

Featuring the latest from the Retailers of Art Glass and Supplies

RAGSfest 2014 Meeting in Costa Rica

by Stan Price

The Retailers of Art Glass Supplies (RAGS), with its current membership of 67 retail stores, held its annual gathering, RAGSfest, at Vitrocolor in San José, Costa Rica, August 13–18, 2014. Vitrocolor owners, Jamie A. Cabezas and Celita Ulate de Cabezas, were incredible hosts. The event was a great opportunity to share ideas with other retail glass store owners, take innovative classes, and get energized about new glass art possibilities.

Learning, Sharing, and Growing

As retailers, we want to provide opportunities to learn, and the new classes and ideas offered at each RAGSfest are essential to helping us keep customers interested in our medium. Seven new techniques and classes were presented in 2014 including: Leaded Filigree Hearts, Glass Painting 101, Textile Design on Glass, Decal and Photo Transfer on Glass, Creating with Glassline Paints, Kaleidoscope Pattern Bars, and Graffiti on Glass, as well as information on how to set up and market a fusing center. We were also fortunate to have visiting instructor Patty Gray, who taught a great fusing workshop with a multitude of ideas and products. That was during formal instruction—but what was shared in informal conversations was limitless. The sharing of ideas and information not only helps us as retailers but also benefits our distributors and manufacturers as we are introduced to new products that we will now order for teaching these classes.



Julie Orchard's Fused Kaleidoscope
Pattern Bars class.



Sylvia Laks

At the end of our five full days of learning, evening activities completed each day. These excursions were both memorable and educational. First came the Welcome Dinner, where cultural dancers performed after we enjoyed a delicious Costa Rican dinner in a very historic building. Our second outing took us to an exhibit of Costa Rican warm glass artists held at the Centrol Cultural Costarricense Norte Americano Center in Downtown San José. The work was innovative and inspiring to our group of enthusiastic glass artisans. A field trip to the Clinica Biblica Hospital is where we saw a five-story stained glass window designed and created by Ulate. I had seen pictures of this window, but experiencing it in person reminded me of seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time—hard to comprehend the scope unless you visit the site. The window is a huge Tree of Life with many hidden images.

A visit to the studio of Sylvia Laks, a renowned Costa Rican glass artist, was amazing. I had admired her work since I first saw it in the 2013 July/August issue of *Glass Art*. Fifteen large painted stained glass windows, all in massive, well-lit frames, mesmerized the group. Following this outing, we returned to Vitrocolor for a fabulous barbequed meal prepared by the staff at the store. Lights were hung, tables were set, fresh flowers were arranged, and the atmosphere was perfect for an unforgettable evening. We held our annual auction to help support RAGSfest with donated items from our members and some of our industry manufacturers. This was also a time we remembered some of our members who have left their impression on our organization but are now doing glass, as Cabezas said, “with Saint Peter near the pearly gates.”



Patty Gray's Advanced Fusing class.

An Altogether Memorable Event

The Vitrocolor owners and their staff did everything imaginable to make this first international RAGSfest event memorable for all who attended. Their 12,000-square-foot store, a former lumber yard, was a perfect fit for all our activities and learning. They serve "coffee break" (Costa Rican custom) with tasty treats twice a day in their lovely community room with large tables for all to gather. They do this daily for their students and customers as well. Delicious, hot, homemade lunches of local fare were provided, and each meal felt like a feast. The food alone was worth the trip! Live music also accompanied many of the meals. This caring atmosphere truly enhanced our learning experience.

To make our time even richer, Ulate arranged a display of well-known Costa Rican artists' paintings hung on the many large walls within their space. One day, two indigenous wood carvers from a remote area of the mountains came to demonstrate and display their original masks. These masks ranged in scope from one that would fit on your thumb to larger than life size, each with remarkable detail.

As I return to my store in Everett, Washington, I am exhausted, but exhilarated to embrace another season of growing our industry from a grassroots perspective. The new products, processes, and class information our members shared will result in the best possible service to our customers and build up our industry at every level.

I would like to give a special thanks to the many faithful manufacturers and distributors who supported our event. Our organization is extremely grateful for their partnership in making RAGSfest possible. We are already looking forward to next year's event to be held in San Antonio, Texas, at the Stained Glass Crafters Workbench.

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Visit www.stainedglassretailers.com to learn more about the Retailers of Art Glass Supplies and for information on becoming a member.

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What's New

Jen-Ken Kilns, a continuing source for innovative kiln working resources, presents the **ProFusion Gold 26**. This quick-firing kiln uses a 12-button controller and has nine user programs. With this kiln, artists will experience shorter firing times, a lighter weight of less than 200 pounds, and a counter-height stand for no-bend loading. The quartz-encased heating elements will fire to a maximum of 1700°F. With a huge 26" x 26" opening and 24" x 24" shelf, this all-fiber, energy efficient kiln will make the perfect addition to your kiln working arsenal. Visit the company's website for more details.

800-329-KILN 863-648-0585
www.jenkenkilns.com



Spectrum Glass Company has created new **System 96® Starter Packs** to introduce newcomers to fusing with System 96®.

They contain enough glass to create multiple projects and provide a fun and satisfying trial experience. The Discovery Pack includes Opal and Transparent colors plus other colorful glass in

different styles, shapes, and sizes, including specialty glasses. An introduction booklet, a step-by-step Project Guide, and PAPHYROS® Kiln Shelf Paper are also included.

425-483-6699 info@spectrumglass.com
www.spectrumglass.com

Wissmach Glass Co. makes all of its colors available with the company's **Luminescent coating**, which is similar to iridescent coatings, but not quite the same. Artists can fire with the coated side up or down to achieve different effects. It is ideal for reversed fusing projects and sculptures to make them look their best from both sides. Working with all of these options offers a wonderful new palette of design possibilities. 304-337-2253 wissmach@frontier.com
www.wissmachglass.com



Glasscraft

Glasscraft has a new studio in the works. At the Eugene location, right across the street from the warehouse, you can now rent studio space. In addition to monthly studio rentals, Glasscraft will eventually also host classes. E-mail the company for further info and to inquire about renting. 877-893-9386 studioiw@glasscraftinc.com
www.glasscraftinc.com

Franklin Art Glass Studios, Inc. is proud to present **two new Pearl Opals from Spectrum Glass Company**, Golden Honey and Autumn Flame. Both are in stock just in time for creating a perfect fall color palette. Also new to Franklin's

