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January/February 2020



Juliet Forrest

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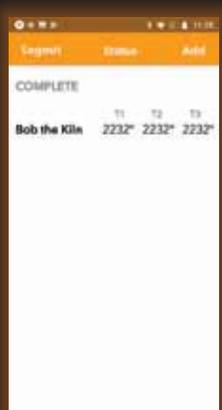


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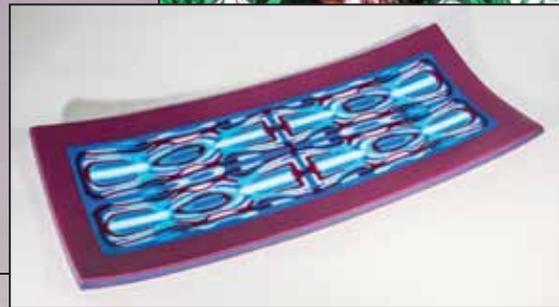
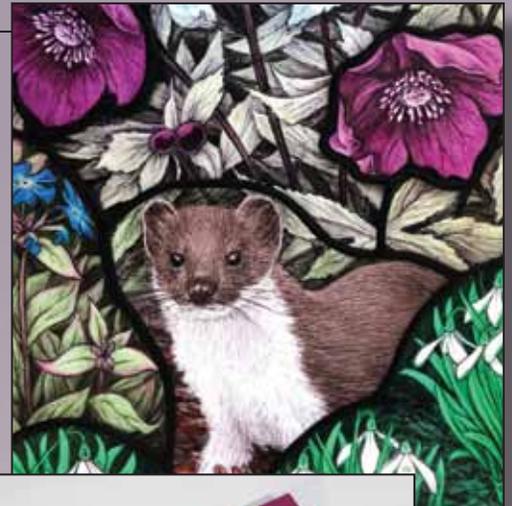
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Photo by Robert A. Mickelsen

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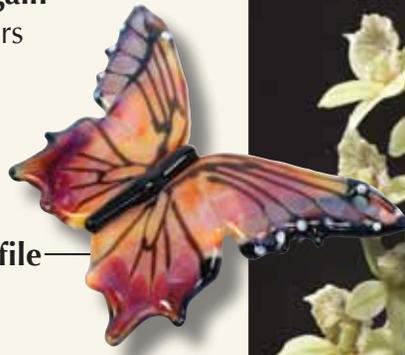


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Juliet Forrest

Nurturing Stained Glass as Contemporary Fine Art

by Colleen Bryan

Juliet Forrest Glass Studio deliberately nurtures architectural stained glass as a contemporary fine art, battling its common perception as historical restoration or craft. Stepping into glasswork from a background as a fine art painter, Forrest has begun to attend to the more substantive original work that sparks her artistic passion, and that shift is changing the face of her studio.

The artist's current body of work combines fused with traditional stained glass and glass painting in intricate and increasingly narrative designs. She opens those mediums into the garden through displays at the Royal Horticultural Society as well as other shows around the United Kingdom and advances them into architecture with commissioned original window designs. Her enthusiasm catches flight as she describes the varied textures that she can elicit from the glass. "My current fascination is using texture to create interesting effects."

Juliet has produced her artwork in partnership with her husband David Forrest for the past three years. This allowed her to move forward with two-dimensional sculpture and incorporate metal into her glass designs. However, as their sculptural work grows sufficiently distinct from her architectural glass designs and the public art she wants to pursue, the two plan to split their business into separate streams during 2020. That split will pose a bit of a challenge in the way the two artists produce art. "It will require changing premises and patterns between David and me." It will involve a certain intentional unweaving of the ways they now work, and they will also need to establish new practices that better support the two business streams.

Currently, Juliet Forrest Glass operates from the convenience of a home studio, but the structure necessitates that Juliet and David work in different rooms. "We're in the process of looking for a light industrial unit on commercial premises that offers more space for larger works and active collaboration."



Juliet Forrest, Tulips Pink, Tulip Series, painted, silver stained, and enameled glass with copper foil construction in oak stand, 2019.



A Perspective on Glass as Art

Forrest reflects that she has always done “artsy” things, even when her career pursuits were occupational therapy and mental health work. “I spent my spare time making art, exhibiting paintings and selling them, receiving awards. In 2014, I was made redundant in my mental health job, creating a fabulous opportunity to ramp up my recent explorations in glass. Within two years, I had moved entirely from fine art painting to glass, mostly with painting on glass, and was getting regular commissions and sales.”

The migration to stained glass came as something of a shock. Juliet’s skills that had been valued and respected as a fine art painter were abruptly discounted when applied to the medium of glass. Still, she found reason for optimism as galleries and collectors began to recognize the value of her work. She sees herself as part of a movement among artists intent on taking stained glass out of ecclesiastical settings and into all types of public spaces, where it can be seen and respected as a fine art form.

*Juliet Forrest,
Oak Wren, Birds Series,
painted stained glass with copper foil
construction, 19 cm diameter, 2019.*

Learning from Established Glass Artists

As a longtime maker, most of Forrest’s glass technique is self-taught and developed through experimentation with lots of trial and error. “Some of the most interesting insights come from mistakes. Sometimes the material itself takes the lead.” Forrest is also a free-man of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass, where she recently won its prestigious Ashton Hill Award. That association gives her the opportunity to learn from people who are long established in the field and exposes her to fine glass artists and their work throughout the United Kingdom:



Juliet Forrest, Four Seasons commission, painted and enameled glass, copper foil construction, 70 cm x 100 cm, 2018. Commissioned for an interior window in the client's orangerie, the brief was to include elements of all seasons incorporating the client's favorite plants and animals that can be spotted in the local area. Many pieces of glass in this commission involve up to 10 layers of painting and enameling to achieve the depth of color and shading.

Juliet undertook a placement with Thomas Denny to learn about acid etching and double plating. Denny is a notable contemporary stained glass artist. His figurative and narrative work is renowned for dynamic color and light achieved through extensive acid etching and double plating overlaid with painting and silver staining. This combination of techniques was previously exemplified by Harry Clarke, an Irish stained glass artist and illustrator of the early twentieth century. Forrest was already a fan of Harry Clarke, so she found it a joy and privilege to be taught his methods by the contemporary leading expert. While on this placement, Forrest also had the opportunity to visit a nearby church with a Harry Clarke window, St Mary's in Sturminster Newton, U.K.

Forrest spent an internship with Chapel Studio, which does a lot of accredited salon conservation on medieval glass. At Chapel's she gained exposure to techniques for stabilizing paint, reproducing painted pieces for antique windows, and restoration plating. She also tried her hand at full restoration of some Victorian church windows. "It was interesting to see them at work, to observe how meticulously they toiled with enamel that was very badly degraded. Matching color and texture often required hundreds of samples and, oh, so much patience to get the effect just right."

The artist was also placed with Derek Hunt of Limelight Studios, learning techniques such as sandblasting and digital design, as well as traditional techniques such as fitting church windows using lime

render. These experiences cemented lessons she had already learned and enormously boosted her confidence in the skills required for creating her own church windows. Juliet concluded, however, that restoration would not be a focus for her studio. "My main passion lies in creating new works of my own design."

When an award program she won invited her to replicate an antique or medieval panel, she chose to model the figure of St. Elizabeth from Harry Clarke's *Sturminster Newton* window. Using the techniques, materials, and style of the original, she built the replica, put a price on it, and displayed it at a show. "I had a lovely chat with a guy at the show who photographs stained glass around the world and is a particular fan of Harry Clarke. At the end of the show, I was flabbergasted to learn he had bought it! He told me, 'Although I love stained glass, this is the first piece I've actually wanted to own.' That feedback made me feel that I'd gotten things right." She felt that way even more so when he told her he had put the *St. Elizabeth* window in his will to return to Juliet upon his death.

These internships and placements gave the new glassworker experience on larger pieces and helped her to see how stained glass is installed. She was able to observe how people can use very different approaches for the same task, with neither being necessarily right or wrong. Only sometimes is one way distinctly better. The exposure also gave her confidence to approach designing and fabricating her own original windows.

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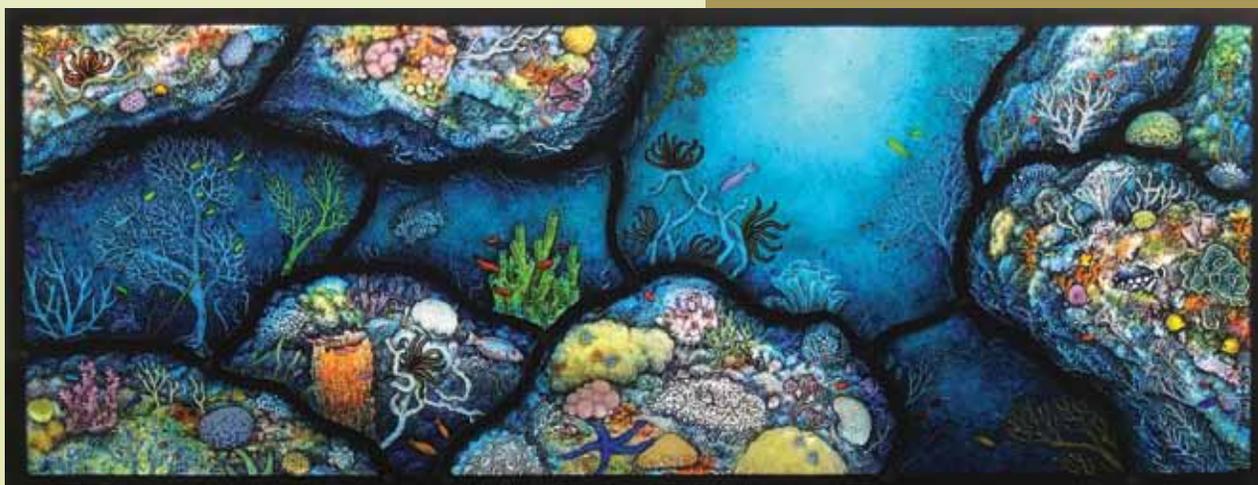
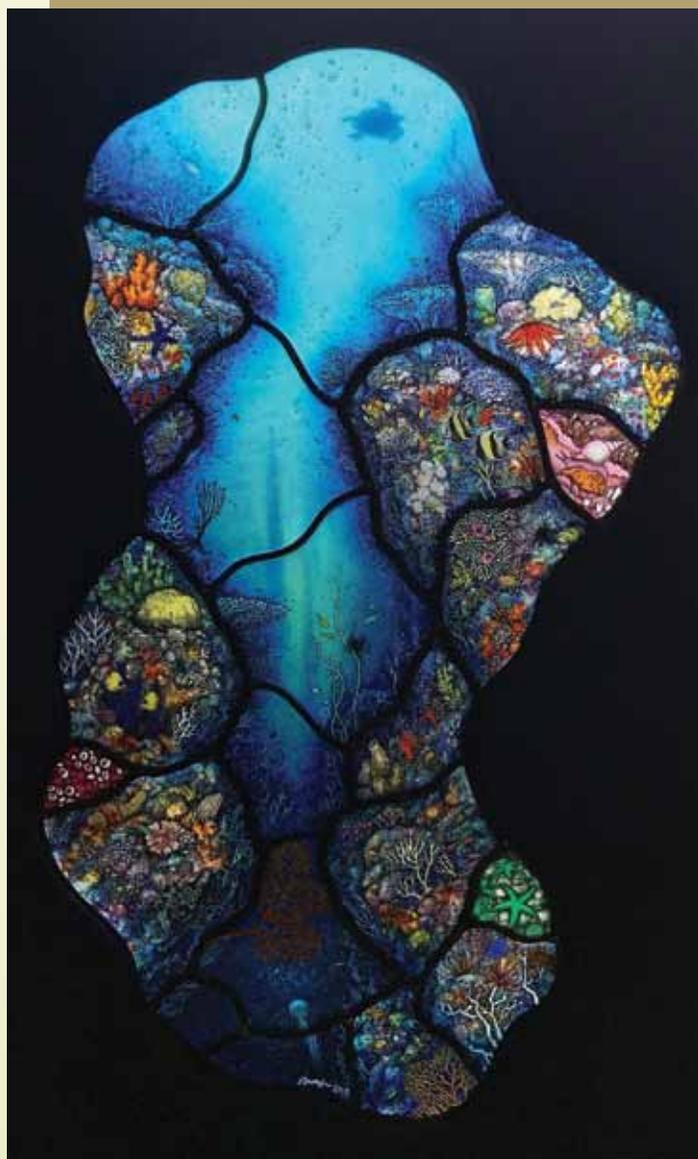
The endless intricacies of the natural world inspire Forrest's artwork. As an erstwhile diver, she became fascinated with coral reefs, which are the subject of her current artistic focus. "I've wanted to pursue a coral reef theme for years, and it seems more urgent and poignant now with the reefs in danger from global warming and pollution. I approached the subject several times but wasn't able to draw out the depth or texture or detail I wanted until I began to work with glass fusing." Now she paints atop textured fused glass to depict the intricate, watery, ocean world.

Juliet also enjoys science fiction and is eager to explore futuristic and celestial themes. "I most enjoy developing pieces with great detail, ones that give the viewer an initial 'Wow!' experience, but that also present something new every time they see it."

While there is no denying the passion and unified vision that comes when a client grants free rein to the creator, sometimes inspiration comes from outside the artist as part of a collaborative commission. One example in Juliet's portfolio is a large round window of a sea serpent based on Nordic mythology she created for a private home. "That window would never have been made but for a customer with an interesting, crazy idea. As an outside artist, I was able to bring my take on their taste, attending to color and lighting conditions and tying the window into the rest of the room.

"We went from a fire-breathing dragon cooking a steak with its fiery breath to Norse mythology as the customer worried about offending future, possibly vegetarian, house buyers. We worked back and forth several times until I had the design they wanted. I made small models and sections to see what color and texture would look like in situ. The couple felt a part of designing something that will be in their home for years and years, something that is distinctive from what anyone else will have in their home. As the collaboration proceeded, it felt like I was working with and talking to friends."

Juliet Forrest, The Abyss, fused, painted, and enameled leaded panel, 70 cm x 110 cm, 2019. Juliet's new direction uses the freedom of glass fusing, allowing many colors and textures to be combined on a single piece of glass. Fusing also enables the control of texture on the surface, which can then be manipulated and enhanced by overpainting.



Juliet Forrest, Gorgonian Paradise, fused, painted and enameled leaded panel, 90 cm x 30 cm, 2019.



Juliet Forrest and David Forrest, Sorrell's Portal commission, Portal series sculptures, leaded panel with fused and painted glass within a laser cut stainless steel frame, 80 cm x 150 cm, 2018. A particularly emotive commission created for the mother of a 14-year-old girl killed in the terrorist attack in Manchester in 2017. Juliet combined several pieces of Sorrell's artwork into one of her signature Portal sculptures to be displayed in the client's garden.

Another more emotional piece was a sculpture commission that the studio completed in 2018. "Following a terrorist bombing incident at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, I was approached by the mother of one of the victims. She had seen our Portal sculpture and was struck by my general design sensibility. She wanted me to incorporate some of her daughter's designs into a similar sculpture for her garden. I made the design for her, and we laser-cut the stainless steel frame, including some inspirational phrases that the daughter had pinned to her wall. We delivered the sculpture to Sorrell's Portal last year. Two years after her death, you could see how devastated the family still was and how much it meant to have this artwork to honor her memory. It is an honor to get to make something like that."



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Juliet Forrest, Heraldry Windows, leaded windows created using painting, silver staining, and enameling, 130 cm x 240 cm (each window), 2019. Juliet designed and created the two rectangular windows flanking the central antique window, which had been relocated within the house due to extensive renovations. The brief was to match with the antique panel while also incorporating elements of the client's coat of arms. It was key to ensure impeccable matching across the glass, paint, stain, and enamels to ensure the new and the old sat well together.

Approaching a Project

When Forrest puts on her outdoor garden hat, she designs very differently than for her indoor architectural pieces, primarily because of the difference in structural considerations. “With indoor pieces, I am more aware of imagery and considering how to translate them onto glass. With outdoor garden pieces, I begin by considering the engineering constraints, then figure out what can I produce within those. It is almost an inverse to the indoor process.”

In 2018, she made a pair of windows for a massive extension being built onto a Georgian-era private residence. Each window was roughly 4 feet wide by 8 feet high, which was bigger than anything she had done before. The paint, glass, and design needed to complement and match the colors of an antique window that was being repositioned from what was previously an external wall. The imagery needed to include their family motto, coat of arms, and family crest. “I had to learn a lot about matching paint and what happens to certain types of glass when it is fired. I had to work out how to use the internal steel to provide stability.” In total, the windows posed quite a challenge, but the customer was delighted with the finished product, and it is a piece of work that Forrest is quite proud of.

Unfolding the Artist's Year

The progression of Forrest's year is dictated by the shows she participates in. She spends the first half of the year producing work to sell at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) shows in early June and September. Each RHS show requires about a month of work to prepare, set up, and deliver. Beyond that, there are the sale stock and demonstration pieces to make for exhibit. Between RHS shows and other shows around the U.K., she works on commissions and sale items.

“I try to take a big statement piece of work with me to each show so people can see that I do make windows.” She is deliberate to display something fresh and new each year. This year's theme is the coral reef. “It's a funny shape. I made a sample window for this year's RHF show, and as spinoffs I sold a light box and got a commission for some large pieces for a swimming pool. I'm excited to make more glass art featuring the coral reef theme.”

Making time to develop new work and experiment with new techniques is the perpetual artist's challenge. As she interviewed with *Glass Art*, Juliet was packing to leave on holiday but taking along her sketchbook. “In looking through my year, I can see some time coming up in January three months away when I may have time to think about new designs for the coming season.”

Transitioning to Larger Work

Juliet's perseverance through hit-and-miss attempts allows her to find her right customers, but she also adapts her products and distribution as she gains more confidence and her glass practice matures. Early on, galleries provided a venue for selling small works and a welcome local platform for real-life viewing. "One shop in the Lake District was doing very well for me selling small light catchers, but my passion is producing larger work. In the end, I gave up that shop to take on a commission for two big windows."

Smaller shows continue to be a fantastic source of new commissions. Forrest spurs the transition to larger work by regularly displaying a larger panel or sculpture even at venues where she primarily hawks her smaller pieces. "When samples of larger glass are on display, customers can see what I am capable of and say 'Yes, that's what I like.'" This speculative investment has attracted some of her larger commissions to date.

Currently, Forrest's receipts split about evenly between commissions and shows. She is moving toward larger and public art commissions. Spending a large chunk of time making work that is incidental to one's passion can leave the artist without time or energy or resources to pursue what brought them to glass in the first place. Juliet notes the inherent risk of going big: "Sometimes one is tempted to hold onto smaller things that generate quick income and pay the bills, but smaller product lines can hold you back. Letting go feels risky but necessary."

Forrest collaborated with Handspring Designs of Sheffield, U.K., on a large sculpture of birds made from wood with stained glass inserts. She is now working on a commission for a local hospital to create a commemorative exhibit celebrating and promoting organ donations. Forrest sees demand for restoration work but veers more toward original design.

Juliet Forrest Glass Studio lacks the facilities for acid etching, but Juliet achieves a comparable effect by fusing liquid stringer and frit to produce multicolored pieces and texture on the surface of glass. "These days, I use paint, stain, and enamel to make my coral reef pieces, taking advantage of the textured surface and sometimes unexpected results of the fused glass to make spontaneous decisions about details whilst painting. That is different from the way I've always painted, where I sought to be very controlled and wanted to know exactly how things would turn out. This medium is quite liberating!"

In her element, Juliet would love to be moving from painting to stained glass 24 hours a day. Still, the artist made a conscious choice to choose a direction to move into rather than trying to keep all of the balls spinning in the air contemporaneously. "I don't want my studio to grow so massive that I become just a manager. I want to remain a hands-on artist."

She summarized an e-mail conversation she has been having with another young artist. "You go into this field because of a passion for making beautiful things, making art. But you have to be aware of and be prepared to spend a significant amount of time doing business."

Of her life as an artist, Forrest reflects that she tries to focus inwardly rather than being caught up in the roil of markets and trends. "You're going to get knocks and disappointments. It takes a certain character and perseverance to decide to stay true to what you want to do, but some things will work. Move toward those. Attend to what you're drawn to do."

GA



Juliet Forrest, Horsleygate Border, leaded window created with painting and enameling, 55 cm x 110 cm, 2015. Created to bring the outside in and inspired by the beautiful grounds at Horsleygate Hall in Derbyshire, U.K.

Juliet Forrest

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Society of American Mosaic Artists MAI 2019 Invitational Exhibition



Lilian Broca, *Judith Seducing Holofernes*, smalti, gold smalti, and ceramic tile borders, 48" x 70-1/2", 2014.

Photo by the artist.

by Shawn Newton, SAMA Communications Manager

Photos shared with Permission from SAMA

*E*mbodied, presented in partnership with the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery in Nashville, Tennessee, showcased the work of five internationally recognized artists—Lilian Broca, Shug Jones, Michael Kruzich, Atsuko Laskaris, and Carol Shelkin. The selected works survey contemporary figurative mosaic art and capture personal histories, preserved memories, and the emotional occurrences of everyday life through figurative compositions of hand formed pieces of glass, stone, and ceramic.

The exhibition was part of the 18th Annual Mosaic Arts International Exhibition series (MAI), sponsored by the Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA). MAI celebrates both established and emerging artists working in the medium today.

Lilian Broca

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

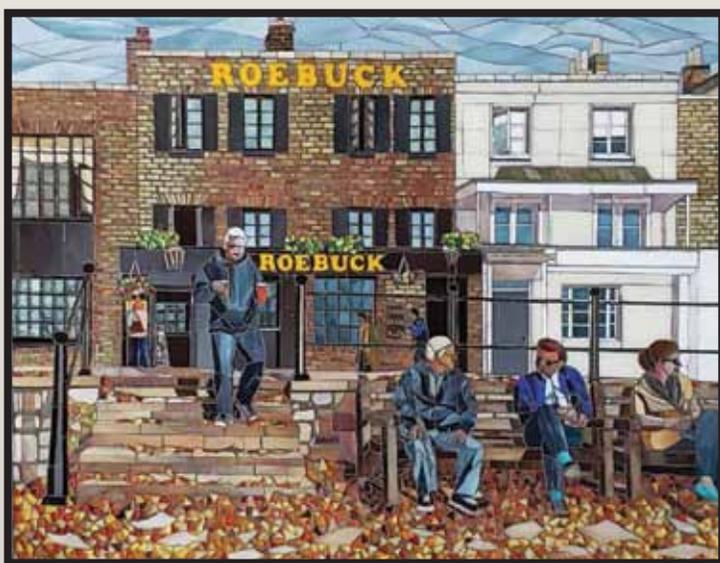
Lilian Broca's work has been featured in more than 60 exhibitions in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Celebrated for her spirited exploration of contemporary societal issues in a variety of media, Broca draws on historical iconography, legends, and popular myths.

The artist's mosaics have received the coveted Lorenzo il Magnifico Gold Medal in the mixed media category, as well as awards in several MAI exhibitions. *Return to Byzantium: The Art and Life of Lilian Broca* won Best Documentary Award at the San Pedro International Film Festival in 2012. Her book, *Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics of Lilian Broca*, accompanied her traveling Judith Exhibition in 2017 in Canada and the United States.

Shug Jones

Garland, Texas, USA

Shug Jones' artistic path has taken her from oils to colored pencils, scratchboard to watercolors, and finally to mosaic. She was co-founder of Tesseræ Mosaic Studio, Inc., creating large-scale mosaics for residential, commercial, hospitality, and healthcare installations. In addition, she also taught across the United States and in Australia for over 13 years. Since 2014, Shug has focused almost exclusively on her fine art as Shug Jones Mosaics.



Shug Jones, *Richmond Hill-The Roebuck*, 20" x 25", stained glass, flash glass, mirror glass, glass noodles, glass rods, filati, paper, and glass, 2019. Photo by the artist.



Michael Kruzich

San Francisco, California, USA

Michael Kruzich was trained at the prestigious Mosaic Art School in Ravenna, Italy, by Maestra Luciana Notturmi and her colleagues. His work has been exhibited at the Ravenna Mosaico 2017 Biennale, has won awards at MAI exhibitions in 2010, 2011, and 2015, and has appeared in several art and mosaic publications. A member of SAMA and the Associazione Internazionale Mosaicisti Contemporanei, Michael is based in San Francisco, California, where he maintains his studio, creating fine art mosaics, reproductions, and commissions.

Michael Kruzich, *Refuge*, 5' x 3', stone, Italian smalti, and gold, 2017. Photo by the artist.

Atsuko Laskaris

San Diego, California, USA

Atsuko Laskaris studied art and design in Japan, and after working at the Yoshio Oda Etching Studios, she married an American military serviceman in 1999. By 2010, after living in San Diego and raising two daughters, she decided to teach herself mosaics. Atsuko has received various People's and Juror's Choice Awards, exhibited in the International Mosaics Exhibition in Clauiano, Italy, 2012–2014, and won Best in Show at SAMA's MAI Invitational Exhibition in Texas in 2014 as well as in San Diego in 2016.



Atsuko Laskaris, *Where Are You, Peter?*, 15" x 15", stained glass, 2016. Photo by the artist.



Carol Shelkin, *Beautiful Day*, 18" x 22", stained glass and millefiori, 2019. Photo by the artist.

Carol Shelkin

Havertown, Pennsylvania, USA

Carol Shelkin is an award-winning artist, art educator, member of SAMA, and Master Artisan of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen. She is also founder and past president of the Mosaic Society of Philadelphia and founder of Worldwide Mosaic Art Workshops and Retreats. Her work is exhibited around the world and is known for its bold, unexpected color, energetic line, and strong composition.

GA

The Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating, inspiring, and promoting excellence in the mosaic arts. Visit AmericanMosaics.org for more information on becoming a member.

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The Stained Glass Association of America Heading to Philadelphia in 2020



by Amy Moritz

Cheesesteaks. Rocky. The Liberty Bell. Yes, it's time to start thinking about all things Philadelphia.

The 111th Annual Conference of the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA) heads to the City of Brotherly Love in June 2020. Held at the Wyndham Philadelphia Historic District on Arch Street, the conference again features classes, workshops, speakers, and the annual awards dinner.

Main Events

The schedule follows the recent conference format with summer classes being held on Saturday and Sunday, June 13–14 and the general session convening on Monday and Tuesday, June 15–16. Local tours will be offered on Wednesday June 17.

SGAA's main conference kicks off on June 14 with an evening vendor reception and the opening of the silent auction. Attendees will have a chance to get to meet our sponsors and glass manufacturers in person and learn more about their companies and products while offering their own feedback.



Abatron demonstration. Photo by Kyle J Mickelson.



*Angel gilding demonstration.
Photo by Kyle J Mickelson.*

On June 15, morning speakers will be presenting various topics of interest, followed by afternoon field sessions. Attendees can choose from one of three offerings—maintenance and restoration, a trip to the University of the Arts Technology Center & Glass Department, or a walking tour of public art in historic Philadelphia. Monday night's reception will feature a presentation on the local nonprofit, The Stained Glass Project, along with the close of the silent auction and a live auction.

Tuesday morning will feature an archives panel with archivists from the Rakow Research Library at The Corning Museum of Glass and the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art leading a discussion on studio and artist archives. Breakout sessions will follow lunch, allowing time for demonstrations and case studies.

Awards Reception and Banquet

Tuesday night's awards banquet will be held off site this year, beginning with a reception at Beyer Studios and continuing at the Germantown Cricket Club. Look for more information on the banquet and classes on the SGAA website.

Registration for the conference will open in early 2020, but you can book your room now. Information on rates and links to reservations can be found at stainedglass.org/conference.

GA

Visit www.stainedglass.org to learn more about the Stained Glass Association of America, the upcoming conference and events, and how to become an SGAA member.

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Fusing Separators

A Look at the Basics



by Paul Tarlow

One of the most important decisions an artist makes when planning a kiln formed glass project is the choice of separators for the firings. The separator is the material used to prevent the molten glass from sticking to shelves, slumping molds, and dams. Shelf paper and shelf primer are both examples of common separators. There is a variety of separators, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Basic Differences in Separators

There are several considerations when choosing a separator. These include:

Ease of use. How easily does the separator go on and clean off of shelves, slumping molds, and dams?

Cost. How expensive is the separator, and how often does it need to be reapplied?

Texture. In most firings, glass will pick up the texture of anything it touches when fusing. Different separators have different textures. Also, some separators contribute to the risk of hazing and devitrification.

Bubble mitigation. Separators that allow air to escape from under glass when fusing reduce the risk of air trapped between the shelf and the glass that can cause large bubbles and craters.

This article looks at the three most popular types—shelf primer, shelf paper, and boron nitride—and how they each fare against the four attributes above.

Shelf Primer

Shelf primer, which is also called “kiln wash,” or “batt wash” in the U.K., has the primary ingredients of kaolin clay and alumina or silica. Many recipes for kiln wash exist. The kiln wash manufactured for fusing tends to release more easily from glass and produces less “off-gassing” than some ceramic kiln washes. Bullseye’s Shelf Primer and Hotline Primo Primer are both popular among glass fusers.

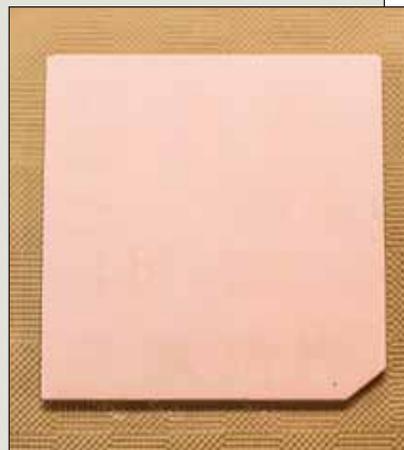
Ease of Use. Shelf primer is usually shipped in powder form and is mixed with water by the artist. It is easy to apply to kiln shelves and ceramic molds using a brush. The Asian style “hake” brush works well because of its width and soft, fine bristles. An application of shelf primer can be used repeatedly until it starts to flake or chip off, at which point it is scraped away and reapplied. Scraping kiln shelves can be a tedious and laborious task. Ease of use is low.

Cost. Of all the separators, shelf primer is the least expensive. A five pound (dry) pail of glass primer costs about \$25 or more and will cover many shelves. Cost is low.

Surface Quality. A properly prepared primed kiln shelf will leave an exceptionally smooth surface on the glass. Surface quality is good.

Air Escape. When molten glass settles against a kiln washed shelf, it creates an airtight seal, making it one of the more likely separators to result in air bubbles between the shelf and glass. Air escape is poor.

Most shelf primers are sold dry, as shown here. They are mixed with water according to manufacturer instructions, then painted or sprayed onto the kiln shelf or slumping mold.



This freshly primed and dried shelf is ready for the kiln.

Shelf Paper

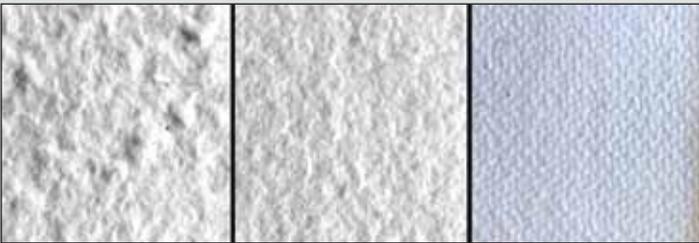
Shelf paper binds powdered separator materials into a paper-like product. Shelf paper is available in different sizes in sheets and on rolls and is easily cut with scissors. Two popular shelf paper products are Bullseye's Thinfire and Techniglass Papyros.

Ease of Use. Simply cut shelf paper slightly larger than the project to be fired, lay it on the shelf, and place the glass on top. Once done, vacuum the residue with a HEPA vacuum. No other separator is easier to work with than shelf paper. Ease of use is very high.

Cost. Both Thinfire and Papyros have similar costs, between \$ 0.70 and \$1.35 per square foot depending on the quantity purchased. With care, both can be reused, though Papyros tends not to disintegrate to the degree that Thinfire does. Cost is medium.

Surface Quality. All shelf papers have organic bindings that burn away when they are fired. This produces carbon, which can contribute to glass surface hazing and devitrification. Additionally, the glass surface that is against the shelf paper will take on the texture of the paper. Thinfire is much smoother than Papyros and will produce a smoother finish. Glass fired on Papyros will have more surface texture than glass fired on Thinfire. How one feels about the texture is more a matter of personal preference. Surface quality is medium.

Air Escape. Both Thinfire and Papyros, though thin, are porous materials, especially after the binder has burned away. This allows a small amount of air to escape from between the glass and the kiln shelf. Air escape is medium.



Three examples of the many different fiber paper textures that different manufacturers make. The second and third images are different sides of the same fiber paper.



The example on the left shows the glass surface after it is fired on fiber paper. On the right is an example of glass that was fired directly on shelf primer.

Boron Nitride

Boron nitride is a compound that is used for many purposes, including as an industrial lubricant as well as in cosmetics, where it absorbs skin oils and disperses pigments. It is an excellent glass separator and is available as a spray in both aerosol and pump as well as a brushable liquid. Common brands include ZYP, CRC, Slide, and Momentive.

Ease of Use. Aerosol spray is the most popular application method for boron nitride and is especially useful for stainless steel draping molds, where shelf primer application is often difficult. It is also usable on shelves, small casting molds, and traditional ceramic slumping molds. Ease of use is very high.

Cost. Boron nitride is easily the most expensive of all glass separators. It isn't unusual to find a standard 12-ounce can, the same as a standard full-size spray paint can, for over \$50. Additionally, it comes off molds easily and requires frequent reapplication. Cost is very high.

Surface Quality. Boron nitride sprays on with a glassy, smooth finish thanks to boron nitride's very small particles. This allows it to coat finely detailed molds without filling the detail with separator particles. Boron nitride is the preferred separator for most people casting jewelry in ceramic molds. Surface quality is excellent.

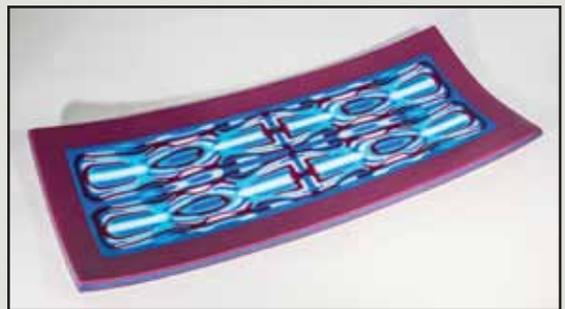
Air Escape. As with shelf primer, glass fired against boron nitride provides no space through which glass can escape. Air escape is poor.

Which to Use

There are other separators worth considering too. Fiber paper provides better air passage than any of the other already mentioned separators, but it comes with a higher cost and significantly more surface texture. Mica, though not typically considered in a discussion of separators, works very well when airbrushed onto a shelf or into a casting mold. Additionally, the mica imparts a subtle sheen on the glass.

The three standard separators—shelf primer, shelf paper, and boron nitride—all have a valuable role to play in a glass fusing studio. Understanding their strengths and weaknesses should help artists to decide which to use when.

GA



Paul Tarlow, who is widely acknowledged as an authority on kiln formed glass, has written a series of e-books on a wide range of topics related to kiln formed glass available at fusedglassbooks.com and is known to be a generous instructor. He runs www.fusedglass.org as well as FusedGlassOrg, a closed corollary Facebook group, at www.facebook.com/groups/fusedglass. Information about his teaching studio can be found at www.helioglass.com.

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The American Glass Guild Prepares for 2020

by Tony Glander and Kathy Jordan

As we head into winter, the American Glass Guild (AGG) is beginning a very busy time in preparation for a very busy year. AGG is reviewing all that took place at the 2019 San Antonio conference this past summer and looking forward to Baltimore, Maryland, in 2020. We are also announcing the changes in the scholarship process and are looking forward to the excitement surrounding the upcoming annual auction that supports our scholarship program.

Celebrating the Past and Planning the Future

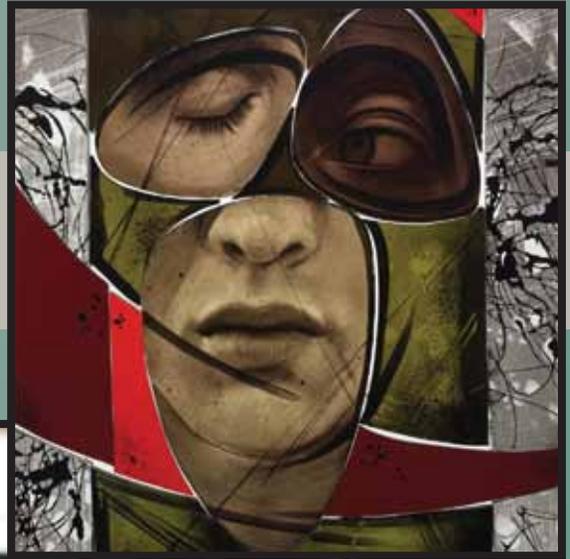
For the first time in history, the AGG had a joint conference with the SGAA in San Antonio in June 2019 that was an overall success. The event hosted many incredible speakers, demonstrations, displays, workshops, an amazing tour of stained glass work, and an annual auction that raised over \$20,000. Both organizations worked hard to bring the best conference they could provide their members and are open to discussing future joint conferences.

Looking forward to 2020, plans are moving quickly for our annual conference to be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 7–9. The Maritime Conference Center, directly next to Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) airport, will be the site for the conference. Tours of historic stained glass work are already in progress as well as speakers, workshops, and demonstrations.

Speakers this year already include Michael Janis, Tim Carey, Judith Schaechter, Amy Valuck, Art Femenella, and Jon Erickson. Demonstrations will cover stone installation of stained glass plus leading tips and techniques. This year's day of workshops will focus around the design process, with top designers giving their advice and inspiration. Be sure to watch the website for further updates. Registration will open soon.

Scholarship Awards

If you are looking for a way to help afford the conference, you can apply for a scholarship. In 2019, for the first time the AGG Scholarship had two deadlines for awards, February 28 and August 28. Eleven students received awards in February to attend the classes and workshops taught by Ralph Mills and Jules Mominee, Peter McGrain, Kathy Jordan, and Sarah Brown. The August list of award recipients consisted of nine students, who will be attending the classes of Tim Carey, Debora Coombs, Ellen Mandelbaum, Narcissus Quagliata, Kathy Jordan, Sarah Brown, and a course at Pilchuck Glass School in Washington State.



Sofia Villamarin with her AGG donation for the 2020 Baltimore auction. Photo by Kathy Jordan.

A total of \$13,395 in scholarships was awarded. These funds came directly from the AGG conference auction of 2018. In 2020, the organization will have the same deadlines on February 28 and August 28, so clear your calendars, make space to schedule a class or workshop, and apply at www.americanglassguild.org/scholarship! While you're attending the conference in Baltimore, remember that when you bid at the auction—and who doesn't—half of the proceeds go directly to enhancing the skills of glass artists with the help of the James C. Whitney Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Since the inception of the auction, which directly supports the scholarship fund, members have donated incredible stained glass panels to help raise a majority of the funds. This year's donations are proving to be impressive, with two panels already having been offered for the auction. Incredible work by Sofia Villamarin and Kristopher Tiffany will certainly get the bidding moving. Visit the AGG website to donate your panel for this incredible way to help educate upcoming stained glass artists.



Kristopher Tiffany with his AGG donation for the 2020 Baltimore auction. Photo by Kathy Jordan.



Remembering a Stained Glass Icon

January 1, 2019, marked the death of Charles Z. Lawrence, an American stained glass icon and Senior Advisor to the American Glass Guild. Lawrence's career began in 1956 and extended well over six decades with countless prestigious commissions throughout his career while working with Rambusch Decorating Co., Willet Hauser, and his own studio in Mt. Airy, Pennsylvania. His bold gothic revival style and exceptional use of color was best typified in five windows at the Washington National Cathedral. Lawrence received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the SGAA in 1994 and the Lifetime Achievement Award of Excellence from the AGG in 2015.

The AGG is dedicated to encouraging and promoting the creation, conservation, and history of stained, leaded, and decorative glass as it continues to provide a community that supports one another as well as the art. We look forward to seeing you in Baltimore.

GA

Visit americanglassguild.org to find out more about the AGG's upcoming events and how to become a Guild member.

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AGG Awards

The life and work of Sylvia Nicolas, a longtime AGG supporter, was honored in October 2019 at the New Hampshire Governor's Arts Awards. Ninety years young, Sylvia received the Lotte Jacobi Living Treasure Award that recognizes a professional New Hampshire artist who has made a significant life contribution to her art form and to the arts community of New Hampshire.

The Nicolas family has a long and distinguished history in the field of stained glass, proudly tracing their involvement in the art form back to the Netherlands in 1855. Sylvia first learned the craft from her father, the renowned artist Joep Nicolas, and the tradition continues with her son, Diego. Embracing the freedom of the modern age, she observes: "I don't want to become set in preconceived ideas. I want to be open to the spontaneity and accidents of the medium. Very often the medium will tell me where to go." As she has noted, "Stained glass is all about the light." Sylvia studied costume design in Paris, and in addition to stained glass, she creates mosaics, sculpture, drawings, and paintings at her studio in New Hampshire.

The American Glass Guild is very proud and honored to call Sylvia Nicolas its Senior Advisor. She is an avid supporter of the AGG and the James C. Whitney Scholarship Auction, donating numerous panels since the inception of the auction. Sylvia is also the 2012 recipient of AGG's Joseph Barnes Award.

At the 2019 Annual AIA Rochester meeting, Nancy Gong, who hosted the 2017 AGG conference in Rochester, New York, was awarded Honorary Member of the AIA Rochester. Nancy received the award "in recognition of outstanding accomplishments and distinguished service to the profession of architecture and the arts and science allied therein." The artist believes that there is no line between art and architecture.

Sylvia Nicolas's Panel. Photo by Kathy Jordan.



Art Glass Association of Southern California 36th Annual Members' Exhibition



by Leslie Perlis

Photography by Krista Heron

First Place Wall Art and Best of Show

Krista Heron *Make Room For Me*

If you could have seen into the future while visiting our first glass exhibit over 38 years ago, I don't think you could have possibly imagined what was in store for future glass artists. Our 2019 Exhibit featured many fine examples of this hyper-jump of innovations in glass technology that have affected industrial glass as well as glass art.

Providing a Showcase for AGASC Members

The 2019 Art Glass Association of Southern California (AGASC) Members' Exhibition took place September 20–29 at Gallery 21 Spanish Village, Balboa Park in San Diego, California. Our show chairs Jon Simpson and Krista Heron did a great job. Krista, a relatively new AGASC member, stepped up to the plate following longtime show co-chair Gayle Tunny Richardson's fine years of leadership. Krista recently shared her thoughts on the exhibition.

"For 38 years, glass artists have enjoyed the support of the AGASC, as well as the opportunity to display incredible pieces of

art glass in our annual members' show. The entries for 2019 certainly didn't disappoint in any way. Novice artists, student artists, and professional artists turned in their best efforts once again to create an exciting and interesting tour through the seductive world of glass art.

"Our members' exhibition is a wonderful opportunity for all of our members to show their talents and their love for the art. We are lucky to have such a varied group in our association. I especially look forward to seeing the growth from year to year in our newer glass artists. When I joined the AGASC, I was impressed by the welcoming vibe amongst these very talented artists. That in itself is such great motivation.

"We are very focused as an organization to attract the newest generation of glass artists through education and exposure, and we hope they will experience the same enjoyment and interest that our current membership enjoys. I am thrilled to be able to support this wonderful exhibition and look forward to seeing more amazing art in the years to come."



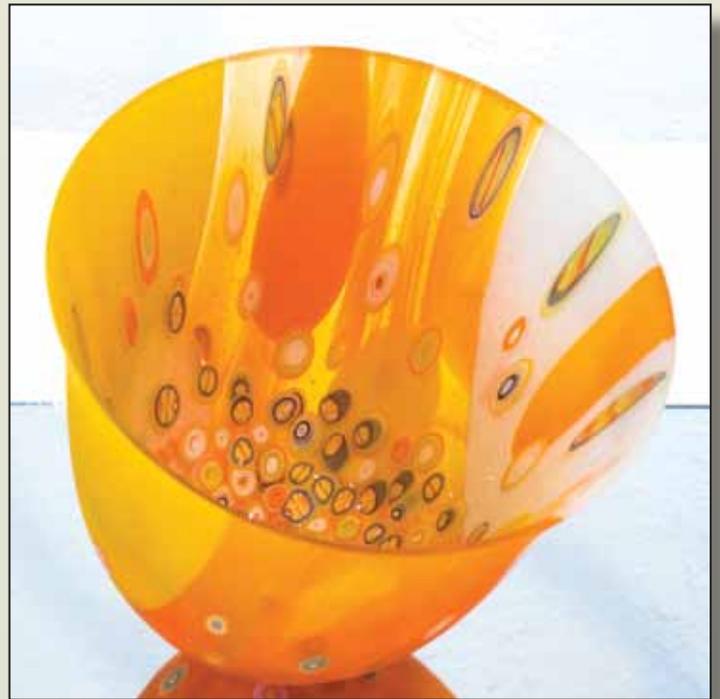
Oceanside Glass & Tile Special
Paul Messink *Autumn Dreams*



Sculpture
Patricia Yockey *Shell*



Coatings by Sandberg
Susan Hirsch *Visions*



Vessels
Krista Heron *Carnival*



Wearable Art

Linda Dillard *Sparkly, Of Course!*



Novice

Sandra Lodge *Incalmo Bowl*

Meet the Judges

Our three judges brought individual qualities to the judging. **Gail Goldman** is a well-known public art consultant working throughout the United States. She is currently working on the planning and commissioning of artwork for the Los Angeles Stadium and Entertainment District in Inglewood where the new Rams stadium is being built. Gail shared: “The caliber of art by those who received ribbons was consistently high in quality, content, and workmanship. Coming to a consensus among the jurors was easy based on those criteria and how impressed we were overall with the work submitted.”

Patty Gray is a well-known glass fusing artist as well as teacher. I was happy to hear she was a judge and that she has moved to Southern California. Patti has become a valuable part of our glass community.

Our third judge was **Janine Stillman**. This California glass fusing artist has gained a reputation for unique design, attention to detail, and personalized service.

Looking Forward to 2020

AGASC is pleased to be able to present the first place winners from the eight categories as well as the Best in Show award. You can find a complete list of all the winners on the AGASC website.

Congratulations to all of these fine artists. I am excited to begin the inspirational process for next year’s pieces to see where my creativity and that of the rest of our fine artists will take us. **GA**

Visit www.agasc.org for a complete list of the 38th Annual Members’ Exhibition winners and to learn more about the Association and its upcoming events.



Mixed Media

Leslie Perlis *KROK - Your Boss Radio*

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Lisa Stirrett

Emerging as an Artist

by Colleen Bryan

Few artists are straightforward about coming to glass as a means to satisfy another purpose in their lives rather than from a passion for expression or the material. And few artist interviews range from Washington State to West Africa. Still, Lisa Stirrett is forthright and energetic in narrating her origin story as a glass artist.

“It has been a challenge for me that I didn’t come to art with a lot of things inside that I wanted to express, but I’ve found it important to have confidence in who you are and what you have to offer without trying to be like everyone else or anyone else. In the beginning, I did not know that I knew how to create anything. I wanted to make something that earned money to help with the mortgage and support my staying home with young children.”

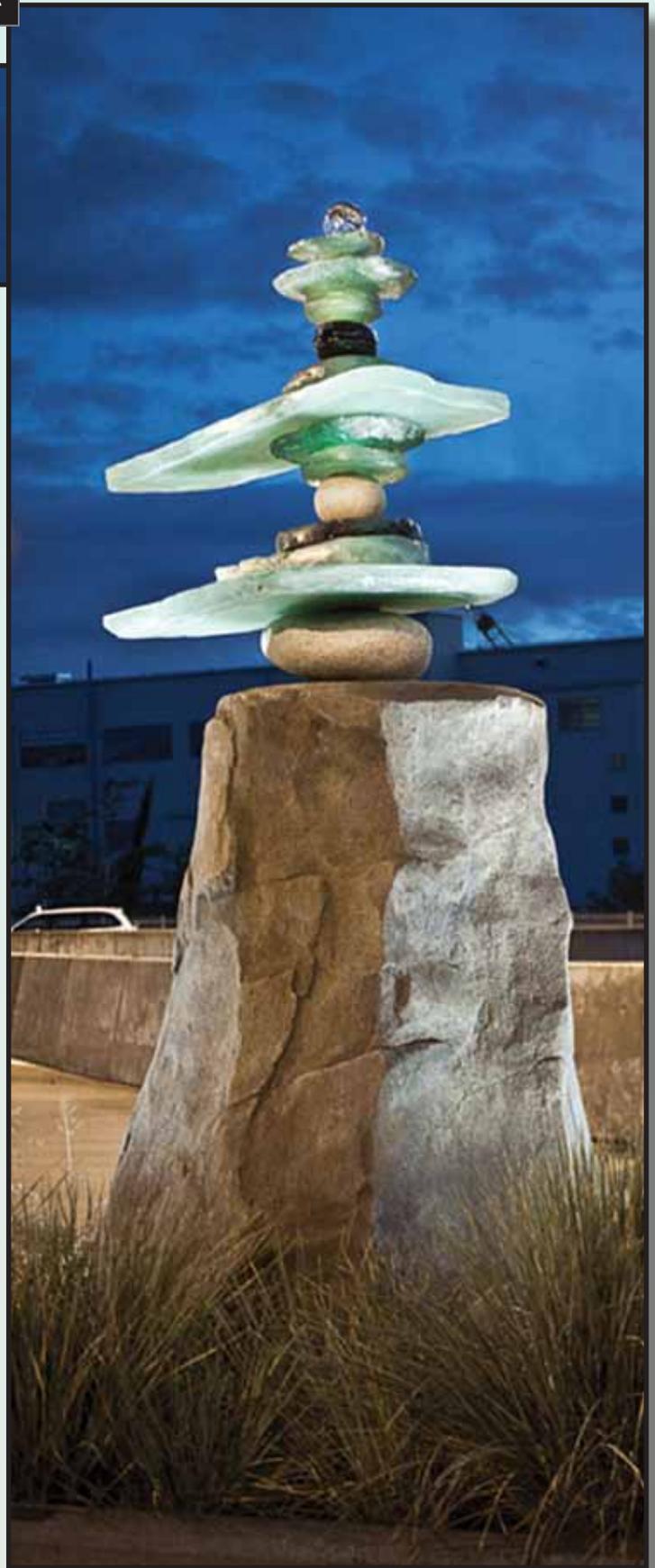
Lisa began with *gyotaku*, the Japanese art of fish imprinting, and went on to become proficient with encaustic, a process of painting with beeswax. Working from her garage, she sold her creations around the United States through entities like the Epcot Center and Nordstrom’s.

Stirrett found that she loved creating and was good at it, but the workload grew to a point where she needed help with child care. That was contrary to the reason she had started her business in the first place, so she called her representatives, stopped production, and started teaching art and business start-up classes from her home, which she continued for several years.

Public Art Projects

Public art became a strong element of Stirrett’s practice starting in 2000, when she sought and won a commission for the Kitsap Transit ferry terminal. She initially completed fourteen 8-foot paintings and two 12-foot by 12-foot tile murals for the building. Since 2002, the site has hired her to provide additional work, including 12 glass benches, five stone and glass cairns, and other smaller works. Lisa takes pride in seeing that the artwork looks as good today as when it was first installed. The terminal project gave Stirrett experience creating designs for meaningful, site-specific art while looking only at a set of architectural plans or a blank building.

After the ferry terminal, at the request of builders for the Kitsap Conference Center at Bremerton Harborside, the artist was commissioned to create what would be her first steel and glass sculpture. “I did not know how to work with steel and glass at the time, so I hired Mike Dupille and Scott Curry, two established and talented glass artists, to help me create this sculpture.” Scott took the lead on the metal and Mike on the glass, and Lisa served as an apprentice on the project. “That’s where I fell in love with glass.”



Lisa Stirrett, Path Finder, made of core-drilled stone and cast glass stone. This stone and glass cairn helps commuters and visitors find their way and is one of five sculptures for the Kitsap Transit and Ferry Terminal in Bremerton, Washington.

From there, the artist began to receive other commissions. Washington State maintains a roster for artists on public buildings that renews every three years, and Stirrett got her name on that list. Sometimes the roster generated new commission leads. Other times people would see her work in person or online and call her directly.

“One request for proposals came out two days before I was due to leave for Africa. A donor had put up money for artwork at a new library building and wanted an art piece that spoke to her memories of a childhood spent playing on Puget Sound. I quickly produced a Photoshop rendering of what was in my head. I went to Africa and my proposal and designs were chosen—welcome news on my return.”

Underwater Dream (2016) emerged as a 15-foot, multilayered sculpture spanning from ceiling to subfloor in the Kingston Library in Kingston, Washington. Bent glass panels hang from the children’s library ceiling to depict waves interspersed with salmon, codfish, and jellyfish. In the floor below the hanging sculpture, a glass tide pool is sunk into the floor that features crabs, limpets, sea cucumbers, sea anemones, and starfish, all protected by a glass panel flush to the floor.

Stirrett gauges that it was the hardest project she has ever attempted because of the need to engineer panels to suspend above patrons’ heads. “I did papier-mâché castings and hung them first to be sure everything was in balance before moving on to the glass panels. Fabrication certainly wasn’t easy, but it was a delight.” She is grateful for her own engineering brain and for a husband and dad who work in the construction industry. The combination allows her to bring engineering aptitude to the table with larger projects.

Establishing a Studio

In 2006, Lisa opened her first public art studio, Lisa Stirrett Glass Art Studio, in a small building located in Silverdale, Washington. From its inception, the glass studio was a social hub, organizing and staging community events, hosting other artists and culinary as well as performance arts, and participating in art walks. Being a center for the community took a lot of energy, but it was vibrant and invigorating. This little hub provided a place for Stirrett to show her work as well as spotlight other artists and nonprofits in the area.

In 2012, Lisa purchased a 3,000-square-foot 1940s-era building in Silverdale and moved her studio to the new location. The larger space allows her to do her own glass and provides a beautiful space for classes, team buildings, and do-it-yourself (DIY) projects.

Looking Under the Hood at the Studio

Lisa Stirrett Glass Art Studio is a multifaceted operation. Stirrett creates her personal art and public art commissions. The studio maintains a Creative Warriors area where customers can choose a DIY glass project from the shelves and walk through creating it with guidance by studio employees. The studio features one 8-foot, a 6-foot, and three smaller kilns.



Lisa Stirrett, Ohana Octopus, a private commission made with float glass and copper inclusion.



(Top and bottom left) Glass and core-ten steel embedded into stone for the Norwegian City of Poulsbo, Washington; Freedom Butterflies, fused and slumped. These butterflies give back to help stop sex trafficking.

The business has expanded to the point that Lisa now requires a small team of people to assist with current production and retail demand. A production manager re-creates popular retail items, teaches evening classes, and assists Lisa in larger commissioned projects. Part-time employees assist in cleaning, grinding, and wiring popular products as well as graphic design computer work. A studio manager handles customer service, retail, and human resources for the business.

Stirrett observes that running a large art studio in a small town is inherently challenging. A multifaceted business plan, flexibility, and a commitment to keep innovating and growing all combine to support a thriving business. Retail and classes plus private and public custom work are all essential business lines. The studio stays current with marketing practices by reaching out to customers through Facebook and Instagram and recently by placing an ad in *Glass Patterns Quarterly* magazine that proved to be a fruitful business decision.

The Underwater Dream, float glass panels, salmon, cod fish, and jelly fish for the Kingston Library, Kingston, Washington.

Art for a Purpose

Lisa Stirrett Glass Art Studio has a mission to create stunning works of art that impact and inspire. Its vision is to become a globally recognized art brand that empowers women.

At first, the new studio continued its original diffuse approach to community involvement, spotlighting different nonprofits every month. In 2015, Stirrett decided to concentrate her charitable efforts from the glass studio on two mission fields. One is local and works with a group called Shared Hope International in its mission to stop sex trafficking. The second focus is global and partners with Walk in the Light International to cofound and develop a pay-it-forward micro loan program. This latter program provides interest free, no-fee loans in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The initiative helps women conceive, start, develop, and run their own in-country sustainable businesses. Both initiatives are funded through the studio's sale of designated products that Lisa calls Products with a Purpose.

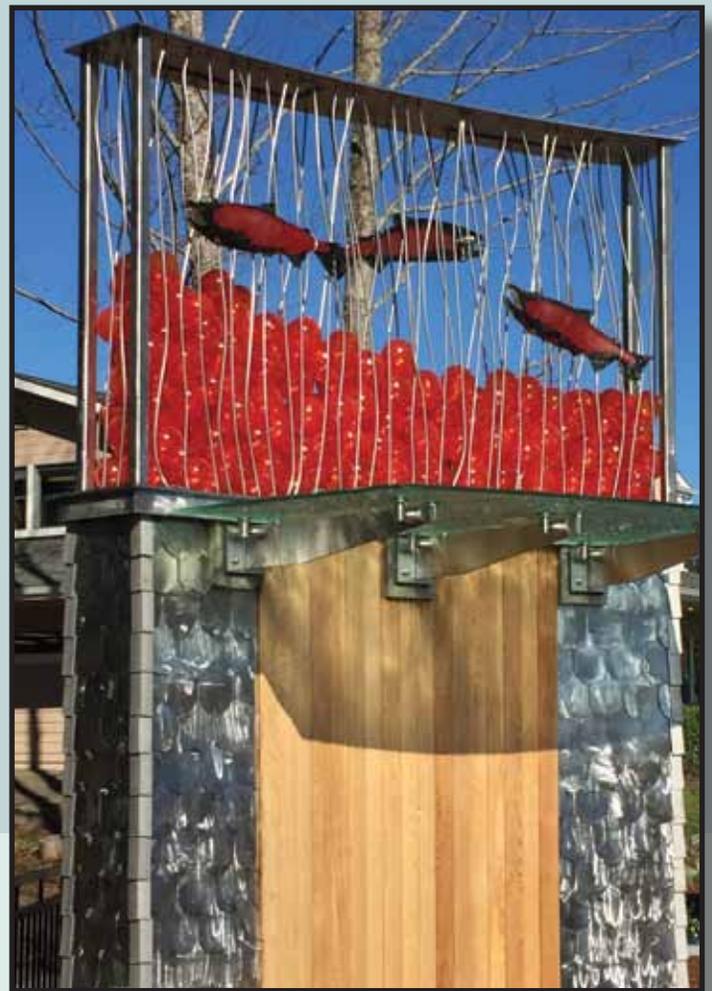
Glass butterflies that make up *Freedom Butterfly* walls generate proceeds and raise awareness of the movement to stop sex trafficking. Each butterfly represents a victim of sex trafficking finding freedom. Collectively, they represent a movement to recognize and end sex trafficking. Customers can choose to take their butterflies home or donate them to help launch a *Freedom Butterfly* wall. One wall stands in the studio, and others have been created in public spaces throughout the community.



The Metropolitan Crab Walk, float glass panels and neon lite glass Dungeness crabs for a commercial commission in Tacoma, Washington

The Washington glass studio also hosts a mechanism for its customers to contribute toward the West African micro loans. “We keep a book of each African woman’s bio profile with a summary of her business plan at the front of the store. Customers can review the book in the studio, and as some particular cause touches their hearts, they can contribute to support a specific woman.” The studio directly supports the initiative by making tea lights under its Products with a Purpose line. Proceeds from the sale of tea lights pay all of the administrative costs of the West African micro loan program so that 100 percent of what customers donate for loans keeps rolling from one woman to another.

In the four years it has operated, Lisa says that the global initiative has funded 88 women in five African villages. Thirty-five women have successfully completed their loan payments. A three-year tailor school opened, and each village has gardens and farms built and business training courses offered through the initiative. One village chief followed by providing night courses for the women in his village to teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic. “It is so exciting to watch this program change lives for women, their kids, and their communities for the good.”



The Sa'q' ad Kiosk, cast glass Coho Salmon, blown glass balls, float glass canopy, and stainless steel kelp and scales created for the Bucklin Hill Bridge in Silverdale, Washington.

Float Glass Product Lines

Stirrett specializes in making two- and three-dimensional pieces with float glass. “For nearly 19 years I have been perfecting and pushing its limits by fusing, slumping, casting, and carving this material and finding innovative ways to bring depth, texture, and reactions. I use 7-foot sheets of float glass to accommodate larger scale exterior work.”

The artist uses knowledge gleaned from these years of experience to develop product lines using the material. She recently brought to market a line of glass shapes she calls Glassy Cuts, a collection of more than 100 precut fusible glass shapes that other artists can use to make their own creations. They include ornaments and large wall hangings made of System 82 float glass.

Lisa wrote a small book to dispel some of the misconceptions about how one can use float glass and recycled glass successfully. The studio carries COE System 82 + or – 3 colorant that can work with both float and recycled glass. “We distribute 48 amazing colors of float glass frit, which provides full saturation with much less product than once thought necessary. We are now seeing a high demand for float glass, both because art glass is expensive and because people want to repurpose/recycle glass. Customers are having a lot of fun with it.” Lisa is scheduled to host a booth and teach classes using Glassy Cuts and float glass frit at the Glass Craft & Bead Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada, in April 2020.



A cast recycled glass shelf with fused and slumped glass books for the YMCA, LEED Silver certification in Silverdale, Washington.

The Artist at Work

Stirrett is the sole artist designing and making public work and private commissions in her studio. She spends a good part of each day in the studio running the business, but nights are when she is the most creative. “I create pieces for the studio floor, custom private commissions, and larger sculptures for public commissions. Custom work is my specialty. There is something special about connecting with a customer and knowing just what needs to be made. Then it is a joy to watch how the finished product connects with the customer.”

Lisa also loves when there is time to set the commissions aside and create straight from the heart. Favorite pieces include a line called *Warrior Spears*. Each spear carries a deep meaning and stands for strongholds being broken. “I believe we are all warriors for something, and these warrior spears stand in acknowledgement of that reality. The studio has T-shirts for sale with a logo that reads ‘I am a Warrior.’ Customers walking in the door with their own unique struggles and stories seem to feel a strong connection to those spears and castings.”

The Artist in the World

In her life away from the studio, Lisa loves to travel and is an avid diver. Both inform her artwork. “I pick up colors, movement, and inspiration from nature and regularly incorporate primitive images and writing into my glasswork. My work is organic and eclectic, not literal.”

As a personality, Stirrett has a strong, adventurous side. She also treasures an intuitive ability to quickly feel from clients what they’re trying to convey in a piece, whether on the scale of a sculpture or with buildings and public art.

For younger artists going to school and anticipating entry into the art world, Stirrett crystallizes her experience into an urgent piece of advice. “Make sure you come out of school knowing how to write a proposal, get up in front of people, and do math, even if it means you minor in art. Artistic expression and voice, materials, and technique can all come over time and with practice, but even an incredible artist will need solid skills on the business end to succeed in the art world.”

While Stirrett’s own path as a creator started out as a means to an end of staying home with young children, it developed over decades into a meaningful journey in its own right. Lisa has come to love the process of creating, standing for something significant, and letting her art stand for something as well. Both her art and her confidence in herself as an artist have grown beyond the small box that initially contained them, spilling over to give toward a greater good, both locally and globally.

G/A

Lisa Stirrett Glass Art Studio
Glassy Cuts

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www.GlassyCuts.com

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War and Peace, A Cultural Inquiry

by Marcie Davis

Photography by Robert A. Mickelsen

What would motivate a peace-loving glass artist to devote himself to the creation of elaborate guns out of flameworked glass? Ask Robert Mickelsen, and you will receive a thoughtful reply. You must understand that funny though it may be, he is not a gun enthusiast. Mickelsen doesn't collect guns. He doesn't even like guns. So how is it that he has spent seven years dedicating his artistic life to fabricating full-sized borosilicate firearms?

"My interest in them had to do with noticing how guns were such a pervasive part of our society. So many of my friends—people I was associated with—carried guns casually in the glove compartments of their cars and their homes, and I wanted to know what the deal was. When I started looking into them, the first thing I noticed was that like other weapons humans have made since the beginning of civilization, guns are made to be beautiful. They have a very definite aesthetic. It's an architectural aesthetic, a form that follows function, very much like buildings or cars. They're definitely beautiful!

"What started this off was me thinking, 'Well, this must say something about human nature, that the art and the war are like two sides of a coin. They describe us as a species, and you really can't have one without the other. I decided that I was going to portray the art side of it and do away with the war and death side of it. It's kind of a counterbalance to the cultural fascination that we have with weapons of death."

Bringing People Together

It's a brave artist who is willing to publicly take on a polarizing issue as explosive as the place of weapons in modern society, but Mickelsen has a philosophical approach. "I think one of the roles artists play in life is that you should be looking for some controversy. You should be trying to shake things up, to show a view of things that would be different from the normal human experience. That's where you change the world with your work."

Robert's journey gave rise to a groundbreaking series called *Weapons of Peace*. It's been very successful, but how has it been received by the public? "I have had very strong responses from people who've encountered my series," he muses. "At first they're confused, but when I explain my viewpoint, they understand. I've had the experience of having two people with opposite political views standing in front of one of my pieces, and they both come together to admire the work as art. I think it's been a fulfilling series."

The Challenges of Collaborative Art

To construct a *Weapon of Peace*, you are taking glass to the edge of what the material will tolerate. It takes patience, fortitude, and a collaborative effort among multiple artists. You couldn't hope to create a piece of this magnitude on your own.



(Clockwise from far left:) Shogun from the Weapons of Peace, The Art of War Series; members of the Subliminal Glass and Mickelsen Studios crews, Patrick McDougal (left), Christian Farrington (center), and Ryan Moring (right), assembling the glasswork; Shogun detail.



The Egyptian AK-47 from the Weapons of Peace Series, The Art of War.

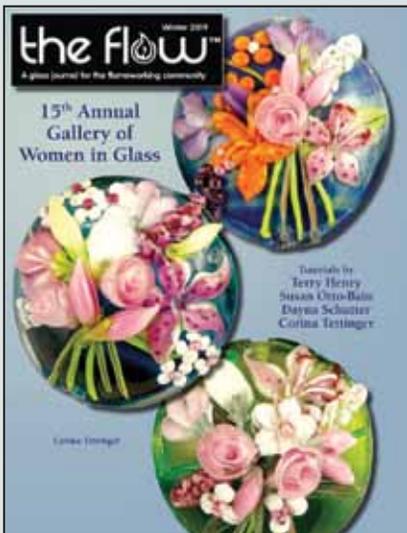
When a group of artists come together to collaborate on a complex project, there is much to consider. Who does what and when? According to Mickelsen, the tasks are delegated by mutual agreement, with the artists deciding which of their skills might best be used for the good of the whole.

Years ago when first considering the concept of working on a single project with other artists, Robert hesitated because he didn't think he would be good at letting go of being in charge. The artist had always considered himself to be a "control freak" and figured that would not lead to an easy collaborative working style, but he surprised himself.

"I discovered that I don't mind being relegated to parts making. It doesn't seem to bother me. Or if I'm called upon to do major construction moves, I can do that too. I just want to fit in wherever possible, with the ultimate goal being the finished piece.

"One of the key issues about any collaboration is to check your ego at the door. There is no overriding boss in a true collaboration. Everybody is an equal partner, so you have many chiefs, no warriors. We're all chiefs *and* warriors!"

It takes a flexible working style to flamework as a group. While furnace glassblowing has always been a "team sport," a dance between the players, flameworking is traditionally a solitary pursuit. One of the intriguing facets of lampworking collaborations is bringing the dance back in. It's not always simple. Oftentimes these artists do not know one another well, and they have to hit the ground running without much time to get to know each other's working rhythm or anticipating their moves.



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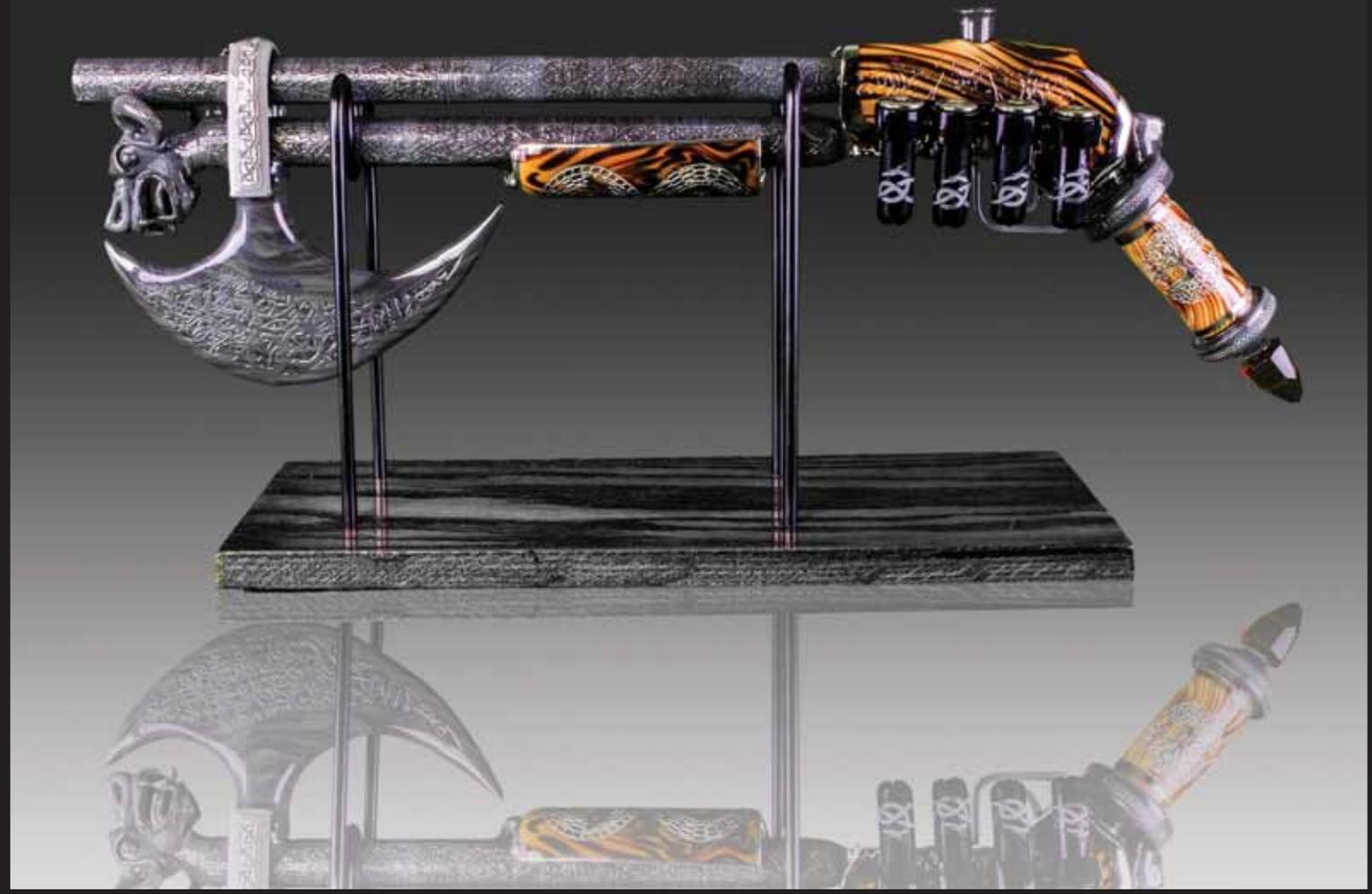
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(Far left to right) full work and details of Viking War Axe from the Weapons of Peace Series, The Art of War.

The Art of War

Most recently Mickelsen has been exploring a new aspect of *Weapons of Peace*. This particular part of the series is called *The Art of War*. It is comprised of four different pieces, each one based upon an ancient culture that was recognized for both its art and its war. “The cultures that we picked were Viking, Egyptian, Samurai, then one that is still in the works, Aztec.”

Viking and Egyptian are stunning. They have already been completed and sold quickly. The most recently completed piece, *Shogun*, represents Samurai culture. This monster masterpiece took eight people 600 combined man-hours to complete. The resulting artwork is 42 inches long, the scale of an actual sniper rifle.

The crew at Mickelsen Studios combined forces with Subliminal Glass and their crew from Vancouver, Washington. They’ve worked together with Mickelsen’s crew before and have flown to Florida several times now to create projects together.

Shogun was fabricated in two stages, the first of which was begun in January 2019. Then in October 2019, the Subliminal artists came to Mickelsen’s studio, and they all worked together for a week. Even though they had almost all of the component parts made in advance, it still took seven days to complete due to setbacks and difficulties.

Finding Collective Success

The physical construction of a massive piece such as *Shogun* is daunting. Previously created sections and components are preheated in the kiln, then attached one by one. Each time the crew takes a piece out of the kiln, they only have a short time to work to add the next segment. One crew member is left in charge of watching the clock to make certain that the piece doesn’t cool for too long. In and out of the kiln it goes—a wearying, tedious process that goes on for days. Even with the most methodical time management, small cracks and “checks” are unavoidable and must be repaired as soon as they are discovered.

Patrick McDougal, of Subliminal Glass, gets busy inspecting the piece when it’s out of the kiln looking for small fractures to mend. He uses a small hand torch, an indispensable tool when constructing projects of this scale. *Shogun* has a glass pumty or handle meant to support it, but that alone cannot be relied upon to keep the piece safe. Christian Farrington of the Mickelsen crew acts as a “spotter,” donning fireproof gloves and helping to support the massive piece as it’s moved in and out of the kiln. Reid Jones, meanwhile, thoughtfully considers his next move—attaching the trigger guard. He has to trim it and get it in exactly the right spot.



Mickelsen Studios Crew

Robert Mickelsen @ramickelsen
 Kyle Smith @smiffglass
 Ryan Moring @ryder_glass
 Christian Farrington @villainglass

Subliminal Glass Crew

Patrick McDougal @subliminalglass
 Reid Jones @doctajownz
 Justice Nelson @just_ice_glass
 David Cohen @buddahjew

With six or eight hands working the piece simultaneously, the complexity of it all can definitely lead to unexpected obstacles. “It’s absolutely unavoidable,” Mickelsen notes. “We are asking a lot of the material in making these things. The material objects, and *when* it objects, we have to appease it and fix it!”

A little later on, the front bayonet is added, as well as the head site and scope. Finally the work in the torch flame and assembly is done, but the process is far from over. There is sandblasting, then the meticulous gilding of Japanese characters on the sides of the gun, including the Bushido Code. The edges are cleaned up so that it’s a nice, crisp image.

“Quite honestly, I’ve never been involved with anything quite like this,” says Mickelsen. “I have to hand it to Patrick McDougal for convincing me that such projects are doable. I always avoided things this large, this complex, and this difficult because of the extremely high price point that would result. What’s happened with the two crews, however, is that we’ve managed to sell every rifle we’ve made so far. The only one that’s still available is this one that we’ve just finished. With that kind of track record, it’s pretty hard to say no.”

Shogun is an outstanding example of artistic excellence within a functional framework. While it may be a bit cumbersome when used for smoking, it has been diligently designed to do so. It beautifully reflects the Samurai culture and is a tribute to what a group of artists can accomplish when they come together with focus and vision.

GA



Marcie Davis has been involved in glass art education since 1985 and began producing hot glass videos in 1997 after 15 years of frameworling in local schools. She has worked with Northstar Glass and Bethlehem Burners and has written for many glass magazines. Currently she distributes Lauscha hand pulled glass rods and imports handblown German Christmas ornaments.

Marcie’s podcast series, Glasscaster, brings inspiring interviews to the glass community. You can listen to them at firelady.com and on iTunes. She was also instrumental in the development of the Glass Patterns Quarterly series, Glass Expert Webinars™, which bring video and education full circle shared on a global scale.

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Leopold & Rudolf Blaschka, *Passiflora laurifolia* (Model 390), 1893. Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Everything Old is New Again

by Sara Sally LaGrand

Photographs Courtesy of The Ware Collection of Blaschka Glass Models of Plants, Harvard University Herbaria/Harvard Museum of Natural History

The first time a flameworker or a glass artist encounters the *Glass Flowers* collection at the Harvard Museum of Natural History, the feeling is a little overwhelming. If you wanted to be overcome with the beauty of an object, the work of Rudolf and Leopold Blaschka could create that feeling for you. Just remember to go with a friend and pack smelling salts or some other substance to help you revive. The work is unbelievably outstanding, especially given the simple equipment they used to create such delicate masterpieces, and they did it over 130 years ago.

The Origins of a Magnificent Collection

When you arrive at the exhibit, you will find the room cool and slightly dark, with each of the specimens behind glass in the newly renovated space. It's very much like a library, punctuated with the sounds of school children wandering around on their field trip. The common phrases "Is it really glass?" and "How can that be glass?" can be heard throughout the room.



Exhibit panorama of Glass Flowers. Photo by Jennifer Berglund © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Exploring the Glass Flowers Collection at the Harvard Museum of Natural History

The first time I saw the collection was in 2003 during the International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) conference at Lowell, Massachusetts. We hopped a bus that took us to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to tour the one room dedicated to the 4,300-plus models owned by Harvard. The Ware Collection is named for the financial benefactors, mother and daughter Elizabeth and Mary Lee Ware. Under the direction of Professor George Lincoln Goodale, the first director of the Botanical Museum, they were underwriters for the exquisite collection you see today. It was life changing for me. A “beyond beginner” in lampworking at the time, I had enough knowledge to know that the skill level of this father and son team from the 1890s was extraordinary in every sense of the word.

Let me back up a little, since you might need a history refresher on how this all began. Leopold Blaschka was a Bohemian glassworker in what is now the Czech Republic. He learned the skill from his family who were glass craftsmen of the tourist trade. One day he was stuck in the middle of the sea on a boat and was observing jellyfish floating about in the sea. While waiting for the wind to return, he decided jellyfish made of glass might just be a good idea.

*Leopold & Rudolf Blaschka, Prosthechea radiata (Model 1), 1887.
Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.*





Rudolf Blaschka, Iris versicolor (Model 609), 1896. Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.



Rudolf Blaschka, Rhododendron maximum (Model 608), 1896. Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

The pieces later caught the attention of scientists and science professors. The practice of putting an invertebrate in formaldehyde for the purpose of study led to lackluster results that culminated in a pile of goo at the bottom of the glass jar, but a glass model would offer an opportunity for three-dimensional observation and study. Museums and schools of science began ordering the models. A business began, years passed, and Leopold's son Rudolf held the promise to carry on with this new business venture. At that point, a team was formed.

Once Professor Goodale, the newly appointed overseer of the new Harvard Natural History Museum traveled to Dresden, Germany, to meet the team in 1886, he was familiar with the animal-centered work of the Blaschkas. Professor Goodale had designs on asking them to use their fantastic skills to build a collection for study in a museum setting that was equally difficult to preserve, that being flowers.

There were stops and starts, but eventually Leopold and Rudolf worked exclusively for Harvard, creating the fantastic collection now housed at 26 Oxford Street in Cambridge that was financed by the Ware family fortune. The work was 50 years in the making, with the death of Leopold in 1895 and Rudolf carrying on. In 1892, Rudolf traveled to North America to observe plants, draw them, and collect specimens from the Cambridge area, Jamaica, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Missouri. The models that were made from these reference specimens and drawings are on exhibit today.

Caring for an Irreplaceable Treasure

Let's fast-forward. Today there is so much to learn from the collection 135 years later, not only from a scientific standpoint, as the collection was built to serve, but also as a student of the glass. It is fascinating to peer closely at the root structure of the iris in *Iris versicolor* (Model 609) created in 1896 by Rudolf and see the tiniest wire exposed. They used wire, not only to bolster and support but also to "add gesture" as described by Public Relations Specialist Bethany Carland-Adams. "It's fun to see how it adds gesture and movement to the specimens." In fact, the Blaschkas were not purists of the glass. While the models were primarily made of soft glass, they were also treated with paint, enamels, and glue—anything that might convey the correct surface of real flowers, plants, and seeds at all stages of a plant's growth, bloom, and decay.

The care of the collection falls on the shoulders of Collection Manager Jenny Brown and Conservator Scott Fulton who manage the collection full time. Conservator Fulton confirms that he is not a glassblower. "Oh, no, there is no flame repair," Fulton says. "I have a conservation plan to maintain the stability of the collection that does not include creating new glass parts. When they break, I fashion a 'fill' of sorts. The models are often covered in an animal glue/resin and painted. The iris is a good example, because it was actually made later in Rudolf's career when he was using colored glass as a basis. The iris leaves are green glass, then covered with the animal glue. Otherwise, the model would not accept the paint. The matte finish you see is an organic varnish." That made for a stellar piece of work but one that was difficult to maintain.

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Rudolf Blaschka, *Nymphaea odorata* (Model 731), 1906.
Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.



Rudolf Blaschka, *Hypericum ascyron* (Model 676), 1900.
Photo by Natalja Kent © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

In years past when buildings on campus were heated with coal, a layer of coal dust settled on the models, which had to be carefully cleaned. Then you also have the issue of humidity. Fulton explained that the dryer weather in winter, followed by the humidity and heat in summer, causes the organic outer material to shrink and expand, oftentimes causing the glass to break.

The collection has been on permanent exhibit since the project began. The most extensive renovation of the exhibit was completed in 2016. Collection storage was moved to a new and improved space with climate control, says Collection Manager Jenny Brown. “The renovation project helps maintain the collection and keeps the models in a more stable environment. The addition of the eight new cases allows us to move the displays in and out to keep the exhibit fresh and highlight different parts of the collection.” Currently only about half of the models are on exhibit at any given time. Fulton agrees. “Keeping the models in a climate-controlled area has made a big difference in maintaining the collection.”

The Need for Reversible Conservation Techniques

All methods of conservation must be reversible, explains Brown, since methods of repair will improve. She points out a repair made to a leaf prior to her tenure at the museum. Glue used for previous repairs has aged and discolored, an example of good intentions causing further harm. Going forward, new methods are likely to be discovered and adopted. Being able to remove the prior repair is essential.

Brown is steeped in the history of the collection as well as the mastery of the work. She points out a few orchids that are among the first models made for the collection. They are beautiful but less detailed and subdued in color. The nearby iris, made almost ten years later, shows how the Blaschkas’ skills changed and improved over time. Everything from the detailed root system to the blooms is perfect, an exact replica of what an iris should look like. “Rudolf began to experiment, making his own colored glass and using different materials to replicate surface textures.”

Additional Offerings

In addition to the 4,300-plus models, the collection represents 780 plant species with enlarged details of characteristics that were not visible at first glance. These include flowering plants from around the world as well as nonflowering plants, a pollination series that includes the insect that would act as a pollinator, and a collection of diseased fruits that are currently on display in the new cases. The fruits are from the rose family and include apples, pears, strawberries, apricots, peaches, and plums.

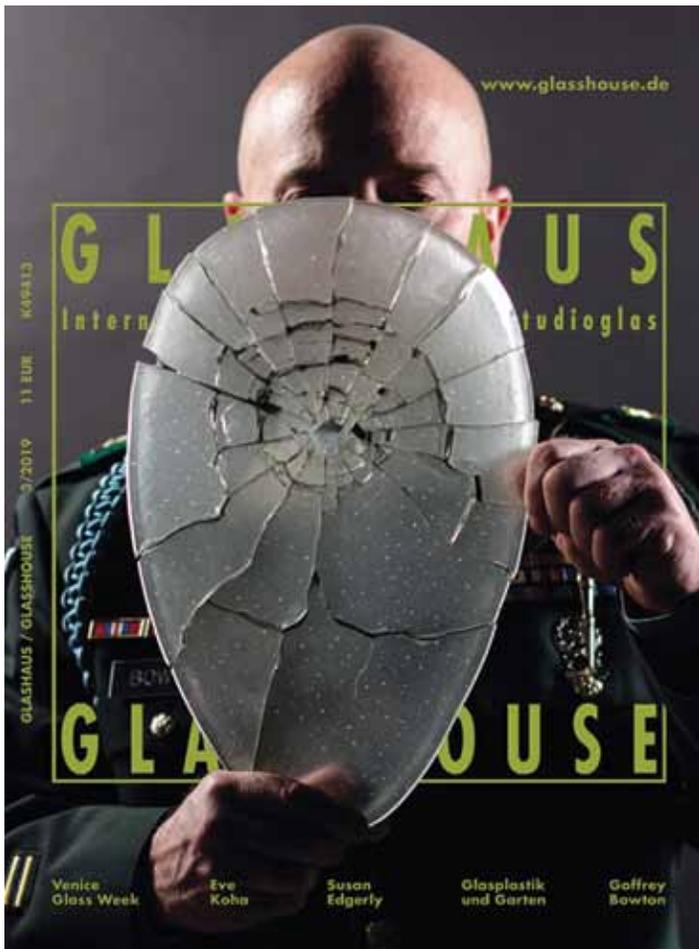
The Harvard Museums of Science & Culture is excited to announce the publication of *Glass Flowers: Marvels in Art and Science at Harvard* featuring stunning new photographs. Available in spring 2020 from the Harvard Museum of Natural History gift shop, this book is a companion to *Sea Creatures in Glass: The Blaschka Marine Animals at Harvard* published in 2016. The museum is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 26 Oxford Street on the Harvard University campus. Visit hmsc.harvard.edu for more details. **GA**



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 to find out more about the artist.

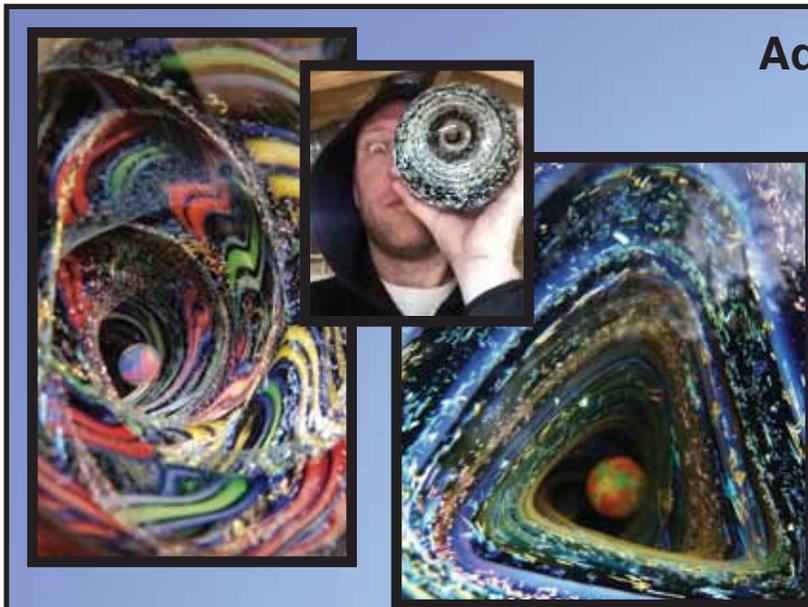
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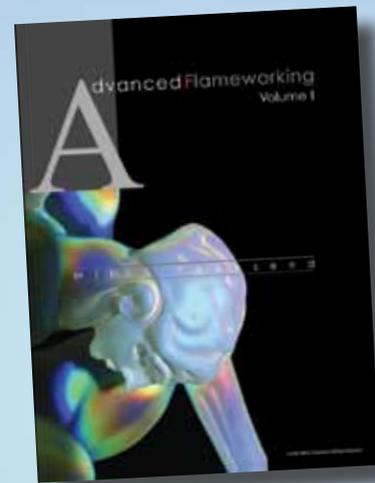
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Margaret Zinser Hunt

Creating Glass Butterflies and a Legacy



*Borosilicate Butterflies,
2017 and 2018.*

by Vicki Schneider

Margaret Zinser Hunt is best known for her stylized flame-worked butterflies. Whether in a bead, pendant, necklace, or sculpture, her nonrepresentational insects communicate the creativity and joy she feels as she creates them.

In the year before starting graduate school, Margaret received a Hot Head torch and a small beadmaking kit as a Christmas present in 2001. Several days later, she told her family about her gift and enthusiastically explained that there were artists who actually made a living creating beads. According to Margaret, her family laughed and jokingly told her to keep her job. Clearly, they are not laughing now and are very supportive. What started as a fun hobby has evolved into a full-time, successful career filled with singularly beautiful work that is admired and collected by others.

Starting Out

At first, Margaret was very nervous working at her torch, but over time, she worked through her instinctive fear of setting herself on fire. The kit she had received included a book by Cindy Jenkins, *Making Glass Beads*, which she leaned on quite heavily for the first few months. Margaret reflects that her first couple of beads looked like chewed up pieces of chewing gum. For several years, she learned her craft primarily by relying on Jenkins' book, talking with other artists, and following the International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) online forum and the Wet Canvas website.

Margaret started selling her creations to her friends and their friends who bought her handmade beads right off her neck. Once she learned about the online site JustBeads.com, she started posting work there, and her sales gained momentum.



Borosilicate Butterflies with crushed Gilson opals, 2019.

Entomology Interpreted

The turning point in Margaret's career came a couple of years later while she was earning her master's degree in entomology. At the time, her bead designs were explorations in color and texture and very deliberately had nothing to do with insect content. She remembers thinking, "I'm not going to make any bugs. This is my freedom from entomology," then quickly adds, "but you know, you should never say never."

When Hunt was approaching the end of her master's program, she had to decide if she wanted to get her PhD or find an alternative. She really didn't want to move from Tucson, Arizona, where she had recently purchased a home and built her studio. In addition, as an academic, she was more interested in teaching and research and less on grant writing and its associated "money chase."

Working through her last year of graduate school, Margaret's beads started paying more bills than her meager salaries from her research and teaching assistantships. In her deliberations, she surmised that if she worked full time at beadmaking, she could support herself, so that was what she decided to do.

Margaret finished her master's at the end of 2004 and participated in her first bead show in Tucson in February 2005. She still wasn't making any insect content, and it wasn't until about two years later that she began creating scarab beetles.

Focus on Butterflies

During undergraduate and graduate school, Hunt drew highly detailed biological illustrations as a sideline. "It was a fun hobby, but it's not art oriented. Each illustration could have over a thousand different measurements to make sure that the scale multiplication was accurate. I wanted to translate some of that illustration in glass without being directly representational, but I didn't want it to be cartoony. The thing that freed me up was learning vitreous enamel techniques from Bronwen Heilman. At that point, I started doing scarab beetles. Over the last 15 years, I have added other insect-themed content."

A stressful time in her life led Margaret to focus her work almost exclusively on butterflies. In January 2017, her husband was involved in a very serious car accident. "He was in the hospital for about two weeks, then had close to three months of recuperation at home. That understandably hijacked the beginning of the year.

"When I returned to the studio, I had to exert a lot of effort to stay focused in the studio. It felt very frenetic. Financially I needed to be working, but creatively, it felt like I was forcing a fit. We can't always turn that light on and be creative. I find that anytime I've had a long absence from the studio, I have to force it for a bit until I find that groove again. I have found that to be harder than it's ever been for me. I was craving bright and happy things, so I ended up focusing on butterflies. They were this thing to focus on that I enjoyed."



(Top to bottom) Steel Blue Borosilicate Butterfly, 2019; Butterfly Wing Necklace with frameworked and vitreous enameled wings, 2017.



Boro and Soft Glass

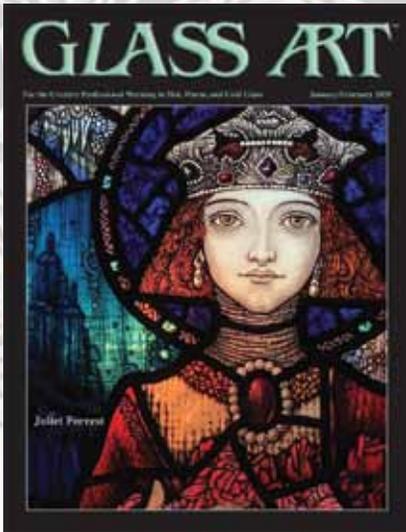
Similar to many beadmakers, Margaret initially worked in soda lime glass. Switching from a Hot Head to an oxygen/propane torch opened the door to other possibilities. After a few years, she wanted to increase the scale and complexity of her work and found that boro was a good solution.

“It just became exciting to me. I still love soda lime glass. I really love the contrast, particularly with vitreous enameling. It’s a very quiet, meditative process. It has a very different energy, and I really like having both of those options. I’ve enjoyed the challenge of trying to translate some of the aesthetic that I get with vitreous enameling to borosilicate.”

Recently, Margaret has limited her work almost exclusively to boro, but that choice wasn’t due to the medium or the aesthetic.

Rather, it was due to her pregnancy. She found early on that the pine oil and solvents she used with vitreous enamel were a major nausea trigger for her. Now that she’s had her daughter Mireille, she’s returning to vitreous enamels with no adverse effects.

Margaret doesn’t prefer one type of glass over another. She often picks her projects based on her mood instead. As a self-employed glassworker who is proficient in both types of glass, she greatly appreciates her freedom to choose to work on whatever she wants. “From a business standpoint, I would probably be better served sticking with one or the other. I like having both. I don’t feel I’m done with soda lime by any stretch of the imagination, and I don’t see borosilicate as something that we ‘step up to.’ They’re different beasts, and I love them both.”



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(Left to right) Monarch Butterfly Wing Necklace and Soda Lime Butterfly Pinwheel Bead, 2018.



Inspiration and Playtime

Margaret's inspiration is sparked by the natural world, especially her beloved butterflies. She grows milkweed, vegetables, and flowers to attract insects to her yard and has the advantage of living in the Sonoran Desert where she can explore its amazing biodiversity.

Hunt's other source of inspiration is flameworking itself. "So much of what we do relies on muscle memory. I've made so many butterflies that the path of steps to make one is much more intuitive than it used to be." Her familiarity with the process gives her the freedom to think about variations and explore other ideas while she's working. She keeps a notepad nearby while she is working so she can keep track of those ideas. Sometimes she revisits them fairly quickly, and others take years to be realized.

"I do very little representational work. There are plenty of artists out there who do amazing representational insect-themed work, but that's not quite what speaks to me. I like borrowing color patterns and the imagery, but I really find that creatively stylized work is much more up my alley.

"I visit monarch-themed content quite a bit, but it is more creatively fulfilling to give myself the freedom to just use a specific species as a starting place. I've probably made hundreds if not thousands of butterflies at this point. Each one teaches me something different. The lesson gets a bit more intricate or meaningful with each one. The insect world is so diverse, I will never run out of ideas to explore." Reminiscent of the insects she creates, Hunt considers herself in a perpetual state of pupation, continually learning, evolving, and chasing a moving target.

Giving Back

Hunt feels very strongly about giving back, which she's done by serving on the boards of directors for Beads of Courage and the Sonoran Glass School. Her vision was to help connect those two organizations. One of her most notable accomplishments was the creation of a beadmaking marathon that has evolved into the highly successful Bead Challenge fundraiser and community service day that is sponsored each September across the United States by Beads of Courage.

Even though Margaret admits that most people might find it boring, she enjoys learning how to be a better board member. She has invested many hours learning about nonprofit and board governance to ensure that both organizations have the proper infrastructure, policies, and procedures in place. She was also instrumental in establishing the Sonoran Glass Art Show and coupling it with various weeklong events, including classes and a flame-off fundraising competition.

Sharing Her Passion

Some might say that Hunt's love of teaching is hereditary. Both of her parents are retired college professors, and there are many other teachers in her family. Even though she used to teach more before she got married and started building a family, she thoroughly enjoys sharing what she makes through her classes. "Seeing new techniques or new ideas spark with students is something that is just extraordinarily soul feeding. Given the history of glassworking and how guarded techniques were, I find it refreshing to be part of the modern-day antidote to that secrecy."

Hunt designs her classes to meet the needs and interests of her students. Broadly speaking, she teaches classes in borosilicate with nature-themed content and classes on nature-inspired sculpting techniques in soda lime glass. "I've worked with a lot of students who want to include more off mandrel work. I think mandrel beads are wonderful, and it is absolutely possible to build an entire creative career off



(Left to right) Soda Lime Butterfly Pinwheel Pendant (2018) and Bead (2019).

of beads made on the mandrel. There are so many different ways to challenge yourself, but I think, at least for me, my technical skill really expanded when I stopped using a mandrel as a security blanket. I really like helping intermediate beadmakers get more comfortable working off mandrel and learning about hot and cold seals."

Margaret describes her teaching style as being as open and encouraging as possible with her students. "I try to focus my teaching on more techniques rather than 'here's how to make this exact item.' I feel my students are better served when I can help them as quickly as possible to spark ideas on how they're going to adapt what they learned from me in their own repertoire. I hope that's what happens. I want to focus on process and not product."

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Borosilicate Butterfly Mezuzah, 2018.

Hunt feels extraordinarily lucky that her teaching has taken her all over the United States as well as to Vancouver, British Columbia, and various countries in Europe, most notably the Netherlands and Switzerland. She also teaches regularly at Glass Craft & Bead Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Another way Margaret shares her knowledge and passion is through her writing. She has created a number of tutorials and writes regularly for *Glass Art* magazine. “When you’re teaching or writing a tutorial, you have to step back from the work a bit. I think that’s a healthy process. I also like thinking about systems and techniques for maintaining a creative focus in healthy and constructive ways. Getting to ask my friends about that and writing articles about it is cool. It’s something that I would do even if I weren’t writing articles about it.”

Since her first exposure as a young girl to handmade beads in her hometown of Oberlin, Ohio, Margaret has evolved into an artist who is highly respected and admired. Whether writing, creating, teaching, or contributing to the glass community, she continues to build on her legacy with good works and her beautiful creations.

GA

Margaret Zinser Hunt
 mz@mzglass.com
 www.mzglass.com
 Instagram @mzglass
 Facebook @margaretzinsertartist

Vicki Schneider is humbled to follow the tradition of Venetian flameworking artists to produce decorative solid and blown glass art. Primarily working off-hand in COE 104 soft glass, her creations are informed and inspired by her “extra-ordinary” childhood growing up on the Jersey shore. Her current bodies of work include Mama’s Garden, composed of life-like blown and solid flowers, and Childhood, vignettes celebrating the innocence of youth.



In 2009, Schneider opened Expressive Glass, a nine-torch teaching studio in Buffalo, New York, with the goal to share her knowledge and passion for glass with novice and experienced glassworkers. She also seeks to build the flameworking community in Western New York. Since 2006, the artist has introduced more than 500 students to the magic of this amazing medium and has studied with and hosted many of the world’s most accomplished and respected artists. Learn more about Vicki’s work and her studio at www.expressiveglass.com.

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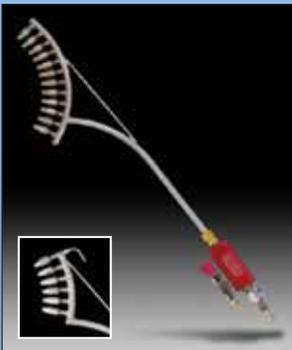
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Dan and crew, 1976

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Creativity

COMMISSIONS

LOOKING AT THE PROS AND CONS

by Milon Townsend

Not every artist likes commissions, since they are, by definition, not his or her own idea exactly. If you have a wealth of ideas burbling up within yourself that are crying out to be expressed, making what somebody else wants you to make might not be the best use of your time. If your unique way of seeing the world, your perspective, or *anschauung* as Kant would call it, will show us all another path, another tao, then we will all be the poorer for you subjugating your skills in service to a lesser goal. That is how some artists see commissions.

Others among us do not like commissions because of the inherent uncomfortable feeling of selling something we haven't yet made, of pleasing the client, of fulfilling expectations. We almost never make exactly what they expect, and we need to find a way to make that not be a problem. Besides, how do you price something that you have, by definition, never done before? You're not really sure how long it will take and how many times you'll have to do it until you, or perhaps your spouse, and the client are satisfied.

By commissions, I'm not talking about changing the color of something you made in red to blue or making something you've done 6 inches in a 12-inch size. We're talking about something that you've never done before, something that has never crossed your mind, something that you're not really sure how to approach, either technically or aesthetically.

One example of that is a Sasquatch with a bottle of wine that I did for the owner of Bigfoot Winery. In this case, I mixed and used a new color combination and could finally see clearly what his face looks like! It's not for everyone. Sometimes, as with me, the discussions about the piece—how much it will cost, how long it will take, how the client will receive it, how to determine if you've fulfilled your brief, what the standards are to define their satisfaction—are taking place in front of an audience.



(Top to bottom) Milon Townend, Bigfoot, detail of Sasquatch face and full Sasquatch sculpture

So there *are* things to be concerned about. Fine. But for me, commissions, or as we call them, special orders, are a key element in my own growth as an artist and as a creative person. If, as I believe, creativity is only evidenced in action, in creating the solution to a problem, then the parameters imposed by the client's interests, time frame, budget, and the physical requirements of the project create a fine kettle of fish for me to fiddle about with and come up with any number of solutions.

Gaining New Perspectives

In my own experience, commissions are often an opportunity for me to go somewhere I was already interested in going, learning and making something new, and having someone else happy to pay me to do it. For a good part of every year, I work in public demonstrations, explaining my technical and thought processes about whatever it is that I'm working on. I encourage people to ask me about making something special, unusual, or unique just for them, and I field a lot of requests every day that I'm out there. However, not everything is, in fact, a good idea. People do not always have the budget to pursue a serious idea in a serious way, and I'm way past trying to do something for anyone for nothing, or not very much. If the divine synchronicity *does* occur when a patron is interested in something that I share an interest in and they can actually afford a decent budget, then I'm all about it.



Milon sharing with attendees at a busy Faire booth



Koi wall-mounted piece

It is my frequent experience that making something new for someone will open the way for me to develop it as an entirely self-sustaining direction. At the very least, talking with people about a host of their own personal interests and passions opens me up to an entire world of new perspectives and ideas. I learn a great deal about . . . everything. Sugar gliders. Peruvian white bats. The external environment of the yellow banana slug. Martial arts as dance. The North American black-footed ferret. Koi.

These sculptures are frequently to be given as gifts to people who have made that image or icon their life's work, passion, or interest. I can't afford to get it wrong, so I must immerse myself in the essence of the thing. I have to go beyond the external representation or form of the object and pierce through to the internal character. I need to get to the point where I can strip away the well-known aspects of that thing and allow the viewer an intimate moment into a little known aspect of the idea, object, or creature.



Public installation of the ACA Memorial nighttime detail



Public installation of the ACA Memorial daytime detail

Considering the Cost and Benefits

Occasionally, a commission will provide entry into a level of scale and public installation that I wouldn't have had the wherewithal to produce on my own dime. If I did, I'd be looking to find a home for the monumental work in which I would have invested months and thousands of dollars. It's important to listen to these extremely different ideas and cogitate on whether or not it's something you'd actually be interested in doing. Commissions are almost always an open doorway into another world, and it's up to you to decide if you're going to want to go down that particular rabbit hole or just do the one piece and go back to your comfortable, orderly life. That might have been the case to start with, which I doubt, but you know what I mean.

It doesn't always work perfectly, but it happens often enough that I continue to expose myself to the inherent risk of the proposal, given that the potential reward is so great. It absolutely isn't about the money. I make a lot more on my production work, where the thinking and experimentation with a way of representing a line or color or texture has already been refined to a high degree of certitude, but that would be like comparing commuting with bushwhacking a new trail through undiscovered country. You're going to get a little bruised and scratched, maybe break a leg falling into an unseen trap, but the view from the crest when you get there is almost always worth it.

A client brought me an image of a design that had been widely circulated on the Internet the year before of a goblet with a shark, which appeared menacingly wonderful when partially filled with wine. It had never actually been created in substance, but had only ever been a digital representation. I had to figure out how to do it for real, and it was a doozy! I learned a lot by doing it and created a line of *Inhabited Goblets*, picking up where the shark ended, with some successful response from my collectors.



(Left to right) Milon Townsend, Shark from the Inhabited Goblet Series, completed empty goblet and detail of the goblet filled with wine

When to Say No

In my dotage, I am learning when to decline a challenge. “This is not what I do” is a useful phrase to practice in the mirror until it looks like you really mean it. That would include horses, for me. I can do a decent enough equestrian piece, but when offered a central role in a once-a-decade, world-class equestrian event, with featured billing for major bodies of work that would take me a year to develop, I passed. My horses are not so bad, but I don’t pretend to have a complete grasp of the confirmation of musculature and bone structure that is so central to the true millionaire aficionado. I passed on the opportunity.

Cats and dogs? I won’t do ’em. They’re too personal. They’re a portrait of a beloved member of the family that I cannot hope to grasp successfully most of the time. I’ve had a few good experiences, but the bad definitely outweighs the good in this category. I don’t do cartoon characters either, not just because of the obvious licensing concerns, but that creative ground has been pounded so flat and so hard that nothing new will grow there anymore.

Cremains? I don’t work with them. I know that some glass artists have pretty much made a career out of this category. I’ve done it a few times myself, but generally speaking, I find the feelings engendered by this kind of piece to be way too intimate, personal, and intense for me to actually want to be involved with doing it. Klein bottles—way more trouble than they’re worth. Pipes? That train left the station a long, long time ago, and I have no intention of going back. I have a list of things that I won’t make, and I trot it out if I need to. “Policy” is a great tool for putting the blame somewhere else, even when you’re the one who came up with it.

Generally, you can tell by looking around my shop where my own interests and skills lie. If somebody wants something in a particular color, I ask them to pick a color that they see, since that is something I have. Hard to work with what you don’t have. Generally, if they like the style, line, composition, and detail of my extant work, the chance that they’ll be pleased with something that I do especially for them is pretty good. I try to stay away from what I don’t do and try to recommend someone else for them to try when I know I’m not the guy for that project.

GA



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 or Google “Milon Townsend images” to view more of his work and go to thebluemoonpress.com for his educational materials. You can also e-mail milontownsend@gmail.com. The sequence presented here is excerpted from Milon’s upcoming book on Creativity.

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The CGS Glass Prize and New Graduate Review 2019



by Pam Reekie

The Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) is delighted to announce the winners of the CGS 2019 Glass Prize and graduates to be included in the *New Graduate Review 2019*. All British and Irish students graduating from an accredited course in 2018 were eligible to enter.

Over 50 graduates from 16 colleges entered the Glass Prize & *New Graduate Review 2019*. The work was of exceptional quality this year and showed the breath of techniques and skills needed for working with this fascinating material, from lampworking and casting to blowing and fusing.

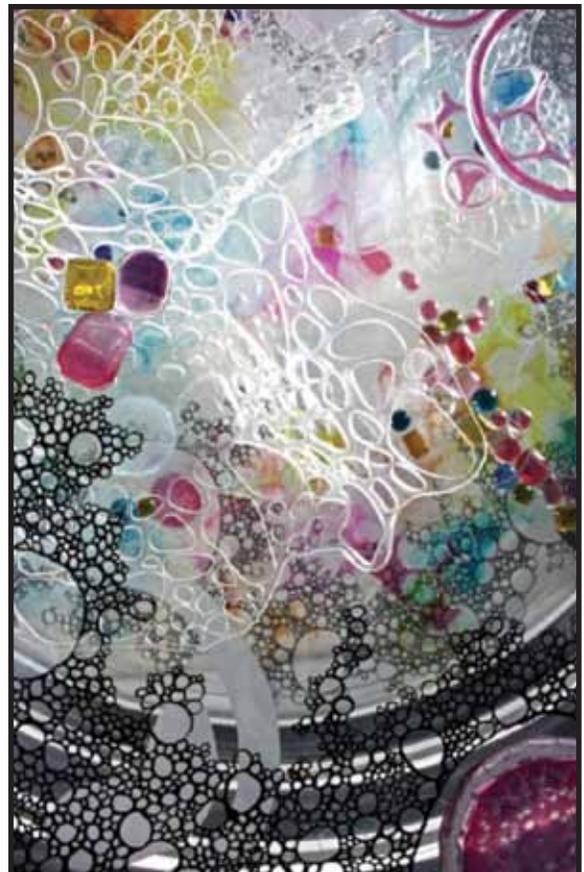
First Prize was awarded to Katie Spiers of Dublin, Ireland; Second Prize went to Bethan Yates of Swansea, Wales; and Third Prize was presented to Calum Dawes of Sunderland, England. First place recipient Katie Spiers recently shared: "I am very honored to have won the annual CGS Glass Students Awards and to have work published in the *New Graduate Review 2019*. I would like to thank my teacher Caroline Madden for guiding me along the way."

An Impressive Array of Glass Art

The selection panel included artist Bruce Marks, glass collectors/Trustees Michael Barnes and Alan J. Poole, and glass artist/Trustee Sarah L. Brown. The panel had a long and arduous task to select the three winners, five Highly Commended entrants, and an additional 12 Commended graduates who will all be included in the Review.

Panelist Bruce Marks described the quality of the entries. "It was an honor to be asked to help in the decision process for the CGS prize. The standard of work submitted is heartening and bodes well for the future of U.K. glass. The range of techniques and diversity of design were truly impressive and made the decision process challenging. I wish all of the graduates well who took part in their future careers and look forward to seeing how their work develops."

*Katie Spiers, The Fading Call of the Curlew, First Prize.
Photo by Hannah Bloom.*



*Bethan Yates, Under the Microscope, Second Prize.
Photo by Colin Telford.*



*Calum Dawes, Pull, Third Prize.
Photo by Jo Howell.*

Promoting Creativity in Glass

The CGS *New Graduate Review 2019* is a 16-page publication that will be circulated to all CGS members and Associates as well as through *Neues Glas – New Glass: Art & Architecture* magazine and CRAFTS social media. This publication will give CGS an opportunity to showcase work from the talented prize winners along with the work of several more emerging British graduates. As more and more creative courses are threatened with closure, it is vital to promote all glass education courses.

CGS is extremely grateful to all of its sponsors who provided financial support and prizes for the Glass Prize and the *New Graduate Review 2019*, without whom this would not have been possible. The sponsors include Professor Michael Barnes MD FRCP; The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London Charity Fund; Creative Glass UK; Pearsons Glass; *Neues Glas – New Glass: Art & Architecture* magazine; Alan J. Poole; and CRAFTS. **GA**

The Contemporary Glass Society is widely regarded as the foremost organization in the U.K. for promoting and encouraging cutting-edge glass and glassmakers within the wider art world. Visit www.cgs.org.uk for more information on becoming a member of CGS.

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2020
Commemorative
Bead Artist
Leah Nietz

Becoming an Art Show Professional

Creating a Memorable Exhibit

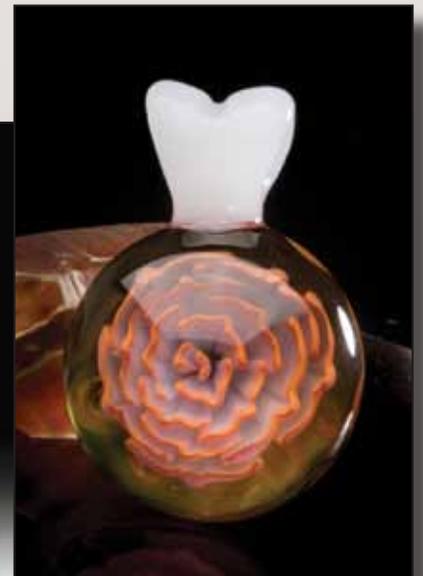
by Dennis Brady

When it comes to attracting art show attendees to your booth, the quality of your display can make or break your success. How much you sell at an art show booth will depend directly on how well the items in it are displayed and how that display reflects your work attitude. A shoddy display suggests shoddy workmanship. Show your customers that you care by putting some effort into your display. First impressions count, and if customers are impressed with your display, they're more likely to be impressed with your work—perhaps impressed enough to buy it.

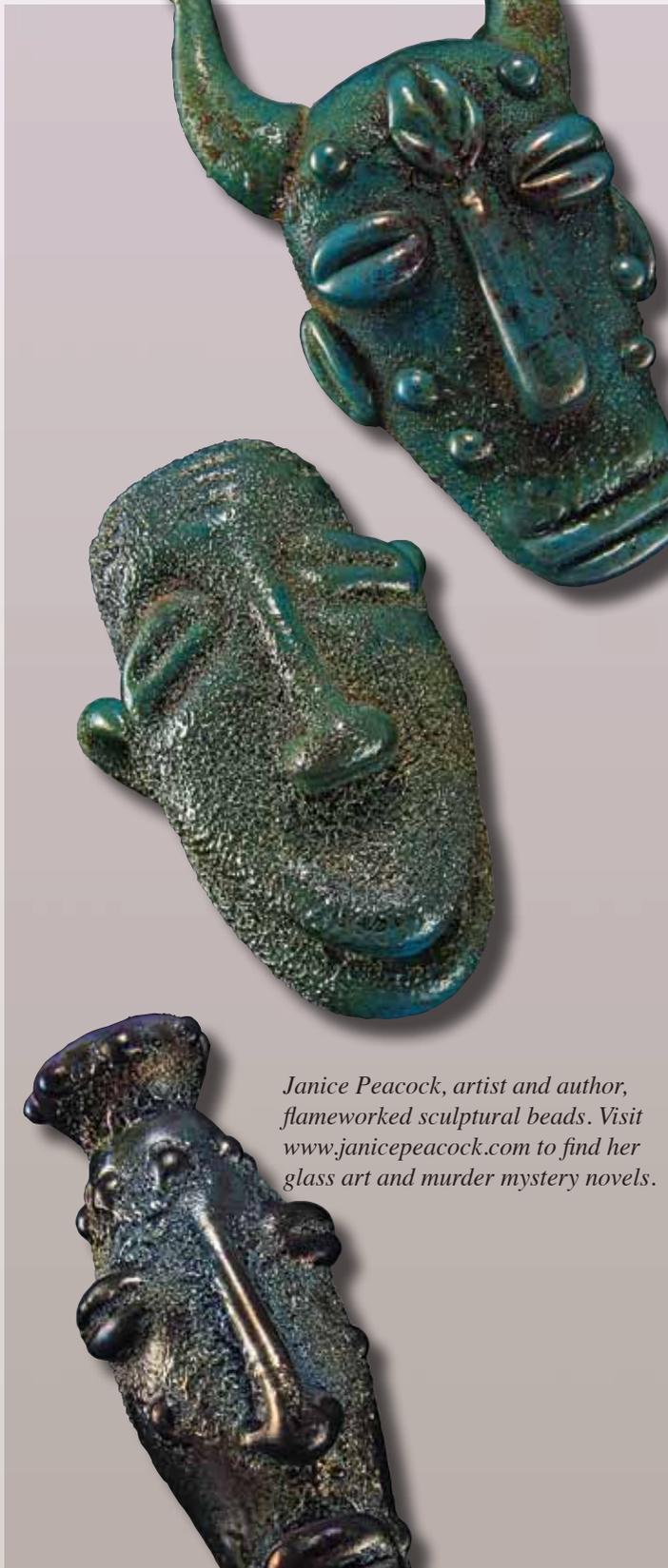
The Importance of a Statement Piece

Take a few special “show-off” pieces to every show. Just because the show you're preparing for is likely to only sell small items is no reason not to put a few high-priced items out on display. A big, expensive show-off piece will attract people to your display to admire your work even if they can't afford it. There's a good chance that while they're at your booth they'll notice something else they like that they *can* afford. The \$1,000 piece you display might help sell a lot of \$50 and \$100 pieces.

My favorite story about how that works is from a shop I sell to in Saugatuck, Michigan. They had a large model ship priced at \$2,500. The owner phoned me one day to tell me that he sold it and wanted another one as quickly as possible. I told him that I remembered he had that one for almost a year, so it's not something that sells quickly. Why the hurry? He replied that he had it in the center of his window display with special lighting at night, and that display brought a lot of people in to look at it. They didn't buy that piece, but many people who came in bought something else while they were in his store. He was concerned about how many sales he would lose because he no longer had that display piece bringing people in.



(Left to right) Freddy Faerron, Implosion Pendant, Double Rainbow, and Rose Implosion Pendant.
Instagram @FreddyFaerron.
Photography by Ben Ramsey.



Janice Peacock, artist and author, flameworked sculptural beads. Visit www.janicepeacock.com to find her glass art and murder mystery novels.

Selecting the Right Display Style

There are two distinctively different ways to display items for sale, the “eclectic mix” and the “drug store display.” The eclectic mix is how most people display things in their homes—no particular arrangement or pattern with everything scattered around. The drug store display has everything in some structured pattern or order.

Many gift shops like the eclectic-style display with everything scattered about and intermixed. The assumption is that a customer might enjoy browsing and, while browsing, happen upon something they like enough to buy it.

On the other hand, the drug store display has everything displayed in orderly categories. When you go into a drug store, all the makeup is in one place, all of the tooth care products are in a different place, and all the health care products are in yet a different place, for example. When you’re looking for a new toothbrush, you don’t want to be sorting through the different options mixed in with a hair spray display and foot fungus medication. If you want those things, you’ll go look for them in their display area.

Use the drug store display in your art show with all of the glass in one group, all of the paintings in another group, and all of the pottery in another group. This display doesn’t just look more professional, but it also significantly increases sales. If you have plates and vases and jewelry for sale, put all of the jewelry together, all of the plates together, and all of the vases together, each in its own group.

Creating a Welcoming Atmosphere

It’s not possible at all venues, but whenever you can, arrange your display with an entry. If your exhibit has a table across the front, it’s likely that people will walk by. However, if you have some floor area where they can walk into to your booth, it’s more likely that they will come into your booth and stay long enough to buy something. That and using the following techniques should help to increase your art show sales.

Banners, Posters, and Brochures. Big, bright, multicolored banners and posters will make your display special and draw people to it. The banner or poster could be photos of other work you do or images of you doing the work. Another option would be to show a listing of all the things you have to offer, especially if you take commissions or teach classes. If you do offer classes, it’s also a good idea to have a brochure or flyer to give to anyone who asks.

Lighting. Add lots of extra lighting to your exhibit. The new LED lights are relatively inexpensive and use surprisingly little power. Load up your booth as if it’s decorated for Christmas. Bright light attracts customers, and strategically positioned lighting is an effective way to draw attention to a special piece.

Live Demonstrations and Videos. Nothing attracts people more than a live demonstration, and having a crowd at your booth attracts more people. If what you make can be demonstrated at the show, design your booth to allow for that. Then whenever there are no people at your booth, start a demonstration to attract people.

As good as and maybe even better than a live demonstration is a monitor playing videos. Produce some videos of you working and put them on a loop to play constantly.

Offering Special Services

Providing extra value to your customers will help you to build a loyal client base. The following are some of the special services that most customers appreciate.

Shipping. Offer to ship anything a customer buys. Many a sale is lost only because the buyer is concerned about how to get it home. I had small posters on display that said, "Worried about getting it home? Don't be. Let us do it for you."

I had calculated 10 percent of the retail price as a reliable average cost for packing and shipping. When a customer was obviously interested but wavering on deciding to buy, I would often close the sale by offering to ship it for free.

Gift Wrapping. If the show is at Christmastime or near a special holiday like Mother's Day or Valentine's Day, you might offer a gift wrapping service. Everything you do that makes you different than other sellers increases the likelihood that customers will buy from you and not buy from other sellers instead.

Layaway Sales. A customer might want to buy something but can't afford it right now. You might offer to take a deposit and accept installment payments

The Dos and Don'ts of Making It Work

First let's take a look at things you can do to make your art show experience a big success.

Greet your customer. Make eye contact, smile, and say hello. The person you greet might be buying your next meal.

Initiate conversation. It could be something as simple as "Are you enjoying the show?" or "Where are you from?" to let your customers know that their presence has been acknowledged.

Encourage sales. Talk to your customers and tell them something about yourself and your work. If you think a customer is interested in something specific, tell the person something about that piece. The easiest way to see if customers like something is by watching to see what they touch and spend a lot of time looking at.

Be patient, no matter how painfully difficult it is. Remember that the person who is making you impatient might be helping you pay your rent.

Dress to impress. You don't have to dress as if you're going to a wedding or fancy party, but also don't be there looking as if you just came from cleaning the garage or garden. This is a job interview. Dress for it.

Create traffic. If there is nobody outside your booth, put yourself outside rearranging or organizing something. Everything you can do to make your area look busy will bring more people to your booth. The more people who come to your booth, the more people will buy something from your booth.

Network with other vendors. You can learn a lot from them. They can tell you which other shows are worth doing and warn you about any problems that might come up.

Be a good neighbor by being considerate of other sellers. It pays good dividends.



(Left to right) Clinton Smith, nature-themed paperweight and vase.
Visit www.clintonfsmith.com to view more of Clinton's glass art.
Photos by Katie Malone.

Allow taking photos. There are lots of reasons people take photos. Some just want a reminder of their visit, and some want one to use hoping to copy what you make. You can't stop people from taking photos. Accept it and encourage it.

More than a few times I've sold something to someone who had taken a photo from my exhibit and contacted me later to buy. I was making stained glass model ships and often had people taking photos and asking questions about how they were made. It was obvious that they wanted to try making them for themselves. When I realized how many were doing it, I produced a series of instructional pattern books to sell to anyone that wanted to learn how to make stained glass model ships. I sold a lot of those books.

Now let's look at a few of the things you should always avoid doing while in your art show booth.

Don't read a book, play with your computer, or continue a conversation with a friend when a customer appears.

Don't be eating or drinking when customers are in your booth. There's plenty of time for that later when there are no customers.

Don't just stand or sit waiting for a customer to ask to buy something. It makes you look uncaring and indifferent. If you're not enthusiastic enough about your work to be anxious to talk about it, why would anybody else be enthusiastic enough to want to buy it?

Don't say, "May I help you?" Never ever say that. That question just irritates customers and chases them away.

Don't hover or hang over a customer like a starving vulture or commission salesperson. Find a comfortable balance between engagement and aggression. Watch your customer's body language and tone of voice to see the difference.

Don't be curt, rude or abrupt, no matter how desperately you want to be. Even if this individual isn't a potential customer, he or she may well bring back someone who is.

Extra Art Show Benefits

Art shows can provide many benefits other than sales revenue. Sometimes those benefits are more valuable than the money.

Market Test. Big companies spend big money on market testing new products. Art shows give you a way to market test at almost no cost at all. To test-market a new technique or new product, just make one piece and put it out on display at an art show. Watch for customer response and customer comments. You'll know quickly whether or not it's popular. If it sells, make more for the next show. If it doesn't sell, don't make any more. Make something else to try instead.

Price Sticker Test. An effective way to test a new product is by putting the price sticker on the bottom. That way if someone wants to know its price, all they have to do is pick it up to check.

We humans are a tactile species. If we like something, we touch it. If customers see something they like, they will want to know the price, so they'll pick it up. That's valuable information for you, since it shows you what customers like. If they touched it, they liked it. Now comes the really important lesson. Did they buy it?



(Left to right) Wesley Fleming, Happy Face Spider, Technicolor Spider, and Woodgrain Spider flameworked glass sculptures. Visit www.wesleyfleming.com for more of Wesley's glass art.

It's hard to know if you have priced your work relative to what customers will pay. If you have something on display and a lot of people have picked it up to check the price but none of them bought it, you know they like the product but do not like the price. You now have four options:

- reduce the price,
- improve the piece to justify the price,
- offer it for sale only where customers will pay higher prices, or
- stop making it.

Contacts. Art shows are a great place to make contacts for commission orders or even for new wholesale accounts. Many gift shop and gallery owners routinely cruise art shows looking for new suppliers.

Website Feed. If you hand out cards or brochures to people who visited your exhibit, some of them will make the effort to visit your website. The more people who visit your website, the more sales you will get from your website.

Classes. If you offer classes, you'll connect with prospective students who want to learn to make what it is you do.

Ideas. Seeing what other artisans are doing will generate new ideas for new products for you to make. Everything that encourages you to innovate and invent new things encourages increased sales.

A Place to Start

One of the great things about doing shows is the information you collect from other exhibitors. If you're interested in whether or not some show is good, ask someone who has done it before. Networking with other sellers can provide invaluable information.

To a large extent, I built my business on the contacts I made at different art shows. I loved the shows and miss doing them, but I have still constantly benefited by all I learned while doing them. I started with retail art shows. Then I extended my company to doing wholesale shows and expanded to selling supplies and equipment to other artisans. Finally, I expanded my products to manufacturing tools and equipment for other artisans and now focus mostly on teaching other artisans, and just think . . . it all started with art shows.

GA



Dennis Brady has been a full-time professional glass artisan since 1980 and currently works with stained glass, fusing, casting, glassblowing, and sandblasting. He has authored and published six books of stained glass patterns plus A Lazy Man's Guide to Stained Glass. Along with his sons, Dane and Jason Brady, he operates several companies. DeBrady Glassworks produces glass art; Victorian Art Glass sells tools, equipment, and supplies; and Master Artisan Products manufactures molds and tools for glass artisans. He has also created the website Glass Campus, which offers over 100 tutorials and videos teaching numerous glass art techniques as well as tips on how to make a living as a glass artisan.

Dennis teaches extensively in his home studio in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and as a guest instructor in several other countries. He is also a contributing artist to GPQ's live and recorded Glass Expert Webinars™ and Master Glass Artisan Lecture Series™. His "push the boundaries" approach to experimentation and innovation is always, "How fast can I go until I skid into the ditch?" Visit www.debrady.com to learn more about Dennis and his art.

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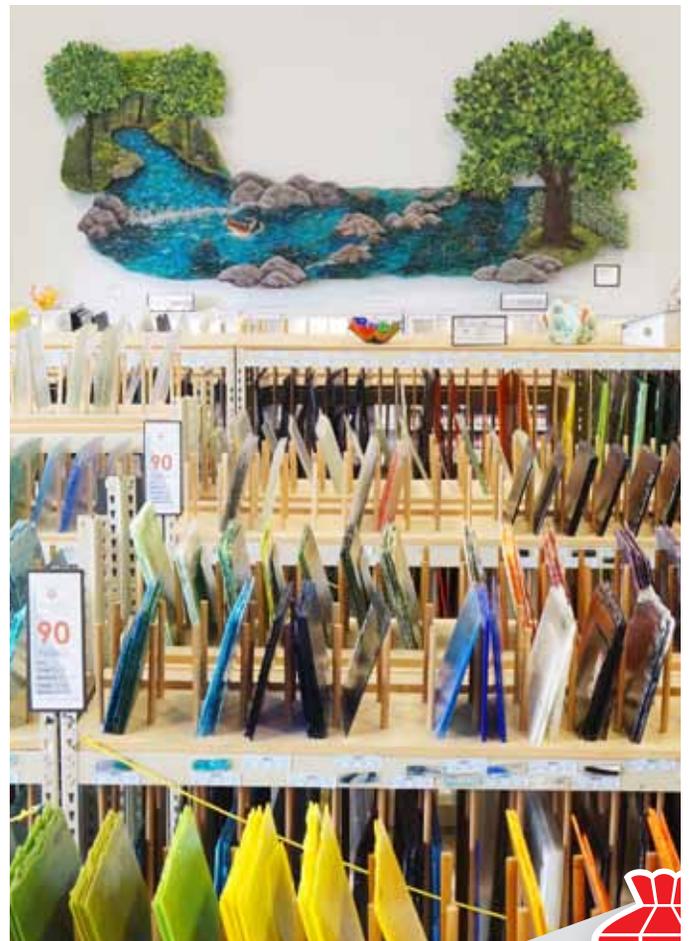
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