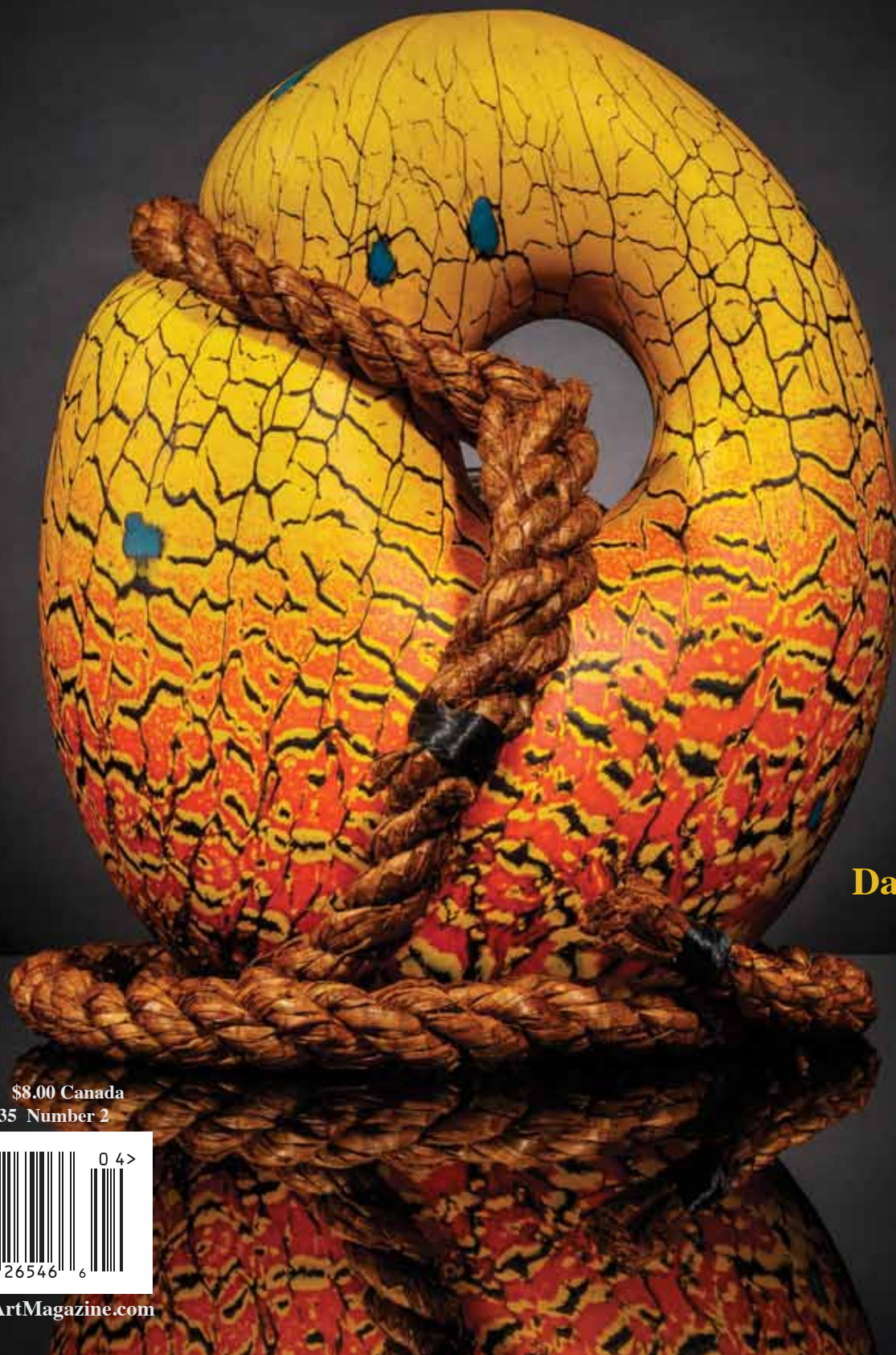


# GLASS ART®

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March/April 2020



**Dan Friday**

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Volume 35 Number 2



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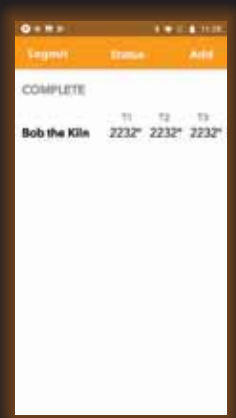
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Photo by Ian Lewis.

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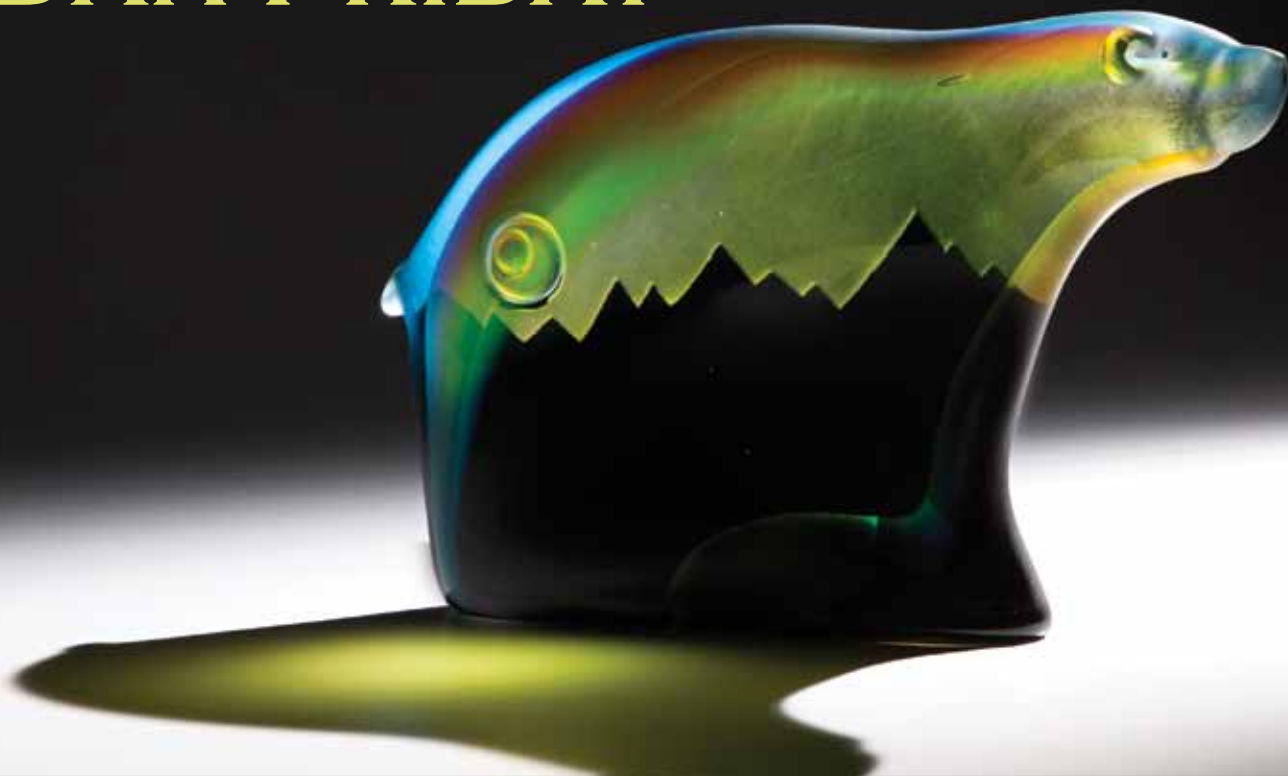
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# DAN FRIDAY



## PUSHING LEGACY INTO THE FUTURE

by Colleen Bryan

Dan Friday's art is both a personal expression and a commitment to cast forward into the future the legacy of his Coast Salish people. Threads of family legacy, forms from tribal tradition, mentorship by glass masters, and Gladstone's 10,000-hour rubric—all channel through this artist to become material for his hot glass creations. As a young man floundering against the tide of social norms, Friday found traction and a path for his life through glass working. Now, 24 years on, he stands in solid self-knowledge that distinguishes both his career as a glassman and his art. "I am a maker, and that understanding of who I am goes into everything, whether I'm building hot shop equipment or building fences, making art for museum exhibits or galleries, or making things that aren't for sale."

Friday is now focused on preparing for two upcoming shows of his artwork. The first is part of a May 2020 group show he is curating at The Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he will exhibit alongside glass artists Preston Singletary and Marvin Oliver. The second show opens April 3, 2021, at the Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA) in La Conner, Washington, south of Seattle. MoNA has given him its entire first floor for a solo exhibition of larger exploratory work. He will also curate a selection of Coast Salish weavers to display their beaded work as part of the exhibit.

After successful shows in the summer of 2019 at Blue Rain Gallery during Indian Market in Santa Fe and Stonington Gallery in Seattle, Dan is stepping back from gallery shows to focus on the milestone museum exhibits through mid-2020. Gallery glass differs from what he makes for museums and again from his private work, Friday observes. Galleries exist to sell an artist's work to individuals, so each piece must be self-contained and able to attract buyers. Museums can allow an artist to play more, to explore larger concepts and narratives, and occupy more physical space. Personal work is often experimental, with the potential to explore new directions constrained only by time and courage and the cost of materials. Keeping each type of glass in balance as he grows as an artist is essential to Friday's success in the business of glass art.

### Elements of Success

His experience in glassmaking gives Friday definite ideas about the elements of success in glass art. "No one is giving away a glass art career. I sometimes work 80 hours a week in glass between my job and advancing my own artistic career." That work involves a lot more beyond the hot shop.



Even so, Dan is keenly aware of the role that fortune plays in being able to connect personal creative process to a livelihood. “I’d be making art whether I could make a living from it or not. Nobody needs permission to make art, but you don’t get nominated to make art successfully. There are lots of gatekeepers—universities, gallery owners, museum curators, collectors—controlling whether artists can make a living from their hands.”

Particularly as someone entering glass without academic credentials, Friday found both cultural and technical mentors critical to gaining his footing and supporting his trajectory. In a way that is characteristic of many tribal peoples, the artist maintains a keen awareness that underlies his life and his art. “I didn’t get here alone.” Rather than false humility stripping him of credit for his achievements, that acknowledgement recognizes an interconnected reality and binds the artist more securely to dual communities of tribe and glassmakers.

“My career, what I do to generate money and livelihood, revolves around the artwork I’m passionate about making. I am so grateful that the two can intersect in my life.”

### Mentorship of Glass Masters

Friday acknowledges that his was a troubled youth. “I came from a good home but spent a lot of time on the streets. I barely attended school and chose vocational training over high school. Now 10 years clean and sober, I found my path in life through glass.”

Dan describes his mentors along the way with the sense of someone fingering precious stones. “I didn’t see art as a pragmatic way to feed myself until I wandered into The Glass Eye in Seattle, Washington, and they gave me the opportunity to apprentice and gain skills in workmanship.”

Initially and on a personal level, Paul Marioni helped. Paul is a forefather of the Studio Glass Art Movement, and his works stand in the Smithsonian Museum. “When I was not at my best and starting without a formal entry point, Paul held the door open for me to find a path as a glass artist. He believed in me and lent moral support along the way. Paul led by example, allowing me to see his own career, courageously trying things in a different way than his contemporaries.”

Tlingit glass artist Preston Singletary helped Dan consider cultural heritage addressed through glass artwork. He offered valuable tips and consultation as Friday moved through the process. “We both started on an entry level basis at Glass Eye Studio in lieu of a formal university art education, so he had some experience with the road I was traveling.”

Friday has worked for two decades in Dale Chihuly’s studio, first at Pilchuck and now at The Boat House. Dan learned many lessons from Dale about what is required to succeed in the business of art. Meanwhile, steadied by a reliable flow of income and benefits, Friday gains the experience and discipline of working with a team of artists and gaffers. The hot shop introduced him to a network of glassmakers including James Mongrain, Dale’s head gaffer, who taught Dan technical etiquette for working on a hot glass team as well as the fundamentals of how to work effectively.



*(Left to right) Dan Friday, Kulshan (Mountain) Bear, hand sculpted glass, 14" x 8" x 3", 2019. Photo by Russell Johnson; Watcher (Raven) Totem, hand sculpted hot glass, twisted cane, 2019. Photo by Alec Miller.*

## Claiming a Right to an Artistic Vision

After a decade of mastering materials and techniques, Friday faced the wall of how to assert himself as an artist. "As an apprentice, my path is different from that of other people who come to art through the university. There, a lot of support exists for questions such as: How's your portfolio? How's your artist's statement? How goes the grant writing? It can be intimidating, seem insurmountable."

Dan is an enrolled member of the Lummi tribe of the Coast Salish people, and it was there that he found the impetus to discover his own artistic voice. Fran James was a renowned blanket maker and cedar weaver and a tribal elder. Her son, Bill James, is the hereditary chief and cultural leader of the Lummi people. "Aunt Fran, as she was affectionately known throughout the Lummi Nation, encouraged me to start on my own course. After 10 years of making glass, Aunt Fran said, 'You don't need anyone's permission to find your voice as an artist. We've always done things with our hands.'"

Knowledge that Friday's great-grandfather Joseph Hillaire (Kwulkwut) had been a renowned Coast Salish totem carver reinforced that message. "He definitely carved in his own way and left an important legacy for our tribe. His path inspires how I create work. Aunt Fran and Joseph Hillaire are my cultural icons, elders within our tribe who made their artistic and cultural contributions without formal university training."



## Spending Time with Forebears

Museum archives offered the emerging artist a less personal, broader exploration of art as legacy. Several museums with troves of personal artifacts from tribal people offer Native artists the opportunity to study those relics in their facilities. Dan spent time behind the scenes at both the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois, and the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle, Washington. The latter awarded Friday a Bill Holm grant through its Connections to Culture program. The mission of the program is to support Native artists with access to historical collections and to aid transmission of artistic knowledge throughout communities and across generations.

As Dan carefully examines museum artifacts processed with preservatives such as asbestos that render them hazardous to hold and watches the last of his great-grandfather's totem poles deteriorating, he confronts the burning question of his art and his life. Where will the legacy of his tribe reside? Is the museum a reliquary for incredible pieces that are not even safe for public viewing?

"The opportunity to hold items that my great-great-grandfather Frank Hillaire (Haeteluk) made, to see his name carved on the side vested me in our legacy at so many levels. His family was very large, having fathered 13 children and raised his oldest son's nine children, and he admonished them all, 'Keep my fires burning. Keep telling our stories. Keep my name alive.' Holding his work in my hands helped me understand what it means to do that, and in doing my work I bring my ancestors forward."



*Dan sculpting Canoe Paddle, 2017.  
Photo by Greg Owen.*

*Dan Friday, Nocturnal (Owl) Totem, hand sculpted hot glass, 18" x 6" x 4", 2019. Photo by Russell Johnson.*



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Dan spent time learning how to process and weave cedar bark, a traditional material for the Coast Salish. He grew to appreciate how much time his people spent to make their work and the steps they took to enrich it. But he also observes that Joseph Hillaire's carvings are deteriorating even in museums. Wampum beads erode in museum storage because of incompatible chemical coefficients. The traditional way of life returns to the earth.

While there are some remarkable contemporary totem carvers, Dan enjoys working in glass because of its relative permanence. Though fragile in some settings, a solid glass sculpture such as Dan prefers to make is the equivalent of being written in stone. "Studying in The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass, you can see Egyptian glass facades made 4,000 years old. It appeals to me to work in such a resilient material and anticipate such a long legacy. I find it empowering to think that my work will tell the stories of my ancestors long after I am gone."

Friday rejects the need to only work with traditional materials and methods when making totemic art. "Native people have always been quick to adapt whatever material resources and technology became available in their moment and place. Beaded work took off when traders came with wampum glass. I've had a chance to explore artifacts in museums knowing they were carved with stone tools until the moment iron tools became available." He recalls that Joseph Hillaire caught a lot of heat for using a chain saw to rough out his traditional poles, a technology that is evident in his work. In some circles that was blasphemy, but today it is common practice. Similarly, the artist does not feel constrained to use exclusively traditional colors and forms, which were influenced by the characteristics of easily available materials. "Glass has the potential of so many colors, such fluidity. It would be a shame not to exploit those qualities."

In summary, Friday muses, "You can replicate your ancestors' work, but that is not doing them a service. The point is not to hit an ancestral wall but rather to add your own work to their legacy and push it forward toward future generations."

To the societal question about what constitutes Native art, Friday believes that his art derives from his being a Native person grown and steeped inside his culture, knowledgeable of tradition and history, materials and technology. From that position he reclaims the stories and legacy of his ancestors, captures it in the permanence of glass, and pushes it into the future.

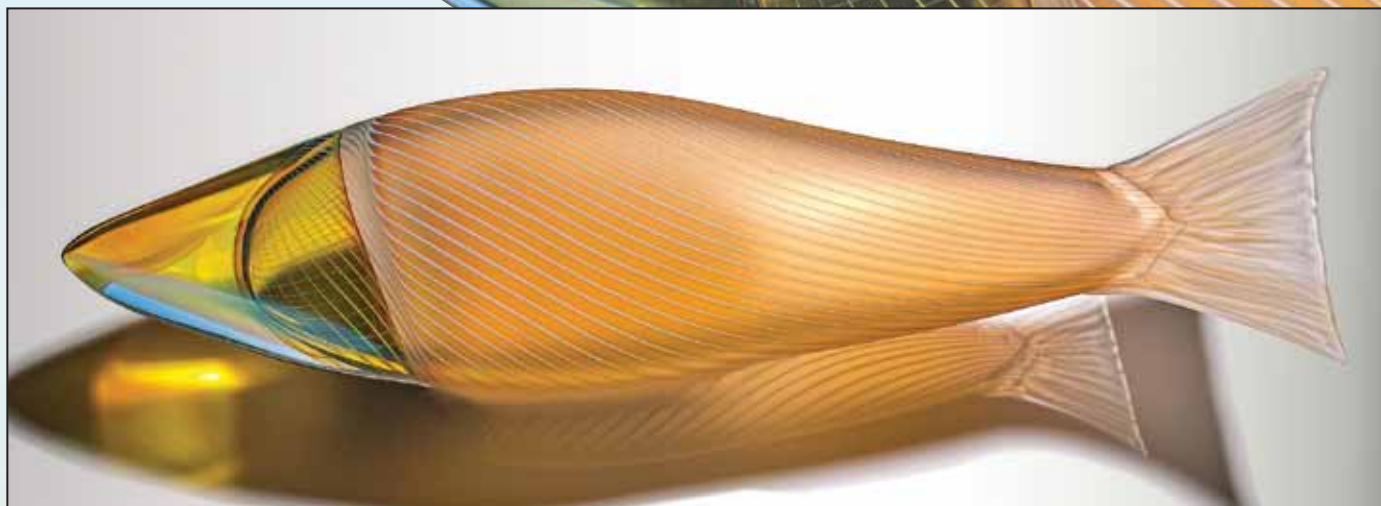
## Inspiration

The inspiration for Dan's work is sometimes highly personal and other times is drawn from tribal symbols and the surrounding environment. "Our family symbol is the bear. They are commonly featured in Joseph Hillaire's totem poles, and I have a high affinity for them in my glasswork." The ubiquitous raven features heavily in Northwest storytelling and in much of Friday's glass sculpture as well. Frogs show up in ornate glass combs. "When Aunt Fran passed away seven years ago, I started an extensive basket series as an homage to her. I've explored Coast Salish basket imagery using glass."



*Dan Friday, Schelangen (Family) Totem,  
hand sculpted hot glass, 31" x 7" x 5", 2019.  
Photo by Alec Miller.*





*Dan Friday, Schaenewx (Salmom), hand-blown glass, wall mounted, 36" x 8" x 6", 2019. Photo by Ian Lewis.*

Dan produced a series showcased in the Bellevue Art Museum exhibit that is a glass rendering of anchors from traditional reef-net (sxwo'le) salmon fishing. The anchor is attached to a handwoven cedar bark rope, the traditional netting material. "There are only two weeks a year that you can strip bark off the tree, and then it must cure for a year before it is supple enough to be woven into rope. So effectively, the fishermen spend all year preparing for this fishing season. More work went into making the rope for this series than into producing the glass anchor." In his upcoming MoNA show, Friday will expand upon a large school of glass salmon that he started at the beginning of 2019 and hopes to incorporate more weaving, rope making, and carving.

Another piece for an upcoming exhibit at MoNA pays tribute to Coast Salish blankets and the Coast Salish woolly dogs (skexe) that provide fur for the blankets. Friday's tribute is constructed from panels of glass cane.

### **Mentoring Tribal Youth**

Recognizing the importance of mentorship personally and in sustaining a legacy of artisanship, Dan and his sister Raya worked at the Pilchuck Glass School with high school students from the Lummi Youth Academy in 2018. Now the Native Youth Program at Pilchuck includes students from Northwest Indian College and four separate tribal nations. Dan and Raya teach glass and raise money for the program. The sibling glassmakers are intent upon extending the program to other tribal youth from the Pacific Northwest. This youth outreach was inspired by some of Chihuly's work with the Hilltop Glass Artist program 25 years ago and is like work that their friend, artist Pearl Dick, does with teen gun violence victims in Chicago, Illinois.

"Even for youth who may never become glass artists, working with glass in a hot shop is a great way to get out of their heads, work in teams with others, and communicate. You have to stay in the present or you're gonna get burnt." Glass is dynamic; it focuses the mind and trains the person.

This is not an unpaid apprenticeship. "I hire kids from the Hilltop program, paying them my green money that I worked hard to earn. It is very competitive, but if you have the capability to show up early and leave late, that is how hot shop jobs are gotten."

### **Get Started Making Mistakes**

Friday gives young people the following advice: "Don't wait for someone to ask you to make something. No one can hand you the keys. There are endless mistakes between here and where you ever hope to be, so hurry up and make those mistakes and go furiously forward with your creative work. It takes a long time to get to yourself."

Along the way, he advises them not to fall in love with anything they do. "Start by giving yourself something to work with. Try things you don't like and get over it. And respect the reality that trial and error are important to the creative process."

If the price of entry is high for a glass artist, it does not level out for the person who has found success with an idea and wants to go in another direction. Sometimes Friday wants to explore new ideas and not become a one-trick pony, but with so much money on the line, exploration takes considerable courage. Making a safe decision is always easier.



*(Top to bottom) Dan Friday, Salish Spirit, handblown and sculpted glass, woven cedar bark, eagle feathers, abalone, merlino wool, 24" x 24" x 12", 2018. Photo by Alec Miller; Smoke Basket, handblown glass, veil canes, 13" X 14" x 14", 2019. Photo by Russell Johnson.*

"You need to tune out public scrutiny and your own inner editor and commit to uncertainty. You must muster trust in yourself and love the process of discovery, even when you're not sure where you're headed.

"Free yourself from what other people are thinking. That is not your business. Live your best life and be respectful of others. Stop worrying about the lens of peer or public critique. Take what is useful from those inputs and learn which 90 percent to leave on the table."

### **The Business of Art**

Dan came from a family without means, so detaching himself from the calculus of survival to make good business decisions as a business owner was weird. The high cost of entry to glass makes it hard to cover ground quickly and the pursuit is resource intensive. He estimates that one day of glassblowing will cost him between \$1,500 and \$2,500 depending on factors such as the size of the work, the amount of color, and the number of assistants required.

The artist tries to mitigate these costs by working out ideas in a sketchbook before taking them to the furnace, but in the end, glass art requires a lot of experimentation. "For anyone who is not wealthy, it is hard to fathom spending thousands of dollars making things you don't like to get to the thing you do."

Dan credits Chihuly, the consummate businessman in glass art, for a key lesson in transitioning from making to selling glass art. "Dale taught me the vital importance of how you document artwork. Between e-mails, websites, Instagram, gallery photos, and other considerations, more people will see an image of your work than ever will see it physically, so it makes a lot of sense to pay the photographer \$175 an hour to set it up and carefully document it. That documentation helps to carry your message every bit as much as what you do in the furnace."





Residency programs can be invaluable in allowing artists to cover a lot of glass in a compressed time, particularly if they are staged strategically. Residencies with The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass and Tacoma Glass Museum both had enormous impact on Friday's career.

As Dan spoke to *Glass Art*, he was preparing to leave the next day for a residency in New Zealand. There, with Maori indigenous artists, he will undertake jade and ivory carving, weaving, and ceramics in an exchange program facilitated by Evergreen College. Another monthlong residency is coming up in the hot shop at The Studio at Corning at the end of March 2020. These come at a perfect time in his preparation for the Santa Fe and MoNA shows.

Creating new work, curating one large show while preparing for another, blowing glass for other artists, travel and residencies, teaching Native youth, being present for family and tribal life—Dan Friday seems to nearly hover, ever ready for another vertical thrust to take him in the next new direction. Internally, he perceives himself in the throes of a milestone moment. The centering force for it all, however, is his strong sense of himself as the crystal formed by generations of Lummi makers and his determination to send the legacy forward enriched by his own contribution to it. **GA**



*Dan Friday collaboration with Lillian Pitt, Petroglyph, handblown glass, water jet cut inclusions, 12" x 6" x 6", 2019. Photo by Russell Johnson.*

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# Sabina Boehm

## Capturing Fragility and Strength in Glass

by Margaret Zinser Hunt

Sabina Boehm's nearly three decades in crafting glass has traced an itinerary that has taken her from making functional glass to marbles to larger-scale work. Femininity and power emerge as a recurring theme in her artwork. Her intricately patterned butterfly marbles are easily recognizable. They have wispy, detailed wings and are often hovering over a flower or mottled background, all captured in a thick encasement of clear glass. She is still as inquisitive, motivated, and passionate about glass art as she was when she first started.

### A Passion for Flameworking

Sabina's journey in flameworking began in 1994. At the time, she was working as a massage therapist doing stained glass as a hobby, and she wanted to learn to make three-dimensional elements for her stained glass projects. She entered into an apprenticeship during which she learned to craft pipes. Sabina transitioned quickly into making functional glass full time, and stained glass became a distant memory.

Boehm laughs as she explains that the components she made for her early stained glass projects sit untouched in various corners of her studio. In her first several years of flameworking, she made pipes exclusively and organized a cooperative space with other glass artists, where she worked until 2006.

In 2000, Sabina took a year off before and after the birth of her daughter, Amirah, then returned to flameworking. Soon afterwards in 2003, Operation Pipe Dreams occurred. This was a federal effort that raided hundreds of businesses selling pipes and bongs, and that ultimately forced many pipe makers to either stop making functional glass or take their glasswork underground. Sabina, wanting to avoid further risk, decided to stop making pipes and focus on other work. "I stopped making pipes because I was scared. There were so many artists having their property seized. I was also at a point where I was looking for a push to make something else."

*Sabina Boehm in collaboration with Aaron Swanson of Swanglass, borosilicate goblet with spinning marble, 12" tall, 2019. Photo by Aaron Swanson.*





## Discovering Marbles

In the effort to find a new creative avenue, marbles captured Boehm's focus and inspiration as quickly as pipes had when she started flameworking. She recently explained her attraction to marbles. "There is something so infinitely perfect about a little sphere and the universe inside. It's really nice to pick a subject and dive in so deeply that everything else fades away."

Marbles present a clear set of limitations with plenty of room for exploration. Additionally, Sabina found a new customer base in the niche community of marble collectors. During her first few years of making marbles, she sold most of her creations on eBay, which became her primary outlet for sales.

In 2004, Sabina took a class with marble maker John Kobuki. His compression technique utilizes gravity and heat in glass to stretch two-dimensional details into a three-dimensional form captured inside a mass of clear glass. Sabina adapted Kobuki's compression technique to create a butterfly encased in glass, the design for which she is most known today.

In 2005, Sabina competed in the Eugene Glass School Flame-Off Challenge and won the Marble category with one of her butterfly marbles. The top prize included the GTT Mirage on which she still works. Marbles are the form in which Sabina feels she found her creative voice. "It's a really hard thing to do, to find your voice in glass. Sometimes it sneaks up on you, and you have to step back and realize, 'These are colors I always use. This is what I make. This is me.' It's important to find your voice in glass, to learn technique, to learn from the world and your community. It will find you."

Fifteen years into creating butterfly compression marbles, Sabina continues to focus her energy toward refining her approach to the technique by adding context, such as a flower under the butterfly and increasingly complex detail, for example. "It doesn't get old. They aren't production items. Each one takes so much time when building the cane and doing other prep work. I can't make more than a couple in a day. They wear me out, but in a good way. You'd think that after 15 years, I could be a robot and make lots of them, but it just doesn't work that way."



## Enter Borosilicate

Sabina has very much grown up with the borosilicate industry. At the time she started, there were very few flameworkers creating with borosilicate. In the late 1990s, Northstar Glass, the only manufacturer of borosilicate color at the time, had perhaps two dozen colors in the company's palette.

The beginning 2000s brought the early expansion of borosilicate color manufacturing in the United States. Sabina worked helping to test color for Momka's Glass, a borosilicate color manufacturer in the Seattle, Washington, area. That work helped the artist deepen her understanding of color chemistry and working properties, and she incorporated that knowledge into her teaching.

Sabina offers several classes a year and shares her view of the need for intentional practice. "I'm a huge advocate that time is not money. I really feel like so many artists who blow glass time themselves and only base their pricing on that. I think it's important to take the time to work slowly, and you will get paid for it. The thing that can set your work apart from others is taking the time. Don't cut corners."



*Sabina Boehm, Lady Marble Holder,  
9" tall, 2019.*





## Expanding an Artistic Voice

Today, marbles account for a little more than half of the work Sabina sells. She also creates sculptures, jewelry, and holiday ornaments, which she primarily sells in galleries. Sabina acknowledges that while marbles do still very much feed her creatively and help pay the bills, she makes sure to set aside time for what she calls her “free” work, the work she explains that *has* to be made to feed her creative soul. “Sometimes things need to be made, and if I don’t, I’d end up in therapy. Making them is therapy.”

Long interested in fashion and costume, Sabina has created a series of glass corsets that address her need to make artistic statements about women, sex, femininity, and power. She explains: “I think that you have to do what comes naturally. I don’t do a lot of art that specifically addresses my motherhood, though that affects me every day. I push with a lot of sexy art and femininity, because I feel like I have to. There are so few women in glass, even still. When I started, I was one of three female glass artists whom I knew. It’s hard being a woman in the glass industry. I want to wear it on my sleeve.”



*Sabina Boehm, Fairy, borosilicate,  
6" tall, 2018.*



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Sabina began designing her corsets in 2016 in preparation to participate in the Seattle Erotic Arts Festival. “I am always drawn to sexy art. I’m a feminist. I think it’s important for feminists to push the boundaries of sexuality. Being beautiful and being sexy is powerful, and I love the idea of my art doing that.”

The first corset consisted of hundreds of clear glass scroll shapes connected together with copper sheet and wire. To create it, Boehm made a plaster cast of her torso, cut it open, and used the inside of that plaster cast as a mold, inside which she assembled the corset. Once she figured out the process for the structure, she quickly made two more. Those three corsets, paired with bustled skirts, were also included in the Glass Art Society Fashion Show in Rochester, New York, in 2017.

Sabina has since made three more, with 6 corsets to date. Two of the six can be rented at a costume shop in Seattle. The most recent, done in aqua and white, was a collaboration with a corset maker, Hillary Specht. Hillary created the framework for the corset to which over 300 glass components were attached, as well as the matching pannier skirt. This costume was shown as part of the 2018 Glass Fashion Show in Murano, Italy, worn by Sabina, as she rode on a gondola through the canals of Venice.

While marbles and corsets might seem like stylistically disparate bodies of work, the themes of fragility and strength displayed throughout all of the artist’s work are clear. The beauty of delicate butterflies is seemingly immobilized inside clear glass. That juxtaposition carries onto her corsets, where she utilizes individually fragile glass components to create the confining and defining form of the corset. As she develops new work, Sabina’s creations will continue to validate the extraordinary vision of this remarkable artist.

GA



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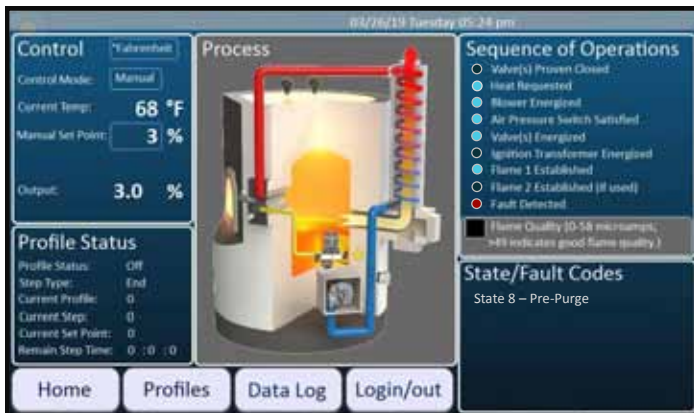
*Margaret Zinser Hunt began flameworking in 2001 while preparing for graduate work in entomology. Now a full-time flameworking artist, she draws from that background as a source of inspiration for her glass art with its vibrant color and intricate detail. Her work has been featured in The Flow, Bead & Button, Step By Step Beads, Bead Unique, and in galleries in the U.S., Canada, and Japan. She teaches group classes in studios nationwide and abroad, and private classes in her studio in Tucson, Arizona.*

*A strong advocate of community arts, Margaret volunteers on the Board of Directors of two Tucson nonprofits, Sonoran Glass School and Beads of Courage. Margaret shares, “I am motivated, inspired, and deeply grateful to be part of such a committed community of fellow artists and volunteers.”*

(Left to right) Glass scrolls created by Sabina; the artist modeling the completed corset created in collaboration with corset maker Hillary Specht, 2018. Photo of Sabina by John Cornicello.

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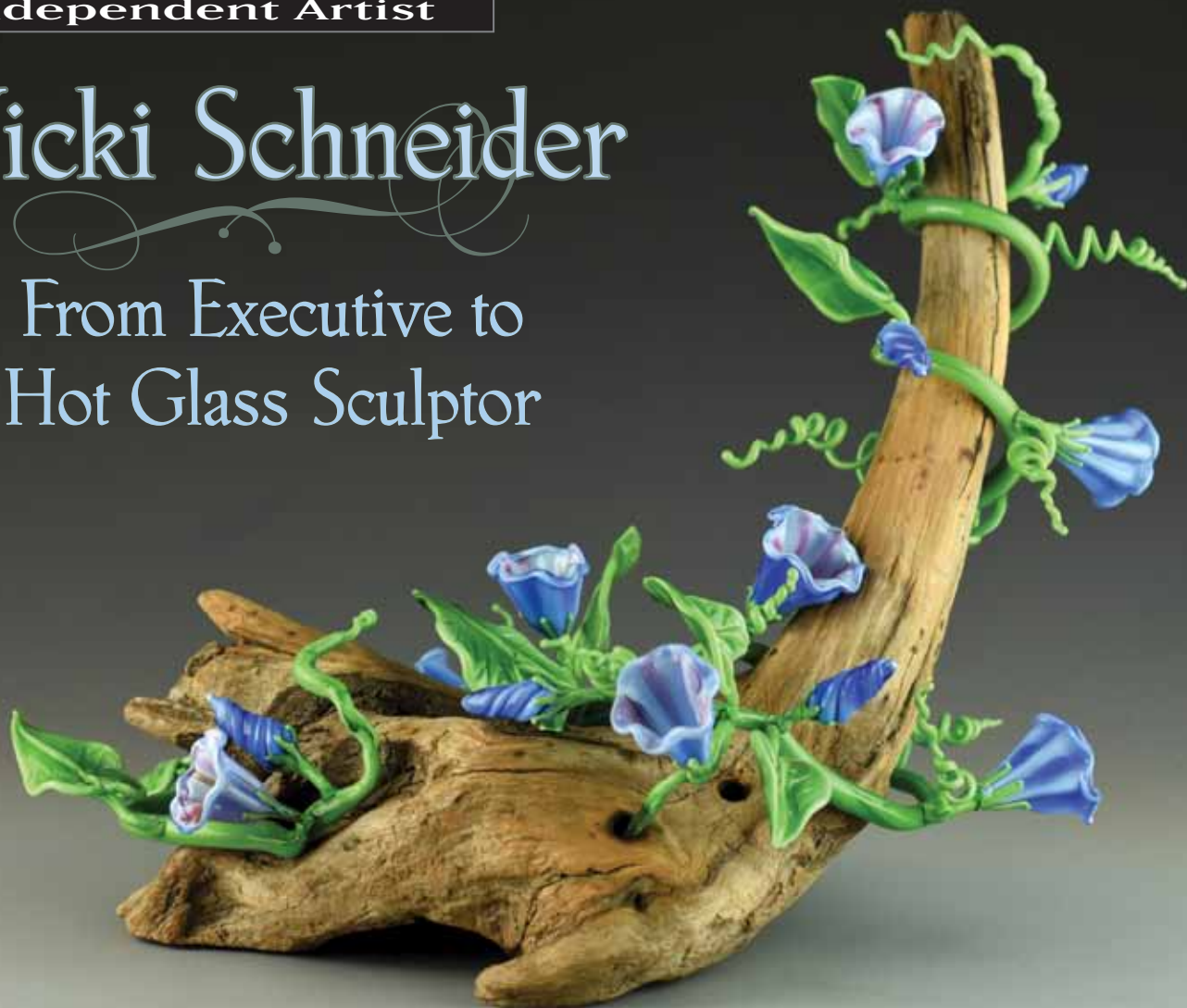


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# Vicki Schneider

## From Executive to Hot Glass Sculptor



by The Staff of Glass Art®

**W**ho is Vicki Schneider? In her former lives, she was an English teacher, business executive, professional speaker, trainer, CEO advisor, independent consultant, think tank facilitator, and jazz singer. If you asked her 20 years ago what path her life would take, she never would have imagined it evolving into her happiest identity yet—a full-time hot glass sculptor, instructor, and studio owner. *Glass Art* is excited to share Vicki's unlikely journey from business executive to hot glass artist.

### How did you get interested in glass?

Around 2005, while a friend and I were taking a class at Snow Farm, the New England Craft Program, I walked into their tiny gift shop and saw glass beads that one of the instructors had made. Before then, I had never even thought about how glass beads were made. They sort of just *were*. I wondered out loud how someone could make them. My friend suggested that we check out The Corning Museum of Glass. She and I signed up for a two-day introductory beadmaking class with Caitlin Hyde. From the moment I melted my first rod, I was hooked.

*(Top to Bottom) Vicki Schneider, Morning Glories, blown and sculpted soft glass flowers on driftwood, 12.5" x 12" x 8"; White Flowering Dogwood detail; Sundrop detail; Day Lily detail; Lilies of the Valley detail; Daffodil Cluster detail.*

When we returned to Buffalo, New York, I set out to find a studio where I could melt more glass. It wasn't easy, but I eventually found a studio that rented torch time. I began torching and found myself at the studio nearly every day I was in town. Each month for about three years, I paid the studio as much as \$400 to \$600 to pursue what had already become an obsession.

To say that I loved working with glass is an understatement. At the time, I was a professional consultant and speaker, teaching organizations throughout the United States, Canada, and the U.K. how to improve people performance collaboratively using a system I had developed. When I returned from my speaking engagements, I would unwind by making flameworked beads.

When my parents' health started to decline, working at the torch was the only thing that helped me maintain my equilibrium. It was better than a stiff drink or psychotherapy. I could get lost in the flame and forget everything except the glass I was working with.





### When did you start selling your beads?

It took at least two years for me to work up the courage to start selling my work. I began by making simple focal beads, placing them on strands of semiprecious stones with a few side beads and selling them in juried craft shows around town.

One of my first shows was a nightmare. I had driven about 75 miles to Rochester, New York. On Friday night, I set up my brand-new tent and glass display cubes and went home for the night. The next day I found my tent leaning over at a 45-degree angle. Apparently, during the night an inebriated man had fallen into the tent, and the police had tied it to a bike stand to keep it upright. To add to my problems, my tent was located directly in front of a “party house” where the guests played beer pong all day and cursed at the top of their lungs. Needless to say, I became far more diligent about checking out future shows in advance.

I rarely do craft shows anymore. I find my work appeals more to people who appreciate and are willing to pay for art. I am fortunate to have developed some very supportive collectors across the country. In addition, I sell my work to people who come to my studio or find me online, and I am proudly represented by several glass and art galleries.



(Left to right) White Allium detail; Blue Columbines, sculpted soft glass flowers on driftwood, 14" x 13" x 9".

### How has your work changed over the years?

After the first three years of making beads and pendants, I was getting bored. In 2008, I took an intermediate class with Caitlin Hyde at The Studio at The Corning Museum of Glass hoping to improve my skills and learn some new techniques. Toward the end of class, Caitlin challenged us to complete a project of our choosing. I was so proud of what I came up with—my best attempt at a basset hound. Caitlin told me very diplomatically that my cartoony bead didn't look anything like a real dog and that if I wanted it to, I'd have to pay more attention to the dog's anatomy. I took up the challenge and devoted myself to creating realistic dog heads.

Since then, I've completed many made-to-order glass sculptures of cherished pets. The most challenging ones are dogs with their mouths open and completely black dogs, which don't show detail as well because of their coloring. I try to impart the dog's personality in each bead I make. Creating custom dog heads was my first step toward sculptural work.

### How did you transition from beadmaking to sculpture?

When I opened Expressive Glass in 2009, my plan was to host one internationally acclaimed artist/instructor each year. My first instructor was Loren Stump whom I watched in awe as he sculpted a graceful woman. The process of stretching and manipulating glass off mandrel totally captivated me.

In 2012, spurred on by my interest in sculpting, I invited Emilio Santini to teach at the studio. Emilio taught us how to work off hand and introduced us to the basics of sculpting the human form. That experience inspired me to put my mandrels away and begin working almost exclusively off mandrel.

At first, I sculpted very traditional, single-color, Venetian-style nude women displayed on spirals of pulled glass stringers. They were lovely and fun to make, but I wanted to develop my own style. I began exploring how to apply the Venetian techniques I'd learned to create clothed figures. My first sculpture in that vein was *Just for Mom*, a little girl holding out a flower for her unseen mother. I placed her on a base of green glass spirals and glued them to a commercially produced, beveled glass base.

I proudly showed the piece to a local gallery owner. He liked my figure, but he thought that the flat glass base detracted from the piece. He strongly suggested I find an artistic alternative that would appear substantial and add value. That's when I started combining fused glass with the reverse painted vitreous enamel techniques I had learned from Bronwen Heilman. My new bases added a sense of place to my vignettes and helped tell their stories. I quickly became entrenched in my *Childhood* body of work.



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### Tell us more about your “Children” and what they meant to you.

For me, *Childhood* is my most emotionally charged work. Each piece is reminiscent of my peaceful and protected childhood on the Jersey Shore. I was feeling good about my vision and increasing skills, but after completing each piece, I felt pride coupled with sadness. It took quite a bit of introspection to realize that the kids I was sculpting represented the children I never had. I had always wanted to be a mother, and that was not to be. In sculpting these pieces, I was passing on the stories and experiences of my youth to my glass children.

People would compliment me on *Childhood* calling it whimsical, nostalgic, and often cute. I came to learn that the word *cute* doesn't translate into sales. As my inventory of children was growing, I wanted them to find caring, appreciative homes. I hated the thought that when I died, they might be destroyed, and I could almost hear them “clink!” as they were tossed in the trash.

### What happened to your children? Is there a happy ending?

About five years ago at the suggestion of a good friend, I approached our local children's hospital to see if they'd be interested in housing a glass playground. My initial plan was to donate about five children to them. In October 2019, my dream became a reality. I donated and installed a 2-foot by 3-foot playground entitled *A Day at the Park* to Oishei Children's Hospital in Buffalo. It's on permanent display in the waiting room of the Radiology Department where children, their families, and staff can enjoy it.



(Top to bottom) Vicki Schneider, child figures from *A Day at the Park: Fetch, A Balancing Act, and String Tricks*, all sculpted soft glass figures with vitreous enamel and fused glass bases plus a metalworked teeter-totter in *A Balancing Act*. (Bottom right) Vicki admiring her finished installation of *A Day at the Park*, October 2019. Photos of *String Tricks* and the artist by BJ Stack 4th.





My final design expanded considerably from my initial vision. It comprises 14 children participating in nine vignettes, including balancing on a teeter-totter, swinging on a swing, flying a kite, playing hide-and-seek, following the leader, playing fetch with a dog, and fishing in a stream. The children are positioned on fused glass bases with vitreous enameled designs and metalworked playground equipment. Each of the thousands of blades of grass was pulled from rods of glass and fused into the bases. It was an incredible amount of work and a true labor of love that almost didn't happen.

After meeting with the curator and my hospital foundation contact in January 2019, we set a tentative installation date around Valentine's Day. One delay led to another, the biggest of which was the need for a custom-made, museum quality display case. Happily, the parents of one of my students offered a very generous donation to fund the case. Once the bid was received, however, we still needed \$3,000 more. The hospital foundation had other priorities, so I took it upon myself to get the funding. I reached out to my former clients and a few friends with good hearts, and within two weeks we had raised all the money needed for the case. Not a moment too soon!

My studio has a flat roof, and the glass park was sitting on my long workbench somewhat protected from students and visitors. What I didn't count on was Mother Nature. One day following a week of rain, I walked into the studio, and to my horror I found that one of the waterlogged ceiling tiles had fallen directly onto the playground. I could hardly comprehend what had happened.

The only thing that saved the park from total destruction was a trifold cardboard backdrop I had placed behind the piece several days before. The trifold absorbed most of the weight of the fallen

tile and protected the glass against the cascades of water. Nonetheless, one child lost a leg and was decapitated, and another lost its arm. I made one new child and added a new arm to the other child. I relocated the entire installation onto a table in the hallway where it stayed until the move to its permanent home.

#### What was it like seeing your piece on display in the hospital?

I had a variety of feelings installing my park, the biggest being relief. After the water damage, I was afraid something else would happen. Moving the park to the hospital was a bit scary. In preparation, I had surrounded each child with fiberfill and placed it into its own compartment of a liquor box. Each tile was numbered to match the map I had created for the park and packed into a plastic tote.

Once I arrived at the hospital, I brought the boxes to the radiology department. Waiting for me was Nicholas Weir, one of my young students, his sister, and his father. We laid out each of the tiles on a staging table and began placing them in order on the deck of the display case. We were all nervous, but in retrospect the setup went flawlessly. It took about an hour to fully install the park. When the plexiglass vitrine was lowered, I didn't know if I should laugh or cry. In reality, I did a bit of both.

#### What direction is your art going in today?

I'm not sure what motivated me to start sculpting soft glass flowers, but I'm glad I did. My flowers require a lot of problem solving, and I like that. They constantly push my limits and the limits of the glass. I am inspired by them and very proud of my creations.

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For the first time, I am keeping copious notes on how I make each piece and what color combinations and techniques work and don't work. For example, I've found that some pieces need to be garaged and put together hot, while others can be joined at the flame when they are room temperature. Some colors crack in process, but others are far more forgiving. My notebook has become an invaluable resource. It guides me as I re-create certain types of flowers and assists me as I explore new species.

### What's your most memorable glass experience?

In 2014 I had the privilege of hosting Lucio Bubacco, one of the world's most admired hot glass sculptors, at Expressive Glass. As a special present to myself, I engaged the maestro for one day of private instruction. After listing what I wanted to learn, Lucio sat down at the torch and went to work. Upon completing his first demonstration, he was ready to move on to the next thing on my list. I think I startled him when I asked if I could torch and have him critique me. Apparently no one had ever asked that of him before. I was nervous, took a deep breath, sat down at the torch, and had the best and most memorable glass experience of my life!

*(Left to right) Daffodil Cluster, blown and sculpted soft glass flowers on driftwood, 14" x 12" x 6"; Vicki's first sculpted dog bead, 2008.*



### Do you teach?

I teach private and small group classes in beadmaking and off-hand techniques at my studio in Buffalo. I particularly enjoy teaching students how to sculpt soft glass. Taking advantage of today's technology, I have also developed a Virtual Coaching program where I work one-on-one online with students anywhere in the world. We both sit at our torches, and I coach them in real time. It's been very effective and gives students who can't or don't want to travel the opportunity to work with me at their own pace.

It takes more than being a good artist to be a good teacher. Throughout my career, I have spent a great deal of my time teaching others how to train effectively. Now I can tap into all those skills as I share my passion for glass and my hard-won techniques with others.

### What advice do you have for lampworkers who want to improve?

We've all heard the standard advice, "practice, practice, practice," but practice alone isn't the answer. Practice is doing the same things over and over. You can only excel by getting out of your comfort zone and risking failure. Cracking pieces and wonky designs are all part of the learning process. Be brave, take chances, and be kind to yourself throughout. You never know what you'll be able to achieve.

GA

Visit <https://youtu.be/FhxtuyAk2pw> to see a video of A Day at the Park in its permanent home at Oishei Children's Hospital.



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*Featuring the latest from  
the International Society of Glass Beadmakers*

# The ISGB 2020 Gathering Welcoming Keynote Speaker Kit Paulson

*by Karyn Sweezy*

The International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) is proud to announce its 2020 Gathering Keynote Speaker Kit Paulson. Kit will provide us with incredible inspiration through her work as she brings together art, science, and the absurd. Her glass art will leave you breathless and curious for more. We are thrilled that she will share her journey with us at our annual Gathering during April 2–5, 2020, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Gathering will be held in conjunction with the Glass Craft & Bead Expo.



*Kit Paulson, Skull.*



*Kit Paulson, Moth Mouth.*

## **Exploring the Natural World in an Unnatural Way**

Kit recently described her current body of work. “I am exploring the line between work that is highly decorative and downright bizarre. These pieces are heavily influenced by the Victorian aesthetic of using natural elements to construct quasi-scientific, wholly unnatural scenes that could not exist in the natural world. I want my viewers to look closer and be visually rewarded for that closer look. I want to communicate my own fascination with the incredible detail of the natural world and with the incredible detail that can be produced by the human hand.”





*Kit Paulson, Telephone.*

Anyone who works with glass will find inspiration with Kit's body of work that can be done in a flame. She states, "Much of the process of making my work involves using hot, liquid glass as a sculptural material. For me, the manipulation of hot glass is a joyous exercise of muscle memory, material understanding, and instantaneous reaction to the peculiarities of the substance."

"I work with glass as a sculptural medium, because it allows me to make detailed, precious, fragile objects. I value glass for its inherent aesthetic properties in which it can be transparent, translucent, shiny, hard, or easily broken. I also value it for the way it has historically been used to make containers, vessels, lenses, mirrors, and other items. I find constant inspiration in both of the attributes of the material."

### **Kit's Current Work**

To view Paulson's current work, we highly recommend that you visit [www.kitpaulsonglass.com](http://www.kitpaulsonglass.com). One of the things you'll find is *The Magpie Museum of Disorderly Inquiry*, a collection of objects, all made from glass and arranged in the style of a cabinet of curiosities, or *wunderkammer*.

The objects are based on real things, but they are not exact replicas. Each is a small vignette, an impression of an object, rather than an attempt to rigorously render reality. The manmade objects in this collection are from the past, but rarely a specific past.

### **Additional Presenters at The 2020 Gathering**

In addition to Kit Paulson, ISGB is excited to share an amazing lineup of presenters that are sure to inspire and educate. Sharon Peters, Corinna Horsell/Bullseye Glass, Floor Kaspers, Marcy Lamberson, Patty Lakinsmith, Kerri Fuhr, Kristin Kearns, Tatyana Boyarinova, Brooke Hamling, Bronwen Heilman, Caitlin Hyde, and Alexx Cheng will all be sharing ways to help you take your flameworking to a new level.

For the first time, ISGB attendees will be sharing their love of glass and opening up the keynote address to the Glass Craft & Bead Expo attendees. We hope to bridge the two worlds and use each other's knowledge to complement and expand our glass visions. ISGB is inviting all in attendance in Las Vegas to learn more about our organization and our mission to educate. Please join us in welcoming Kit Paulson on Thursday, April 2 at 4:00 p.m. Let's be inspired together!

**GA**

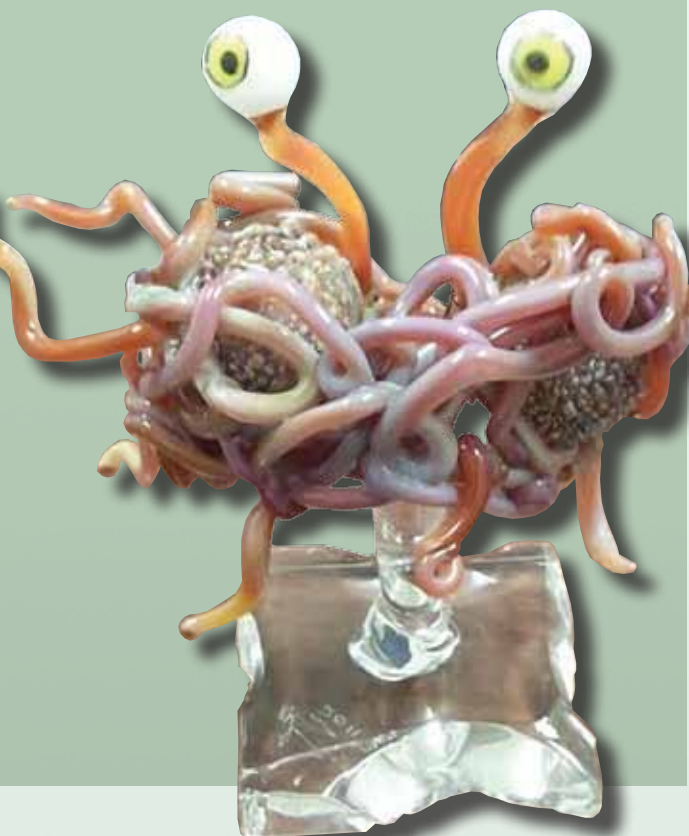
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# Creativity

## COMMISSIONS

AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN NEW THINGS



*The Flying Spaghetti Monster original commission and Heavenly Poodle, a second commission for the same client to honor the memory of his Mom's toy poodle.*

by Milon Townsend

Pricing a custom job can be dicey. You will find it helpful to have minimums that kick in, to put a basic value on your time, and to weed out the not-so-serious petitioners. As a general principle in negotiation, it's wise to have your customers give you an idea of what their budget is first. Otherwise, you'll likely be too high or too low, either scaring them off or shorting yourself. If all your work on display is clearly priced, however, it's easy to point to something and use that as a beginning point. And to repeat an important idea, even though I hardly ever realize the same income per hour on custom work as I do on regular pieces, I nearly always learn something useful, interesting, and new from which my other work will benefit immeasurably.

### Pushing the Envelope

One of the things I like the most about doing custom work is that it will push me beyond where I might have gone, left to my own devices. There is always a solid group of collectors looking for work that is bigger, better, or more involved than what you have on display, and they'll be disappointed if you aren't able to grow to

fill that need. You need to be ready to go beyond and think strategically about issues of scale and engineering, materials preparation, and inventorying supplies. Also important is budgeting the time for research and development that will be needed and for handling the unforeseen problems that will most certainly arise.

There's a distinct synchronicity, a dance, between disparate partners when you and your clients start batting ideas back and forth. They have an idea, and you have a response that builds on that. Then they have additional parameters to throw on there, and you have another approach or way of looking at it. The two of you working together will come up with something that neither of you would have come up with on your own. It is a kind of collaboration.

I love the times when there is a long-standing relationship of trust between a collector and me that has been built up over years of successfully fulfilling all the parts of the equation, and another project is up for consideration. It is in this setting that free thinking and honest communication can really flourish, and you'll be empowered to do your best work.



## Trusting Your Instincts

There have been times when my client has had more trust in me than I've had in myself, and I've been glad of that. There have also been times when I've honestly informed them that the original idea that they came in with was . . . ummm . . . not such a good one and that we really needed to take it in a different direction. This is important. If you're pretty sure from your own experience that what's up for discussion will turn out to be a dog, even though the client can't see that yet, then it will in fact be a dog. It's much better to have unpleasantness over a bad idea than to have unpleasantness about a project that's been finished and may or not be paid for, due to its canine lineage.

I also have a list of things that I won't make. Cats. Dogs. Cartoon characters. Klein bottles. Cremains. Pipes. I have personal reasons why I don't do any of the above mentioned pieces. People don't want a cat or dog. They want a portrait of their particular pet. As for cartoon characters, there are not only licensing and copyright issues with those, but it's also ground that has already been pretty heavily trod that I don't find interesting. Klein bottles are more trouble than they're worth, cremains get way too personal, and pipes are a category that I loved and left a very long time ago. That being said, a customer for whom I'd done the *Flying Spaghetti Monster* a decade ago came to me with a sad story about his mom's toy poodle, and I created for him a poodle ascending into heaven on a cloud of pink tennis balls. Interesting. So I have my list, but I'll make exceptions on occasion.

## Learning to Live with the Pros and Cons

As we all know by now, life is an audition. If you can produce an excellent piece of glass art that satisfies both you and the client, then it is not just possible but highly likely that they'll come back to you again. I've come to accept the fact that I almost always make less money on commission work, since I have to do all of the thinking and figuring and designing, essentially for just one piece, but it's still worth it. In spades! I'm getting paid to learn a new thing, I'm very possibly developing a friend for life, and I'm being exposed to what might be an important new direction for my work.

It's like getting an assignment in art school. You find out if that is really you or not. I think it's important to never stop learning, growing, stretching, expanding, and going beyond your comfort level. Sometimes the first effort is not, in fact, excellent. I'll need to do it again. Fortunately, I'm married. Although I may be too close to the effort involved in making a piece for objective evaluation, my wife is more than willing to share that information with me. As I like to say, it's all good, although it isn't always pleasant.

In Louis Wolchonok's *Principles of Design*, he says in the preface, "Pay special attention to the things that do not interest you." Huh? I figured it out. Those are the areas with which I have the least in common and therefore could benefit the most from expanding and developing. That really stuck with me.



(Left to right) Adam and Milon with coral reef.



This Coqui Frog was an initial order 10 years ago. This client challenges me every year, as with this Puerto Rican Sentry Box.

## Finding Inherent Value in the “Not So Good”

So what do you do with the also-rans, the college tries, the “not quite good enough for the client but too good to throw away” work? We’ve learned that these are really hard to sell—ever—since they’re so uniquely designed for a particular client. They’re also really hard to throw away. We now just give the client all of the best attempts that didn’t quite cut the mustard, and they really appreciate getting two or more pieces for their money. It’s an excellent way of illustrating just how much time you’ve put into their sculpture, so it’s a win/win. In addition, if you do a good enough job, the client will completely trust you and will come to you again and again over the years to have you do more and more pieces for them. It’s usually on a larger and larger scale until they reach the maximum level that they and you can handle.

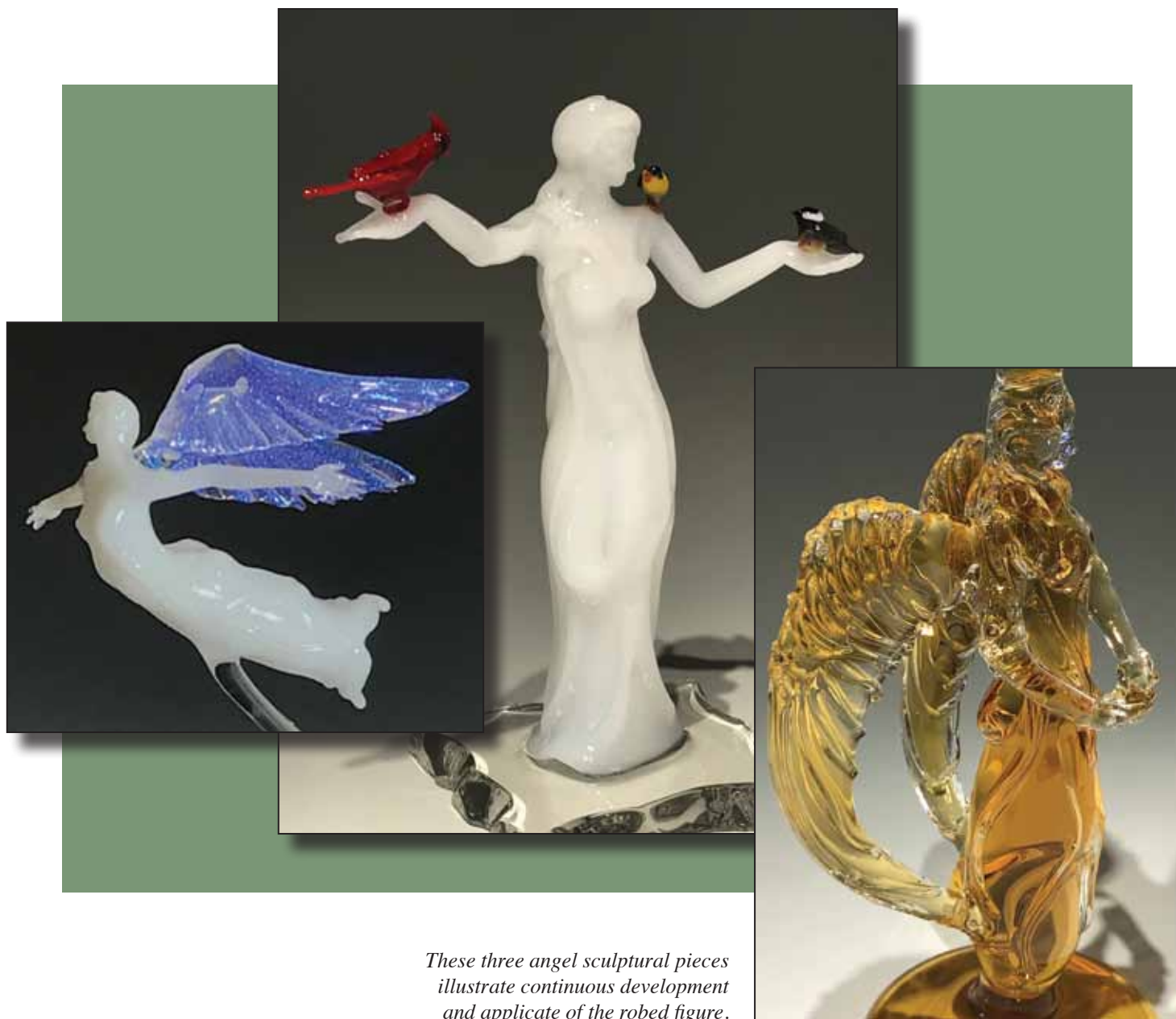
I usually have a category of work that I’m currently heavily involved with making and developing. If a client is interested in that type of work, I’ll certainly see if we can steer the project in that direction. That way I get paid to work on something that I was already excited about or interested in doing, and they get the benefit of my inspiration.

I almost always put a lot more into a special order or commission than I do for a piece for the shelf, and the value of the piece is nearly always much more than the price that we agreed upon. I have been pushing that button a little harder than I used to in the past, since you are, in fact, going to put a lot more of yourself into their piece, and it isn’t unreasonable for you to be compensated for that.

## An Opportunity to Grow

While making a commission for a client is by definition doing what somebody else wants you to, it is usual for what I have learned on that piece to very swiftly make its way into my own vernacular, my glass vocabulary. This gives my own work a freshness and excitement that I’d be hard pressed to live without.

I live to figure things out and take great satisfaction in that. Sometimes I commit to doing a project without really knowing how I’m going to get it done, just with the confidence that I’ll be able to figure it out when the time comes. I recently did a piece for a “wise woman,” a self-proclaimed good witch. She had a great number of parameters/requirements/elements that needed to be included in



*These three angel sculptural pieces illustrate continuous development and applicate of the robed figure.*



the piece—an elegant figure in a blue robe with peacock feathers, a black cat, bottles, a mortar and pestle, and a broom with a gnarled handle and flaming bottom. As with any complex project, I started with what I knew and built from there. I like that the cat is licking the spilled potion, that the liquid in that bottle is sideways as it would be if it were on the floor, and that the figure is robed as well as sleek and sensuous—good new things to know.

For me, commissions remain an opportunity to learn new things, to boldly go where no man has gone before, and to broaden the palette of my artistic ability. Of course, it's also an effective way to sell a piece that you haven't even made yet. Risky . . . but it might just be worth a try. Good luck with that!



*Full and detail images of Milon's Wise Woman commission.*



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



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## The Museum at Prairiefire

by Sara Sally LaGrand

Photography by Sam Fentress

*The spectacular colors and textures of the MAP's architectural design celebrate the region's iconic prairie fires. The fire elements are designed as overlapping "lines of fire," referencing the method by which the fires were set by Native populations and are still set today.*

It's early November in Kansas City, and already everything looks brown and bleak. It's cold but the sun is shining, and it's just a few more feet before I arrive at my destination. I feel a little like a magpie, instantly attracted to the shiniest object in my field of view.

This area of Kansas City is newly developed. However, every house, every shopping center is beige and brown, matching the natural environment perfectly today until you see this bright, shining fire leaping out of the cultivated prairie grass. It's the Museum at Prairiefire (MAP), a building like no other in the Kansas City Region and the most expansive use of dichroic glass I have ever seen used in an architectural project.

### Development by Design

When you arrive, you see that the small museum is nestled among a tall grass wetland. It's brown and dead looking this time of year, but it provides a perfect backdrop to accent this fantastic and unusual modern building. The 60-acre development, created using a Kansas STAR bond by Merrill Co., is a planned community of mixed use that includes boutique shopping, local restaurants created by local celebrity chefs, a movie theatre, a bowling alley, and apartment living. This concept development by design includes cultural enrichment space. It's cozy and beautiful, but nothing compares to the drama of the Museum with its fire-like windows that wrap the building in an undulating spectacle meant to mimic the practice of burning off the field to encourage new plant growth.

The Prairiefire buildings are much like those created during the depression years in America by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a government program set up by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression. MAP can attribute its existence to the government legislation of the day and to the Kansas STAR bond that allows for development, as long as it includes the cultural enrichment element.

### A First Glimpse at Prairie Fires

Jonathan Kharfen, principal at Verner Johnson in Boston, Massachusetts, whose firm was already working on a project in the Manhattan, Kansas, area, was the chief architect and designer for MAP. Kharfen was tapped to step in on the Prairiefire project, which was already in progress. He recently shared his beginnings with the MAP project.

"The city of Overland Park, Kansas, does have design standards that new buildings are required to meet. The rest of the Prairiefire development was designed to meet those standards, but fortunately, the museum was exempt from them. For more than a year prior, I had been working on a project in Manhattan, the Flint Hills Discovery Center, for which I was also project architect and project manager. I would visit the project monthly while it was under construction, driving there from the Kansas City airport. Part of the route is through the prairie, particularly the Konza Prairie. On a couple of the trips, I witnessed firsthand right alongside the road the tall grass burns. I



had known of prairie fires, but witnessing them was very dramatic and unlike anything I had experienced as a New Englander.”

If you have never experienced a prairie fire or a burn off, it’s a practice used in spring to burn off last year’s crop stubble, not only to quickly remove the brush but also to slightly warm the frozen earth. It was a practice used by the Plains Indians to facilitate the fresh green sprouts of grass that buffalo herds find attractive. While the Indians were not farmers but rather hunters and gatherers, this practice helped keep them in proximity to their main food source. It was later adapted by farmers in Kansas.

## Developing the Project Concept of Fire

By the time Kharfen and the team at Verner Johnson joined the project, he had already selected the creative theme. But his dynamic ability to think outside the box created the opportunity to build something extraordinary. Kharfen provided the design and brought it to fruition. “When we were asked to initially meet with the client to simply discuss the Prairiefire project, I drove from Manhattan for the meeting in Overland Park and was already thinking about how amazing it would be to develop the concept of fire for their project. It wasn’t until I met with them that I learned they had branded their entire 60-acre mixed-use development as *Prairiefire*. I had known that the museum was intended to be the centerpiece of the development, so the fire concept for the building suddenly became even more meaningful.”

*The ephemeral hues of the dichroic glass shift with the sun, symbolizing the dynamic energy of the museum experience awaiting inside. This evening shift in color spectrum comes when the dichroic glass becomes more backlit from the illuminated interior of the museum.*

The museum is a 41,000-square-foot space wrapped in dichroic glass. The glass and metal are purposely and intentionally used to give the undulating and shimmering effect of a wildfire engulfing the building. Multicolored iridescent metal panels along with the dichroic glass windows shift and alter not only with the light but also with the viewers’ own movements, as the “fire” surrounds them but does not consume them.

“When I first thought of the concept of fire for a building, I immediately thought of dichroic glass and another product that I had kept near my desk, Light Interference Color stainless steel. Both of these materials, especially the dichroic film, shift in color as your viewing angle changes. To me, fire is alive, constantly moving and changing. To simulate fire with inanimate materials, they had to ‘be alive’ themselves, and these two were spot on. They were dynamic, very rich and colorful, and glowing, and they seemed perfect to achieve the intent.

Before even developing a program for the museum, let alone a design, I knew I wanted to use these two materials. The dichroic glass and stainless steel were in essence the generators of the design. The dichroic glass was developed and fabricated by Goldray Industries in Calgary, Canada. The local Kansas City company, JPI, fabricated the rest of the glazing for the project.”



## A Prairie Gem

The Museum at Prairefire is truly a one-of-a-kind architectural gem. As Kharfen explains, the creation of the glass was crucial to the building's ultimate originality. "When I began the design of the project, I started researching companies that manufactured dichroic glass as well as specialty glass fabricators. I also reached out to the 3M Company to discuss my intent for the project and inquire whether they had any insights into fabricators.

"The stock dichroic glass samples that I received from manufacturers were quite subtle and not as colorful or rich as the 3M film. They were also outside the budget for the project. I focused on fabricators that 3M referred me to, and only Goldray was willing to develop a new product. The company had done a beautiful project in Canada with decorative dichroic glass boxes on the exterior of a building.

"As far as we knew, dichroic glass had only been used as decorative glazing, not in a performance insulating glazing unit (IGU). I had seen images of one project, I believe a commercial office building in France, where it had been used as exterior glazing, but no projects in North America. Goldray used the 3M film to develop the product, meeting my design intent as well as the performance requirements for glazing for the project. The 3M film was used as an interlayer in a laminated assembly that serves as the outer light. The inner lite is a more standard quarter-inch glass product."

A visit to the museum to experience the creative use of glass and architecture is worth the price of the ticket. Oh, and they have some cool dinosaur stuff too, if you can tear yourself way from the glass.

GA

To find information on programs, events, and educational opportunities and learn how to become a supporter and member the Museum at Prairefire, visit [www.visitthemap.org](http://www.visitthemap.org).



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

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



The dichroic glass transmits light in a color spectrum opposite to the one it reflects, which creates the calming interior blues and purples in contrast to the intense reds and oranges of the exterior. The blazing architecture sparks curiosity, but few know that the MAP truly burns for its mission program, KC Urban Advantage. Learn more at [kcurbanadvantage.org](http://kcurbanadvantage.org).

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# Coatings By Sandberg

## 2019 Dichroic By Design Contest

by Dana S. Baldwin

Coatings By Sandberg (CBS) is delighted to present the winners of the 2019 CBS Dichroic By Design Contest. Each year, CBS sponsors the event as a way to demonstrate the unique designs that can be created using dichroic glass. Artists from all over the world submit work to be considered for inclusion in this incredible event. The entries continue to amaze CBS with the skill and creativity shown by the artists, and 2019 was no exception.

CBS awarded over \$2,000 in gift certificates for CBS Dichroic glass to the first, second, and third place winners, those selected for honorable mention, and the Contest Coordinator's Choice award. We extend our sincerest congratulations to all of these exceptional artists.



First Place, \$500  
Andrew Lang  
*The Big Bang*



Second Place, \$250  
Caroline Erb  
*Mystic Amazons Queen*

Third Place, \$200  
Katherine England  
*Ponderosa*





Honorable Mention Awards, \$100



Daniel McStocker  
*Octos*



Joanne Hiscox  
*Sunset Waves*



Nathalie Stickland  
*Monarch Butterflies*



Jackie MacDonald  
*Birds of New Zealand*



Jason Compagni  
*Fire Dragon*



Linda Wells  
*Tembo*

# The Freeze and Fuse Approach to Small-Scale Kilnformed Sculptures



(Figure 5) A Freeze and Fuse shell glued onto a glass bookend.

by Bob Leatherbarrow

Freeze and Fuse is an elegant and simple technique that was originally developed by Paul Kimball for making small glass sculptures using flexible molds, glass powders, and water. Simply put, a slurry of glass powder and water is packed into a flexible silicone rubber mold and placed in a freezer. The frozen shape is then carefully extracted from the flexible mold onto a kiln shelf and immediately heated in a kiln to a tack fuse temperature. An easy, accessible starting point for doing Freeze and Fuse is to purchase commercially available silicone molds like those used for making decorative ice cubes, candy, and cakes. You can also make flexible molds using found objects or your own carved shapes, as described in this tutorial.

## Supplies

The supplies you will need for the Freeze and Fuse technique include:

- a shape for casting such as the shell used in this example
- a modeling compound such as Polytek® Compound 74-29, Smooth-On, or any other mold material that cures to form a pliable and flexible shape.
- a container to constrain the silicone compound while it cures
- a release agent to prevent the silicone from permanently sticking to the object or container
- glass powder and water, and
- a freezer.

## Making the Flexible Mold

1. Make a container to constrain the silicone compound while it cures. In this tutorial, the container is made from clear glass held together with duct tape as seen in Figure 1 to prevent leakage at the seams.
2. Attach the object that will be molded to the base of the container with Plasticine™ to prevent the silicone liquid from getting into any cavities on the underside of the object. Slight undercuts are allowed. You will be amazed at the details on the surface of the object that the silicone will replicate.
3. Coat all surfaces on the object and the inside of the container with a release agent to prevent the liquid silicone from sticking. Use liquid dish soap, spray-on cooking oil, or a mixture of petroleum jelly and mineral spirits.
4. Carefully mix the silicone mold medium according to the manufacturer's directions and pour into the container. To minimize trapped air, pour the mixture into the space between the container wall and the object. A filled mold is shown in Figure 2. The minimum depth of silicone above the highest point of the object should be about 1/2 inch. Use a toothpick to gauge the depth of the silicone above the highest point on the object.
5. Cure the silicone mixture following the manufacturer's directions.
6. Remove the sides and base of the container and carefully extract the object as shown in Figure 3.



(Figure 1) Shell mounted with Plasticine™ in a glass box held together with duct tape.



(Figure 2) Container filled with silicone rubber mold compound.

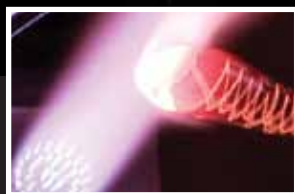


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(Figure 3) Shell and corresponding flexible mold.

### Loading the Mold with Glass Powder (An Easy Approach)

1. Mix a slurry of water and glass powder to a sloppy wet consistency. The supersaturated mixture allows air to escape.
2. Spoon the powder/water slurry into the mold.
3. Dislodge any trapped air by gently agitating the mold.
4. Soak up any extra water with a cloth or tissue.
5. Repeat Steps 2, 3 and 4 until all of the excess water has been removed, the mold is filled, and the wet powder is stiff.
6. Place the filled mold in the freezer and leave until the contents are completely frozen.

### Removing the Powder and Firing

1. Take the mold from the freezer and immediately dislodge the shaped, frozen powder. Hold the mold, object side down, slightly above a freshly prepared kiln shelf. With thumbs on the center of the backside of the mold, use your fingers to pull the sides of the mold away from the frozen powder. Do not touch the frozen powder with your fingers. Allow the object to fall as gently as possible onto the shelf.
2. Immediately fire the frozen powder at 600°F per hour (333°C/hr) to 1285°F (696°C) and hold for 10 minutes. Temperatures and hold times may vary, since all kilns fire differently. I don't anneal the pieces and have not had any breakage.

### Loading the Mold with Glass Powder (Advanced Technique)

Just as kilnformed projects can be created through multiple firings, it is possible to add interesting details to Freeze and Fuse projects through *multiple freezings*! For example, to make the shell more realistic, you can add a lustrous “mother of pearl” finish, colored details such as spikes or ribs on the shell, and colored bands representing growth episodes of the animal.

1. To add a luster to the surface of the glass shell, merely paint the inside surface of the mold using mica powders, enamels or, in this example, Glass Glo. Allow the treatment to dry before adding wet powder.
2. To add fine colored details to spikes or ribs, carefully place wet powder onto the indentation representing the spike or rib with a fine-tipped brush or a palette knife. Soak up any excess water with a tissue or cotton swab and remove excess powder with a cotton swab or palette knife. Freeze these details by placing the mold in a freezer. Once frozen, the wet glass powder will be stabilized and will not be blurred by the addition of additional layers of wet powder.
3. Prepare the next batch of wet colored powder. Remove the mold from the freezer and quickly place the next layer of wet powder into the mold. Fast action minimizes potential mixing of the two colors.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 to add additional details or bands of color. Fully freeze each new set of details.

5. When all of the details have been added, fill the remaining void in the mold with wet powder. Agitate to release any trapped air and soak up the excess water with a tissue.

6. Fire as above. A fired shell is shown in Figure 4. Figure 5 shows a shell that has been glued onto a glass bookend.

### Observations

The frozen powder object will shrink and flatten during firing. A size decrease of about 15 percent is normal. The shape will flatten, so for best results choose shapes that are relatively flat. For example, a cast of a skull will distort due to this vertical compression. If dimensions and scale are important, create an object with compensatory vertical and horizontal exaggeration.

The Freeze and Fuse technique is a fast and easy way to create cast glass. The possibilities range from using readily available flexible molds to creating your own molds by using found objects or your own carved shapes. The silicone mold material captures extremely fine details and translates them onto your finished glass piece. Using the multiple freezing approach, you can add fine color in specific locations or create a lustrous surface. This elegant and simple technique has so many possibilities!

GA



(Figure 4) Fired Freeze and Fuse shell showing subtle detail and careful color placement.

Bob Leatherbarrow established Leatherbarrow Glass Studio in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in 1988 and has created original kiln formed glass ever since. Known for his innovative styles, techniques, and designs, he has taken an experimental approach to developing unique textures and color palettes using glass powders. His glass bowls and sculptures explore the subtle hues and delicate beauty of naturally occurring textures and encourage the viewer to ponder their origin.

In 2008 Leatherbarrow moved his studio to Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, where he continues to make glass and write e-books on his signature techniques. He has also been a popular instructor on both the national and international kiln formed glass scenes. Visit [www.leatherbarrowglass.com](http://www.leatherbarrowglass.com) to learn more about his work.

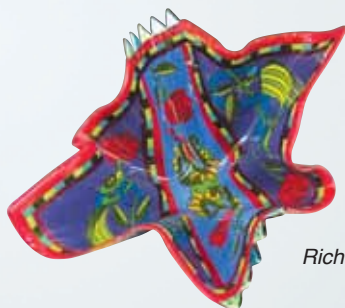


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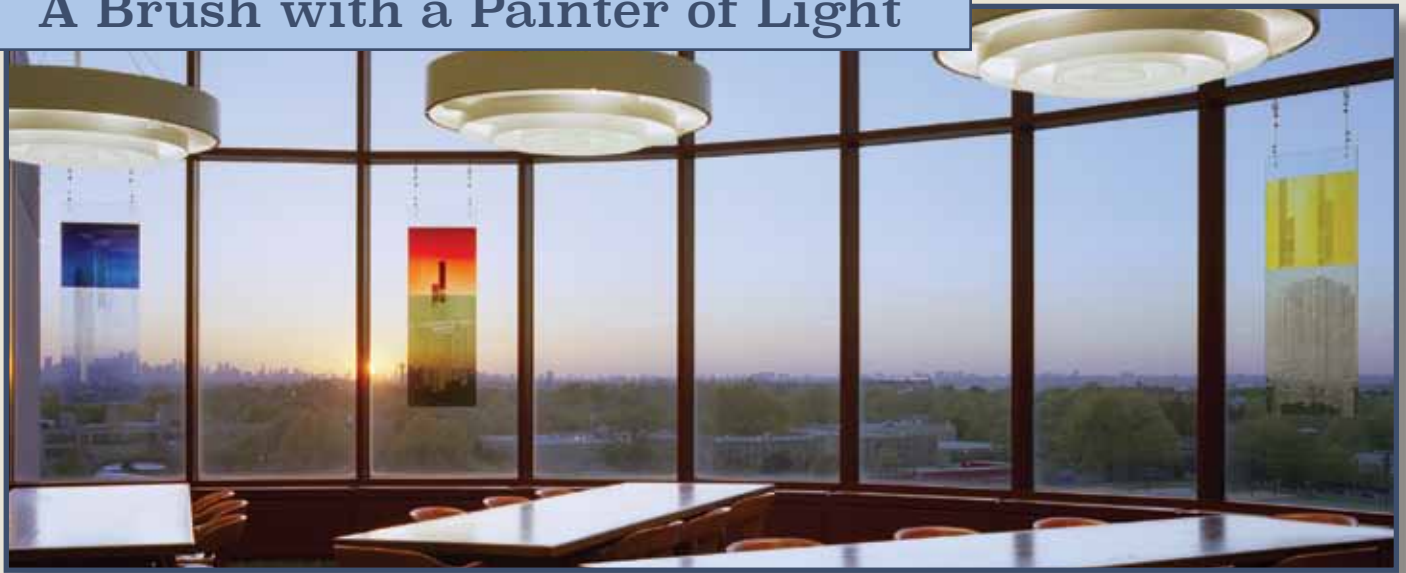
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Featuring the latest from the American Glass Guild

## Considering Ellen Mandelbaum A Brush with a Painter of Light



*Mandelbaum, Colors of the Sky, Queens College Art Center, Flushing, New York, 5' x 2', 2006. Photo by Elizabeth Felicella.*

by Troy Moody

This past summer I was fortunate enough to attend the 2019 joint conference between the American Glass Guild (AGG) and the American Glass Association in San Antonio, Texas. These annual conferences present opportunities not only to visit a new city but, more importantly, to connect with old friends, new business associates, studio professionals, artists, and glass enthusiasts.

I've enjoyed these dynamic events for 14 years now and have come to especially relish the causal rendezvous found among the sanctioned lectures and demonstrations. The random snippets of time spent in the bar, dining rooms, and elevators often lead to memorable off-hand chats with colleagues steeped in the history of the craft. Treasured moments with individuals driven by relentless professional passion and decades of personal experience become unscripted highlights of the events. One such encounter from the recent Texas congregation was the chance to visit with renowned glass designer and painter Ellen Mandelbaum.

### Fortuitous Beginnings

I first had the extreme pleasure of meeting Ellen many years ago in the dirt floor cellar of a 200-plus-year-old New Hampshire farmhouse. The Antrim School was the brainchild of Dick Millard. It occupied a somewhat dilapidated farmhouse on the outskirts of a sleepy village nestled near the picturesque Contoocook River. For a brief, magical time at the end of the 20th century, it was a gathering spot for glass students, artists, historians, conservators, odd characters, and living legends in the world of stained glass.

In that long-ago time, I spent an afternoon glazing an auction panel for Ellen. I was struck by her gentle sincerity and creative curiosity. After all those years had passed, it was wonderful to once

again spend time with her over the course of a few blurry days deep in the heart of Texas. We sat lost in the cluttered basement of a conference hall, strolled along the charming San Antonio riverfront, and laughed amongst the celebratory atmosphere of the formal award ceremony. It was an unexpected luxury to converse easily with this remarkable friend. I was delighted to find her as enthusiastic and sharp as ever. Her passion for the glass arts is refreshing, and her radiant authenticity is inspiring.

### Distinctive Work

Most students of stained glass have encountered images of and references to the distinctive work of Ellen Mandelbaum. Her commissioned work is easily recognizable, with its large swaths of colored antique glass washed in loose, painted movements and gestural lead lines. The artist had an intimate familiarity with brushes long before she found glass and feels that the painting utensils become an extension, not only of her hands but of her entire body. This immersive approach is evident in the brush strokes and fluid character of the painted shadows and the pulled highlights of raw glass. A large part of her skill lies in knowing how to achieve dramatic, glowing panels of modulated light with little technical intrusion.

As a designer, Ellen understands the need for structure and embraces the aesthetics of an underling lead matrix. She allows quiet spaces that are juxtaposed against bold clusters of sweeping lines to occupy her architectural panels. The intentional actions of her glass compositions become graceful dances joining the worked glass screens with the external imagery of the seen world existing outside the window.



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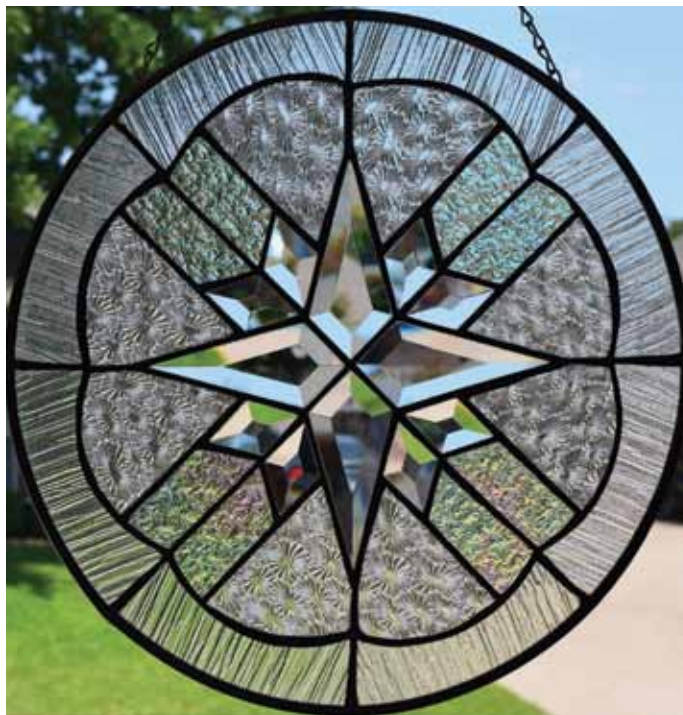
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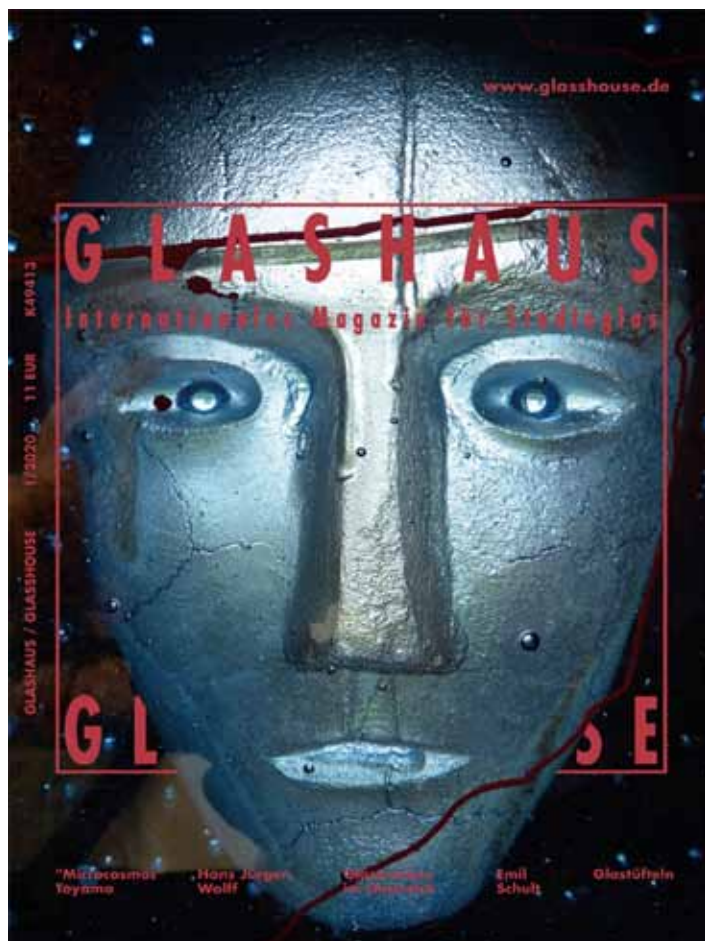
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Artist: Olen Cullum. From Delphi's Online Artist Gallery.







*Mandelbaum, Glass Landscape, South Carolina Aquarium, Charleston, South Carolina, 18' x 30', 2000. Photo by Marilyn Ott.*

## From Painting to Glass Art

The visual effect of Mandelbaum's work seems to be almost effortless—direct and intuitive—yet it is, in fact, the result of intense intellectual consideration and a lifetime pursuit of academic understanding. After earning an MFA in painting with high honors in 1963, the artist taught modern painting at Hunter College and worked as a lecturer at the Whitney Museum in New York City. In 1975, she began studying stained glass as an art form, attending the Stained Glass School in North Adams, Massachusetts, in 1983 and the fabled Pilchuck School in Stanwood, Washington, in 1985.

Ellen participated in the first Architectural Stained Glass Seminar at the Hein Derix Studio in Kevelaer, Germany, and studied directly with giants of German Abstract Stained Glass Ludwig Schaffrath, Johannes Schreiter, and Jochem Poensgen. In fact, it was Schaffrath who first encouraged her to abandon her more pedestrian glass designs and aspire to achieve in glass the remarkable artistry he saw in her early expressive oil paintings. It was legendary Lithuanian Master Albinus Elskus who taught her the noble art of glass painting, which in turn led her to the realization of that goal.

## Finding Inspiration in Nature and Light

When considering Ellen's expansive body of work, it is easy to see that nature and light have been consistent sources of inspiration for the artist. Through years of concentrated effort and determination, she has harnessed a highly individualized language of visual expression in glass art and has employed this voice in her monumental architectural commissions and intimate autonomous panels alike.

Through her involvement with The Women's International Glass Workshop (WIGW), Ellen has traveled and exhibited extensively. The WIGW is a loose alliance of architectural glass artists who meet every two years to exchange technical ideas, discuss professional

development, and share their individual conceptual approach to glass design. Meetings have been held in Ireland, Japan, Iceland, Austria, Wales, the United States, New Zealand, and Canada.

## Delighting in the Magic of Glass Art

After decades of study, execution, and exploration, Ellen continues to delight in the possibilities and magic of stained glass. She has completed dozens of notable architectural installations and has had her original glass art included in countless national and international exhibitions. Active and curious, she continues a committed practice of creating watercolor paintings and autonomous glass panels. In recent years she has been experimenting with incorporating fused glass into her repertoire and began mounting her watercolors on paper behind painted glass to produce original interdisciplinary art pieces.

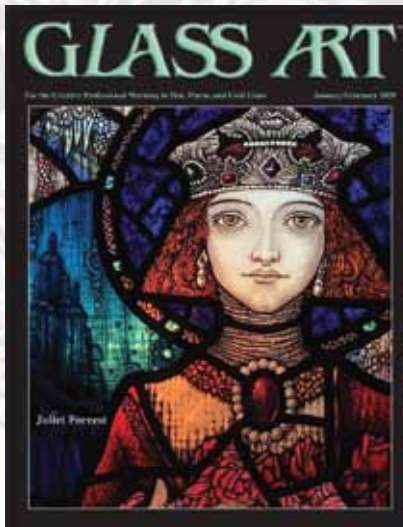
Mandelbaum remains a celebrated member of the greater art glass community. She was recently awarded a lifetime achievement award from the Stained Glass Association of America and is a cherished Senior Adviser to the American Glass Guild. Her accomplishments in and contribution to the world of stained glass is commendable and impressive, but greater still is her truly lovely personality. Quick with a smile and a kind word, she is approachable, generous, and eager to engage. Ellen Mandelbaum is forever an inspiration in more ways than one.

**GA**

*Visit [www.americanglassguild.org](http://www.americanglassguild.org) to find out more about the AGG's upcoming events and how to become a Guild member.*

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