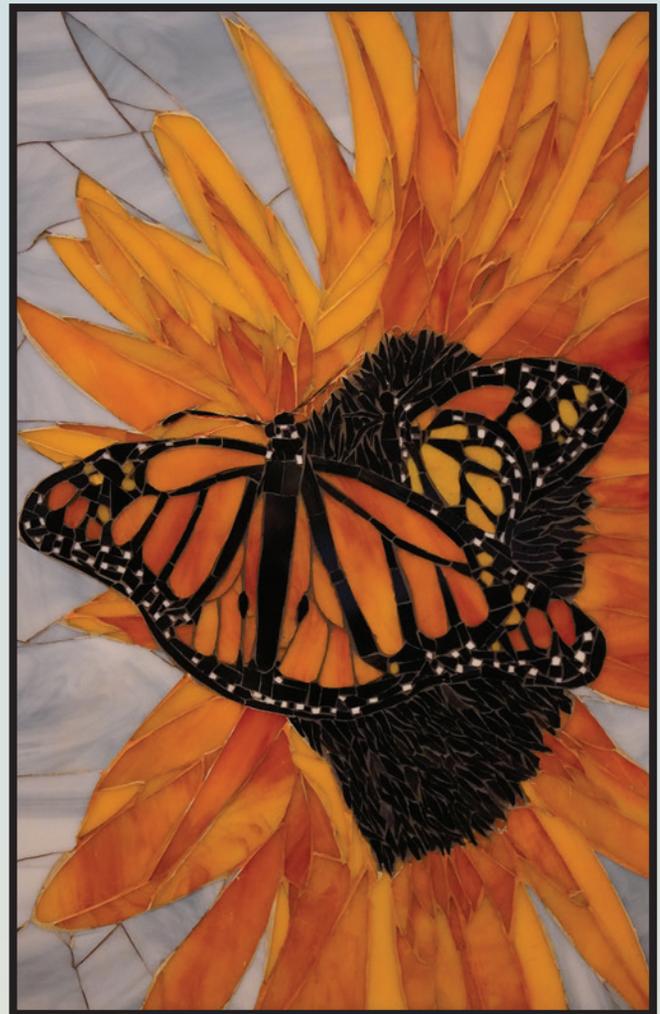
Contemporary artists have taken the art form to new levels of intricacy and awe as they bring an evolution to the art. Connie Vetter-Johnson is among those who have abandoned the traditional style of using small squares stacked neatly together to create an image. Instead, in her work thousands of glass shards, each uniquely shaped, flow almost seamlessly to create photorealistic portraits.

## My House the Canvas

When Connie and her beloved husband Gus bought their home in northern California more than two decades ago, they chose a fixer-upper—a fixer-upper that needed everything from floors to walls to ceilings and all the bits in between. Because of their tight budget, Gus would load up on a hoard of materials from the local recycling depot so they could build with whatever they found.

While Gus was swinging hammers to nails, Connie found a more aesthetic use for the hammer—smashing old tiles. An artist her whole life, she'd use whatever colors they had to create mosaic imagery in every nook and cranny that asked for it. "I started doing mosaic tile work murals on the walls, countertops, and floors with total freedom. There were no worries about screwing up, because I couldn't make it any worse than it already was. My hammer and I would make fish and seaweed or bonsai trees just thinking, 'Hey I can make things look kind of cool with this stuff.' It was a great canvas to actually figure it all out. It wound up planting the seed of something so beautiful for me that I would have never expected."

*Connie Vetter-Johnson, Sumatran Tiger, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 20" x 13", 2021. Photo by Diana Kiester.*



*Connie Vetter-Johnson, Monarchs, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 20" x 13", 2021. Photo by Diana Kiester.*

## Translating Tile to Glass

When tragedy struck the Vetter-Johnson family and Gus passed way too soon, Connie made the difficult decision to migrate her family north to be closer to her parents in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, Canada. Though a devastating time, Connie found solace in the rediscovery of her father's stained glass workshop.

"I probably never would have gotten started if it hadn't been for my dad getting involved in stained glass. I was very fortunate, because he had quite an inventory. I thought, 'This is kind of cool. I wonder if I could do with glass what I've been doing with tile,' so I tried. The first piece I did was a Mother's Day present for my mom. I was blown away at how much more detail I could get with glass than tile. I just fell in love with it, and I haven't stopped since."

Many have commented on the patience it must take to work in such intricate detail, but according to the artist, it's not patience. She's simply engrossed in what she does. "When I'm working, time has a completely different meaning. Three hours feels like 20 minutes, because it's just so gratifying and I love doing it. I had to put a clock radio in my workshop that goes off every hour, because I spend so much time in there not drinking, not eating, not getting up and stretching. I'd be so worn out and sore by the end of it."

## From Gifting to Galleries

Even in the beginning, just like now, Vetter-Johnson's best works are the result of a connection to the subject. She created multiple pieces for another art close to her heart, the martial art of Taekwondo. The unassuming mother of three is also a fourth-degree black belt. On her journey to the fourth degree, she saw many achieve the coveted black belt status. For each level, she'd create custom plaques in Korean Hangul script of the attributes each predecessor most resembled.

"A lot of black belts got a plaque with one of the tenets they teach in Taekwondo, whether it was courtesy or integrity or perseverance. I did that until I got my black belt. At that point, the instructor said, 'Okay, that's it. You're not doing any more of these for free.' I agreed because then it was a different dynamic. I did it as a thank-you to those who had gone before me and had helped me on my journey."

Outside of the Taekwondo Dojang, all of the early experiments with the tiny, shiny glass bits were gifted. "I was giving away my very elementary pieces. Then, little by little, they got better to the point where somebody said, 'You need to stop giving this stuff away. You need to start charging for these.'"

It didn't take long for a local Okanagan gallery to offer space where she could show her work. *Elvis Presley*, her largest piece up to that point, sold to a collector for thousands of dollars. The buyer later told Connie that he would have paid double. Then another smaller piece sold for even more. "I was, like, 'Oh my gosh, this is a whole different ball game now!'"

## Three Tools and a Style All Her Own

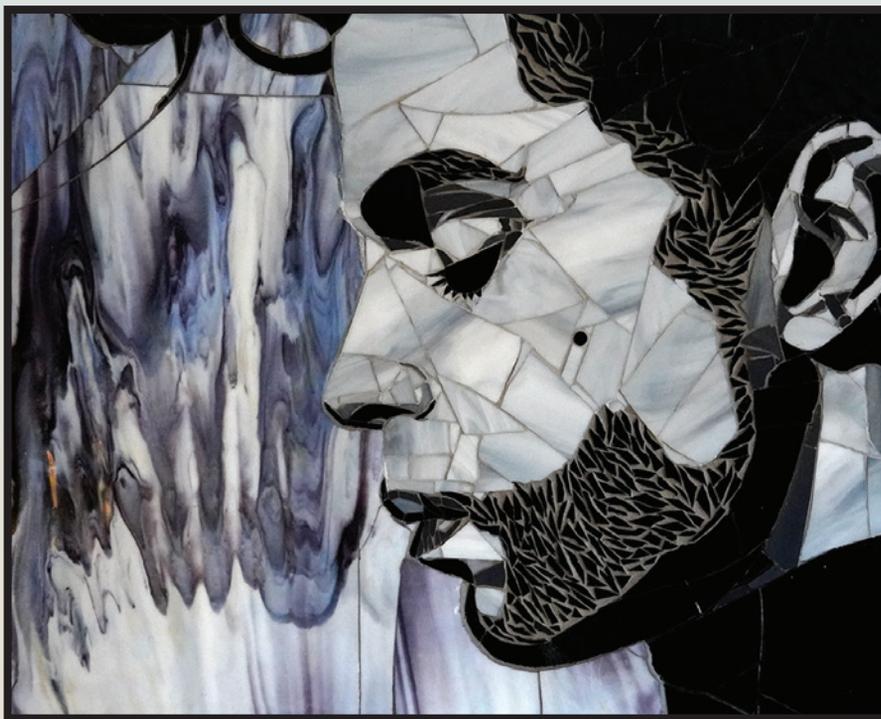
A fellow glass artist would look at Vetter-Johnson's work and likely assume that each piece was carefully crafted and ground down to fit its custom spot, but Connie doesn't have time for all of that. "I use a scoring tool, running pliers, and my nippers. Ninety-nine percent of my work is done with that. I've refined my cutting skills through repetition, trial, and error. It's not traditional mosaic like what's been around for centuries. I don't cut the little squares and put them all together. To me that just didn't feel as organic. It's like doing a puzzle, only you get to cut your own pieces."

Connie projects the image onto the substrate to ensure that the scale is on point across the piece, but from there it's all about the glass and her ability to figure out the flow of color tones. "I have much more freeform. Plus, I do try to incorporate the beauty of the glass. Stained glass in itself is beautiful with different color variations in one piece. I try to use those elements within the design."

The artist points out her *Golden Gate Bridge* piece with its large sections of gray and white glass that look like windswept clouds behind a stark black bridge. Her portrait of Prince uses stained glass that she found with perfect waves of "purple rain" behind the grayscale, picture-like portrait of the music legend. "I'm always looking for that variety of tones within the glass, especially with my portraits. I want to try to get as much gradation as I can to make it look as realistic as I can."



Connie Vetter-Johnson, *The Gloved One*, hand cut stained glass mosaic with mirror, 12"x 11", 2018. Photo by Diana Kiester.



Connie Vetter-Johnson, *Purple Rain*, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 21"x 17", 2016. Photo by Diana Kiester.

## Portraits Painted with a Thousand Pieces

Realism is always the goal for Connie. Whether a commission or a subject of her choosing, she seeks images that speak to her inner self more than anything. "When I see an image that has that emotion, I'm so drawn to that. I love doing the musicians, because there's so much great material out there that shows emotion. I want to be able to capture that feeling in glass, even with animals like the tiger that I did. As soon as I saw that image, I thought the tiger looked like he was saying, 'I'm dying. My species is going away. I don't know what I can do. I'm stuck here in a zoo.'"

Some of the strongest connections to her work are the result of Connie featuring her family. Her first portrait was of her daughter, to which she received the praise, "You made me look like a superhero, Mom!" Another dose of that familial feel comes every time Connie makes a monarch butterfly, since they inevitably evoke the memory of the butterfly release at her mother's funeral. "They've been one of my hottest commission items. People love the butterflies. I had a great mosaic of two butterflies on a sunflower. Those speak to me."

The family piece that the artist is proudest of is a black-and-white rendering of her children's hands raised in the air. The open hand, a fist, and a peace symbol on a dark background are so realistic that people who know her family can tell which hand is whose. "I did that piece in 2020. I didn't want to be political with it or anything. It just incorporates all the emotions that were happening at that time. I called it *2020*, but a friend of mine suggested calling it, *Open to the Power of Peace*, and I thought that was perfect. It hangs in my office. That one I'm never gonna sell."



Connie Vetter-Johnson, Aretha, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 15" x 13", 2018.  
Photo by Diana Kiester.



Connie Vetter-Johnson, Bob Marley, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 15" x 15", 2018.  
Photo by Diana Kiester.



Connie Vetter-Johnson, Frida, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 17.5" x 15", 2019. Photo by Diana Kiester.



*Connie Vetter-Johnson, Catherine, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 18.5" x 14", 2015. This piece was the artist's first portrait. Photo by Diana Kiester.*



*Connie Vetter-Johnson, Be the Light, portrait of Amanda Gorman, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 20" x 13", 2021. Photo by Diana Kiester.*

Commissioned portraits often take up much of Connie's workload. Sometimes the reference picture is a blasé smile-for-the-camera type of picture but with a story that may tear at her heart. "I started getting commissions from people whose friend or family member had passed. Some of them were young people whose lives were taken too early. Those are tough. It takes a lot out of you, because you get to know the people when you're working on their faces for 15 hours. The scariest thing for me is living up to the expectation of the person whose heart is in this. Now there's a lot more attached to that portrait than just, 'Oh, make it look like this person.' Now I'm trying to capture something that loved ones will have to remember them by."



Connie Vetter-Johnson, *I Left My Heart*, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 33" x 24.5", 2020. Photo by Diana Kiester.

## Grateful for Glassing

As the artist prepares for day-job retirement and a full swing into her mosaic work, she finds herself in awe of how each direction that life took her along the way has led her to where she is today. From the fixer-upper that was a house-sized canvas, to her father's stained glass hobby shop, to the countless people whose lives she's touched with her work, none of it is lost on her.

"I definitely have that spiritual side that says things align the way they're supposed to if you put that energy out there and you're open to it. I'm not saying that you aren't making choices all along the way. You are. But when you take advantage of those different situations without any expectations, it's kind of cool when you can look back and see that progression. I look back on it with a lot of gratitude now." **G&A**



Connie Vetter-Johnson, *Elvis and Me*, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 26" x 20", 2018. Photo by the artist.



Connie Vetter-Johnson, *Friends*, hand cut stained glass mosaic, 24" x 16", 2022. Photo by Diana Kiester.

Photo by Wekku Ari Sääsä

Joe Samuelson III is a freelance writer, flameworker, husband, and father. A borosilicate lampworker for more than 20 years, he enjoys taking his own functional glass style and collaborating with artists who have unique aesthetics. In addition to his functional work, he produces a wide variety of glass, both lampworked and fused. For more than a decade Joe has been an avid collector and creator in the murrine community.

Originally from Buffalo, New York, Joe has been an expatriate living in South Korea, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UK for the last 17 years. His writing focuses largely on artist and business profiles and has been featured in *Glass Art®* and *The Flow®* magazines, as well as artistic, medical, and small business online platforms. A variety of his glass art can be found on Instagram @number3glass.



### Connie Vetter-Johnson

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