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Mauro Vianello



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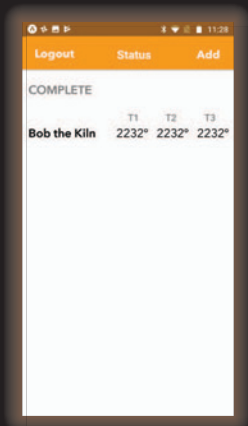


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Anika van der Merwe,
Painted Fish.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

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Mauro Vianello, Sea Anemone with Clown Fish.

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March/April 2021

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Ad Materials	January 30, 2021
Issue Mails	February 19, 2021

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Ad Materials	March 30, 2021
Issue Mails	April 19, 2021



Mauro Vianello

Extraordinary Sea Life in Flameworked Glass

by Vicki Schneider

Mauro Vianello is an accomplished and admired Venetian flameworker whose depictions of sea life are valued and collected by glass enthusiasts from all over the world. Living in Italy near the Venice Lagoon, the artist is inspired by his beautiful environment every day.

Vianello exclusively uses Effetre Murano glass in his work, but you won't find his palette on anyone's shelves. By developing and layering his own custom mixtures of frits, which are small chips of glass, he masterfully transforms classic Effetre colors into intricate reflections of nature. He further uses acid etching and engraving with diamond bits to modify the surface textures of his glass creatures and their environs to make them appear true to life.

The fish and shells in his pieces are made separately from their bases. They can be laid freely on top of the base, or upon request, they can be glued into place. Gluing the components protects them from being dislodged should the installation be hit or moved.

Mauro's consummate skill and joy for living are evident in all of his work. His upbeat personality is reflected in these simple words, "Smiling is less tiring than getting angry." It is our privilege to interview Mauro and share a bit about him and his life.

*Mauro Vianello, Acanthuridae,
20 cm high.*



Mauro, how did you learn to work at a torch?

I began when I was very young, around 16 or 17 years old. I had no experience. I used to work at my torch in my family's garage, where boat engines and fishing gear were stored. The only way I could learn was by looking at other flameworkers. In those days, training courses did not exist. Artists earned their living exclusively by selling their own glass art, not by teaching.

Did you ever want to do anything else?

When I was about 14, I worked as a pastry cook during the summer holiday, and I did other jobs on weekends. I have a diploma in accounting, but that didn't appeal to me. That is another big story.

What challenges did you face when you began?

The greatest challenge I faced was getting started. Unfortunately, none of my relatives worked in glass or were connected to glasswork. Master glass artists and workshops were off limits and impenetrable to anyone not connected with or working in glass.

What are the biggest challenges you have faced since then?

Initially I created my glasswork as a hobby, as a nonofficial second job. At the time, I worked in Barovier & Toso, one of the most prestigious factories in Murano. My job in this big company was to assemble the glass and electrical parts of chandeliers from the simplest to the most complicated, like the chandeliers called *rezzonici*.

I was waiting for the opportunity of turning flame-working into my primary occupation. That opportunity came from my friend Vanni who was an expert flame-worker. He taught me the correct way to approach this type of work. I succeeded because he gave me both his encouragement and technical support.

(Top to bottom) Mauro Vianello working at the Venice Laguna. Photo by Marco Santin; Pesce Scatola, box fish, 18 cm diameter base with 10 cm diameter fish.





How has your work changed over the years?

When I started, I only made handicrafts for tourists to purchase. Over the years, I wanted to leave this type of production. Making tourist items is perhaps more profitable, but it did not give me job satisfaction.

What are you proudest of?

In reality, I am not especially proud of my work life, even if this is not apparent from my joyous disposition. I am often dissatisfied with my work, because I think I could have done it better. I have decided to keep just a few of my pieces, because they are up to my standards and I consider them to be good. I must admit those few pieces have been wrapped up and set aside.

Tell us about your studio.

My studio represents me. Anyone looking at my studio from the outside will see a disorderly mess, but not for me. I know where every glass rod and tool is located under that mess. In my studio, besides a portion dedicated to sales, there is my workstation and five more stations ready to accept students who wish to learn during the year.

What's your typical day like?

I don't have a "typical day." Each one is different. In Venice we move on foot, and I often meet friends on the street in the morning while I am on my way to my studio. We frequently will have a coffee and talk a little together. I typically arrive at my studio around 10:30 a.m. and begin by organizing my day. I make sure I have exactly the right colors of glass and packaging that I'll need for my new orders. If not, I go out and buy them. Then I answer e-mails, respond to social media, and make appointments for paid demos for people who come to Venice for a visit. My afternoons are dedicated to my flameworking until 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

What part does teaching play in your business, and how do you feel about it?

Teaching is a moment of detachment from the everyday routine. I like it because I can get to know other people. As an added benefit, I sometimes get new ideas from my students. For example, I may demonstrate a piece starting it from one side. One of my students may start it from a different side. That experience can give me a different way to execute the object.

When I teach, I work slowly and repeat whatever I'm demonstrating. I show what should be done and what should not be done to accomplish the subject of the lesson. I don't like it when people in my classes find it difficult to carry out what I have explained or demonstrated with the torch. In my opinion, it means that I have not explained it well enough.



(Left, top to bottom, to far right) Mauro Vianello, Hippocampus, sea horse, 18 cm diameter; Pagurus Bernhardus, hermit crab attached to blown shell with flame, acid etched, and sanded, 15 cm diameter; Set di Conchiglie, from a collection of shells 8 to 10 cm each; Palaemon Serratus (Gamberi), common prawn, 17 cm diameter, custom frit application and etched glass.



How would you describe your teaching style and methods?

I try to have my own individual way of teaching. I don't look at how others teach. I try to have my own personal approach with those who are learning. I think that beyond the limitations of the skills people have, there is no bad student, only a teacher who cannot explain well.

How do you find customers?

Good question. I find most of my customers on the Web, but I'm not looking for them. Fortunately for me, they are looking for and finding me. Many times, I also propose ideas to those I presume would be able to buy my work.

As I understand it, many flameworkers in Italy live in Venice and work in Murano. Why did you do just the opposite?

As I explained above, none of my parents or family members worked in glass. I had no contacts to find a place in Murano, so I opted to open my own workshop and business in Venice.

What is the glass community like in Venice/Murano, and how has it changed over the years?

When I started, the community was very closed. Those who were not part of it had difficulty integrating into it. Now it is a bit more open, but as in all jobs, everyone tends to preserve for himself his own techniques, tools, and production processes.

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(Clockwise from bottom left) Mauro Vianello, *Liocarcinus Vernalis*, gray swimming crab, 18 cm diameter base; *Platichthys Flesus*, European flounder, 18 cm diameter; *Chaetodon Semi-larvatus* (Pesce Farfalla Mascherato), masked butterflyfish glued onto base, 25 cm high.

What distinguishes your work from other flameworkers?

I consider the Blaschkas my “virtual masters.” They were absolute geniuses, having made these wonderful objects in spite of all the difficulties of over one hundred years ago. They are the ones I dream of being or even becoming better than they were, because it is in my nature to perform better things. As part of my research, I create new glass colors that are not on the market. As the Blaschkas did, I study and replicate all of the smallest details of the animals I sculpt. This approach is a bit in contrast to the current modern minimalist trend.

What other glass-related skills have you developed over the years, and how often do you use them?

After a lot of practice, I taught myself to blow glass at a torch with small blow pipes. Very often I create works using this technique and mix together my knowledge of solid and blown forms.

What impact has Covid-19 had on you, your business, and your art?

This year I was obliged to stay home by law by the Italian government, and I lost a little of my creative energy. The closure of international flights implied that lovers of my works, collectors, and prospective students had to postpone visits and all of their appointments to my studio. This had a big impact on my work logistically and economically like all business activities in the world.

Are your children flameworkers too?

I have four daughters who do not wish to continue my work. Maybe they see the sacrifices I have always made to carry out the commitments I have set for myself. I have seen that the work is not always handed down from father to child.

How do you feel about their choices?

How do I feel? This is why I teach. I would not want all that I have learned to be lost. I try to pass it on to others, even though I am convinced that it is very difficult to pass on everything one single person knows.

What other nonglass interests do you have?

Unfortunately, I have all the worst interests that life has to offer, like eating, cooking, and drinking. I like wine, beer, and spirits, and I like to go out on my handmade wooden boat. I enjoy doing these activities with those who make me feel good. I also like to take pictures of my life and post them on my Instagram profile.

If you could go back in time, what would you do differently?

Nothing. I wouldn't change anything. I am convinced that life experience teaches us how to behave for the future. If you went back and changed your life, you would not be as you are now.

What lies ahead for you?

I hope a rich collector will knock on my door and buy everything I have in my studio so I could enjoy doing all the things I like without worrying about an income.

What advice do you have for new lampworkers?

Keep trying and learning from your mistakes. Do not throw the wrong things out. Only throw things in the garbage after learning how to do the production process well.

What else would you like our readers to know about you?

In thanking you and all those who will read about me, the readers of this interview must consider themselves lucky for what you asked me. I usually don't tell much about myself. I prefer to leave the words to my working hands, and this article tells a lot about my life.

I just hope that working on glass will not be seen in the years to come as something that was done in the past. I hope something happens that will preserve this type of art. **G&A**



Mauro Vianello, Set di Conchiglie, from a collection of shells ranging from 8 to 10 cm.

Mauro Vianello

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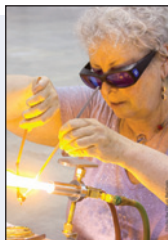
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Vicki Schneider follows the tradition of Venetian flameworking artists to produce decorative solid and blown glass art. Mainly working off-hand in COE 104 soft glass, she is inspired by her childhood spent on the Jersey shore. Her current bodies of work include Mama's Garden, composed of lifelike blown and solid flowers, and Childhood, vignettes celebrating the innocence of youth.



In 2009, Schneider opened Expressive Glass, her teaching studio in Buffalo, New York, to share her passion for glass with novice and skilled glassworkers. Since 2006, the artist has introduced more than 500 students to the magic of glass art and has studied with and hosted many of the world's most respected artists. Learn more about Vicki's work and her studio at www.expressiveglass.com.

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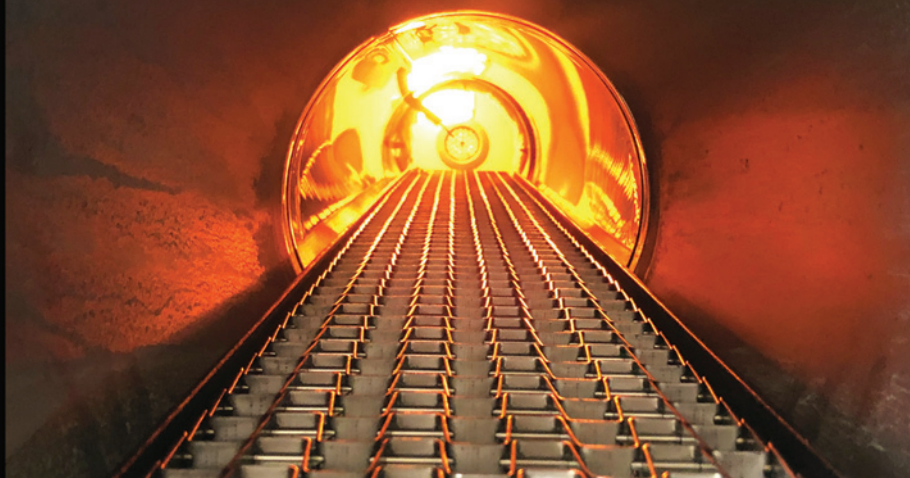
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Toshiki Uchida

Murrine Bead Master

by Sara Sally LaGrand

Social media has changed my life in the most inspiring ways. The problem, however, is that I spent so much time scrolling and making screenshots of glass I love that I had to get a phone with the biggest possible storage. That is not a bad thing, I think. Especially when I go back many years and look at what I had been saving to remind myself of the most beautiful and striking glass objects.

I have been viewing the work of Japanese artist Toshiki Uchida for a long time and have screen shots of his work on my phone from many years ago. What is even more incredible is that his work was included in some of the events and catalogs from “calls to entry” that were initiated while I was president of the International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB), something I didn’t realize until I started interviewing him for this article. It is amazing how the points of a puzzle will come together. In other words, I have been a Toshiki Uchida fan since 2007, when his work first appeared in the *Trajectories Exhibition* that came to fruition with the efforts of ISGB and the former Bead Museum of Arizona. (Tiny shout out to Carol Saker, a hardworking volunteer for the Bead Museum, whose efforts were instrumental in salvaging that project that she and I inherited.)



*(Far left to right) Toshiki Uchida, Fern Bead, 28 mm diameter, 2001;
Ruins, 25 mm diameter, 2016; Passion Flower, 33 mm diameter, 2018.
All beads created from Satake lead glass.*



(Top to bottom) Toshiki Uchida, Bird Mosaic beads, front bead 22 mm tall with the tallest at 45 mm high, 2019; Shaman, 27 mm diameter, 2017. All beads from Satake lead glass.

What is so intriguing about Toshiki's work in bead making are the layers of murrine, so skillfully crafted that they create tiers of glass revealing a world captured inside. The late Marvin Lipofsky once said to me that he found bead making frustrating as an art form, because the pieces were so small. However, to me, that is the joy of it.

In bead making, your canvas is pretty small. You only have an inch or so to convey your message, and Toshiki is truly a master at that. His work invites you in to examine it at very close range to find the glowing eyes of a half-revealed owl staring out at you behind the most perfect fern fronds you have ever seen crafted in glass. I am thinking Marvin never had the chance to see that, or it's likely that he would have changed his mind.

From Architecture to Glass Art

Toshiki has been making glass for many decades in Oiso-machi, Kanagawa-ken, Japan. He did not come from a family of glassmakers like some of my Japanese friends. Instead, he started his studies at the university in architecture. "I left Tokyo Zokei University in 1981 where I had studied architectural designs. Then I enrolled in Tokyo Glass Art Institute in 1982. I learned many kinds of glassmaking techniques there such as lampworking, blowing glass, and pâte de verre. After I graduated from the institute in 1984, I worked there as an assistant for seven years.

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Toshiki explains that it was a curious jump from architecture to glass. “Before I passed to my junior year of college in 1981, I realized that the things I learned in college were totally different from what I had expected. At that time, I was very interested in stained glass church windows. I got the urge to learn about it and decided to enter the Tokyo Glass Art Institute.”

It seems to me that having a Glass Institute is sort of a blessing. Being able to study glass at the university level is still an anomaly in the United States. However, Toshiki explains that even with the opportunity he had, progress on the work he does today had a humble beginning.

“I learned lampworking at the Tokyo Glass Art Institute for the first time. The lessons on lampworking were given for only five days in the two years I was there, so I ended up just knowing how to melt glass and learning how to make canes and solid beads there. Most of my techniques are my own. Fortunately, I have had a lot of time to learn through trial and error.” Hear, hear for trial and error.

Developing New Themes

Toshiki believes his techniques are not that unusual compared with the work being done by American artists. He did convey to me, however, that while he is able to create his work using Effetre, the Italian glass imported from the Island of Murano and favored by American artists, he can’t get the same look of depth unless he uses Satake. This much softer lead-based glass is favored by most Japanese glass artists. Beyond that, he feels his technique is similar.

“My process is briefly as follows. Once a new theme is decided, I sketch the design of the bead that I’m going to make. If I need some murrine to make a prototype, I make those first. In most cases, the first prototype is not finished as imagined. I try to reproduce the sketched design, but it doesn’t always work successfully. Then I make changes to the design to make it easier to reproduce with melted glass and make the second prototype. Finally, I repeat this process over and over again until I get a satisfactory result. I usually spend the time to create beads based on a new theme in July, August, and September every year.”

Sharing Glass Art with the World

Toshiki is invited to participate in several glass bead shows in Japan each year. “I hold solo exhibitions in many different places in Japan every year such as Kobe, Kyoto, and Yokohama, and I usually present new themed work every autumn in Tokyo. The latest one was held at Site Aoyama Gallery in November 2020.”

The artist has also been included in several exhibitions outside of Japan. These include the 2018 Les Créateurs exhibition organized by the Enghien-les-Bains Métiers Tourism in France, the 1999 Hsinchu International Glass Art Festival in Hsinchu, Taiwan, and the 1989 International Pâte de Verre show in Coburg, West Germany. In addition, you can find information about Toshiki and his work in the following publications: *Glass Line* June/July (2012); *Masters: Glass Beads: Major Works by Leading Artists* (2008); *1000 Glass Beads: Innovation & Imagination in Contemporary Glass Beadmaking* (2004); and the *Trajectories Catalog* by ISGB (2006).



Toshiki Uchida, Snake Gourd beads, 25 mm diameter, created from Satake lead glass, 2015. The fluffy, lace-like white petals of the snake gourd are a favorite of the artist.



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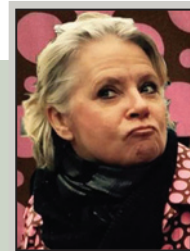
These days, Toshiki has been sheltering in place like the rest of the world, trying to keep classes rolling at the university and working on his own pieces. He is a prolific poster on his Instagram site, and I urge you to follow him there. Also be sure to view his work in his Etsy shop.

GA



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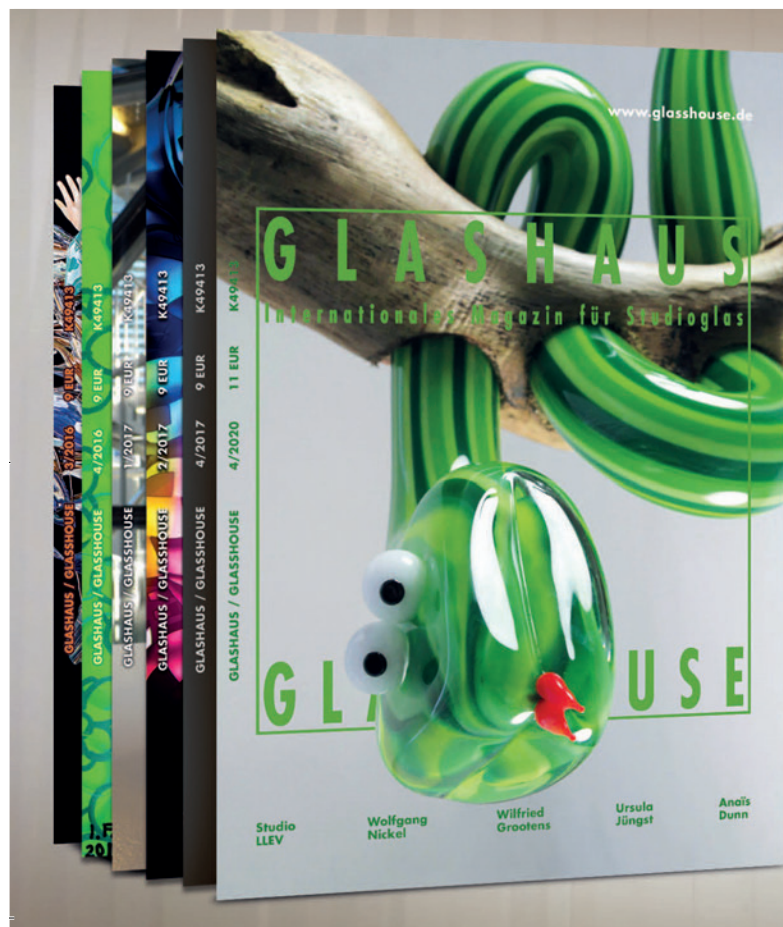
Toshiki Uchida, Ancient Flower, created from Satake lead glass, 32 mm diameter, 2019.



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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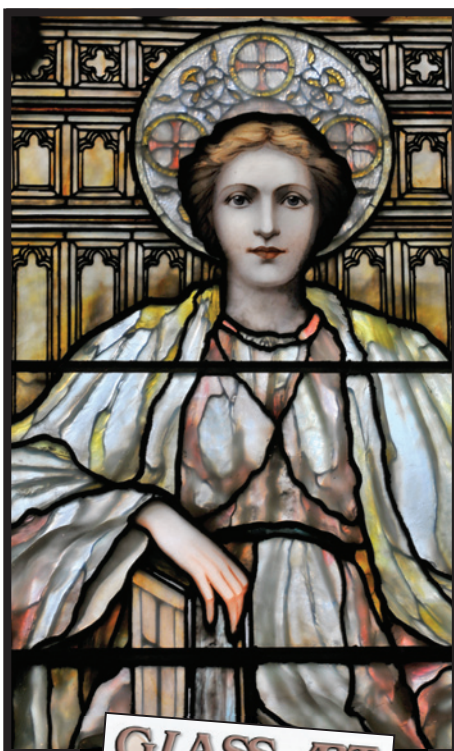
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Discover a world of amazing creations by Janusz Pożniak, Maureen Henriques, Suzanne Head, and J&R Lamb Studios in the November/December 2020 issue of Glass Art®.

On the cover of the November/December 2020 issue of Glass Art®, White Rabbit Mask by Suzanne Head.
(Above)
Religion Enthroned by Frederick Stymetz Lamb, J&R Lamb Studios.
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Creativity

FORM WILL EVER FOLLOW FUNCTION

by Milon Townsend

During the decade when I was heavily involved in kiln casting glass, the work grew and developed in different directions. Some of the factors driving these changes had strictly to do with aesthetic considerations, but other more functional issues became more and more significant over time.

Finding a Better Way

Making illuminated sculptures, side lit by LEDs, required a series of aesthetic decisions and trade-offs to fulfill certain functions. In my series of kiln cast glass archways, the reverse relief images read best when illuminated from the side. The original metal frame that we used was designed to allow servicing the LEDs over time, if and when they needed to be replaced. We discovered, however, that the light strip itself lasts for many years. The part that needs to be frequently replaced is the power source, a change as simple as unplugging and replacing it with another one. We found that the metal frame that provided easy access was visually cumbersome and clunky, protruding into the image area of the piece and eating up the view . . . like Elvis Costello's glasses.

Was there another way? A way that still provided access to the internals, if and when that day should arrive? We developed the slim line frame, a thin strip of metal housing the lighting. The frame is attached to the glass by silicone, which maintains its flexibility indefinitely. We realized that, should it be necessary, the silicone could be cut away and replaced at the time that the lights needed to be replaced. It was decided that the extremely rare function of light service was not worth the constant clumsiness of that functional frame. The trade-off of more work to change things out very infrequently, if ever, was a cost worth risking for the daily relief of the slim, clean lines of the thin metal frame. This is a case where the form trumped function and required us to come up with a better solution.

40" Archways

Incremental Changes

I did a number of 24" x 48" x 2" thick cast glass panels with images of koi swimming in them. I liked them, and they were a successful series. We did find, however, that there were a number of problems associated with making them.

- It took over two weeks to anneal each one, taking a large kiln out of service for all that time.
- It took over \$2,000 in materials to make each one, a large commitment that took a lot of money out of the cash flow.
- Each piece, mounted horizontally, ate up a footprint of approximately 6 feet in width by 4 feet in depth, a whopping 24 square feet. That's a lot of space to ask people to give up in their homes.
- Each panel weighed in at over 250 pounds, making them hard to work on and move around the shop.



24" x 48" vertical panel

*24" x 48"
horizontal panel*



Over time and many conversations in which the above list of issues became clarified, as well as actually sitting down with paper, we came up with solutions to the problems while allowing us to continue to make these pieces. The first change was to make one to be displayed vertically, which took the 24-square-foot covered area down to about 9 square feet. That was good, but we took it further by modifying the dimensions of the work so that the panels became 8" wide x 54" tall x 1.25" thick. We also chose to mount them vertically instead of horizontally.

- Changing the thickness to 1.25" allowed them to be annealed in 6 days instead of 16.
- Mounting the pieces vertically in a 24" stand gave them a total height of nearly 7 feet, an impressive visual, while only consuming a footprint that was 16" x 16", less than 2 square feet!
- The modified pieces weighed in at only 65 pounds and were much more manageable to move around the shop.
- The cost to make one of these panels was a much more affordable \$550.

The taller, narrower columns took on a life of their own, and we experienced a good deal of success with them as a series. I had more space, given the 54" length, to explore the ways that the fish move around each other in the water, so I was able to produce more pieces with more different configurations. In this case, we absolutely modified the form to fulfill a very specific set of functions that were important to us, making the work better as a result.



*8" x 54"
vertical panel*

Considering Requirements for Success

I make pendants, the most basic function of which is to hang. There are numerous ways of making that happen. Another important function of a hanging pendant is for it not to break off of the hanging system or loop.

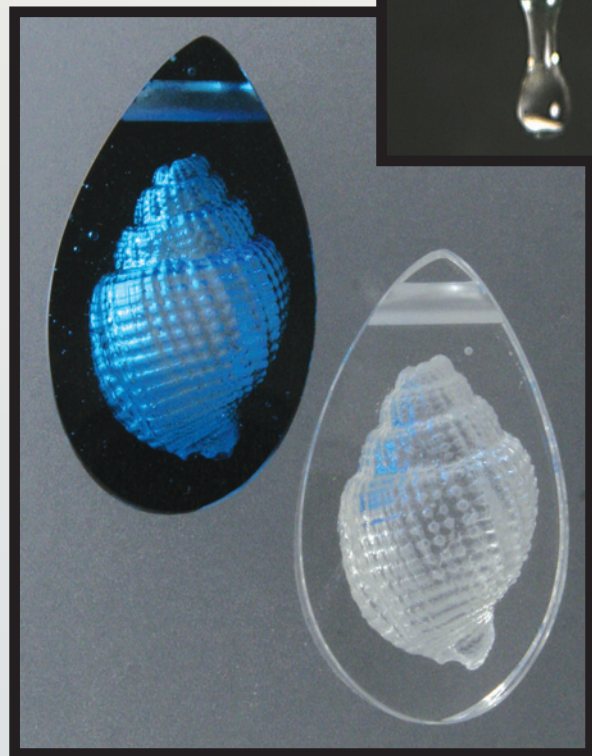
- One approach is to drill a hole horizontally across the top so that there is no protruding loop. This sometimes impinges on the internal image area.

- A loop may be attached to the top, which needs to be thick enough and strong enough not to break easily. It also needs to be graceful enough to be an addition to the design instead of an obvious distraction from it. Making the loop a matching color to the rest of the pendant can help the eye tie it together, as can stretching the loop in a flowing liquid shape.

- I will also often add a falling drop of water to the bottom, especially if the subject material includes a theme in which that would work well, such as undersea marine images or a floral garden in which dewdrops are embedded in our subconscious. This falling drop of water mirrors the stretched shape of the loop on the top. Since the falling drop is a different color from the loop that matches the rest of the pendant, the drop pulls our eyes away from it.



Frog on Leaf with Dewdrop pendant



Turban Seashell pendants

Progressing from Inception to Completion

Traditional functions for, say, a decanter might include keeping volatile spirits from evaporating, being stable enough not to tip, and allowing the free flow of liquid and air within the chamber. Somewhat less traditional functions might include the following.

- Presentation and display
- Shipping and transportation
- Sales
- Profit
- Durability and safe handling by the uninitiated

Designing and producing work that meets your personal, unique, specific needs is also accommodating function as well, as shown in the following examples.

- Use a wooden chessboard, because a glass board is too heavy, fragile, and time consuming to make.
- Use an engraved plaque instead of etching one yourself, because you don't have the equipment to do it.
- Fuse your work onto glass bases, because you don't want to carry a large inventory of wooden bases. You also don't want to use glue to laminate pieces together with a concern for the longevity of your work.

We make a host of decisions as we progress from inception to completion, all of which at the very least brush up against a variety of functional considerations. Ideally, accommodating these needs will lead to more aesthetically and artistically satisfying results.

G&A



Tidal Pool pendant

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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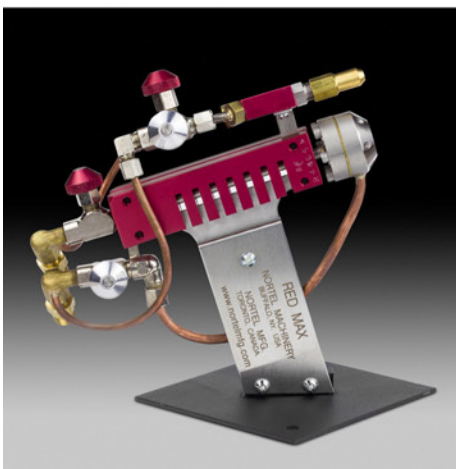
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The Contemporary Glass Society to the Rescue!



*Carrie Fertig, Manga Lamb: All the Rage.
Photo by Shannon Tofts.*

by Susan Purser Hope, Chair

The Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) has jumped into action to support its members during this awful pandemic. Normal life stopped for us all when the pandemic hit. It has put a great strain on our members. Galleries in lockdown, the closure of their studios, and the resulting inability to run workshops to supplement their income means that many are suffering great hardship. Isolation and personal loss has added to their fears for the future and has put a massive strain on their well-being.

The Team at CGS sprang into action in March 2020 and put their thinking caps on to develop a plan to support makers. This has resulted in a dazzling array of new initiatives to help including:

- Twice weekly emails packed with useful links and information about funding and opportunities for artists.
- Emails where members can share information and support and contact each other.
- Weekly Live talks with artists, collectors, and gallery owners every Wednesday evening where members also have time to chat with each other and make ongoing links. These recorded video interviews are then permanently available for members to watch.
- Monthly online exhibitions with opportunities for members to include work for sale and share contact details for potential buyers to get in touch.
- Quarterly International days where we span time zones to bring speakers from Australasia, the Americas, and Europe together.
- Relevant reports on current topics such as making studios COVID-19 compliant to enable members to open their studios and offer workshops again.
- Fortnightly fun challenges to encourage creative thinking and keep spirits up.
- Daily tweets about glassmakers.
- Regular Facebook profiles of members' work.
- Continual Instagram additions with fantastic images of members' work.

Continuing Support for Members and Graduates

Throughout the lockdown period, the CGS board has maintained a sense of camaraderie with members. It has also supported new glass graduates, whose final year was so adversely affected by the pandemic, with their own online exhibition *Glass Graduates of 2020 (The Lockdown Exhibition)*, featured on the new website. This is our first Graduate Show, and we were excited to share graduates' work with the public and glassmaking community. Despite the restrictions placed upon them, graduates produced a dazzling and wide-ranging demonstration of their ability and creative approach to contemporary glass.

The feedback from our members has been fantastic. They appreciate our help and support as can be seen here from one of the graduates.

"Just a quick email to thank you so much for arranging the current CGS talks. Although I haven't been able to see all the live Wednesday evening talks, I've watched all of them over the past few weeks. I particularly enjoyed Katharine Coleman's and Cathryn Schilling's talks.

I realize it must be a lot of extra work for you, but I'm sure we all appreciate the effort. I certainly do. Not having access to a studio at the moment and not knowing whether I'll be able to continue studying in the way I'd like to at the Royal College of Art (RCA), having the CGS community network is a life saver. I know we all say thank you every week, but I just wanted to say an extra thanks. Kind regards, Caroline"



*Cathryn Schilling, Cloaked - Gods & Heroes, free blown glass with kiln formed glass cane fabric applied hot, 2018.
Photo by Ester Segarra Photography.*

Angela Jarman, Saphire Geode, 46 cm x 21 cm x 21 cm, and Amber Geode, 34 cm x 20 cm x 20 cm. Both from lost wax cast lead crystal with 22 karat gilt, 2018. Photo by Sylvain Deleu.



James Maskrey, Shakelton's Scrimshaw, free blown bottles with sculpted stoppers, free blown scrimshaw with printed details, group measurement 60 cm (tallest) x 90 cm x 14 cm (deepest), 2014. Photo by Colin Davison.



Christopher Day, Transcending Bondage, handblown and sculpted glass with terra-cotta thrown form, microbore copper pipe, and copper wire, 36 cm x 25 cm x 25 cm, 2019. Photo by Simon Bruntnell.



Improving Internet Resources

In addition, lockdown has enabled us to work with our Web designers to create and launch a new and highly interactive website, www.cgs.org.uk, with many new features that look fabulous. It is easy to navigate and promotes our members. As well as a modern design, with lots of wonderful images of glass, the new website works seamlessly on all devices to showcase contemporary glass from the United Kingdom and around the world.

New features include a magazine section, *Glass Network digital*, which complements the established and respected print magazine, *Glass Network*, produced for CGS members. *Glass Network digital* publishes regular in-depth articles about outstanding glass artists, both upcoming and established, alongside business advice for creatives and relevant news and opportunities for the glass community.

Isolation has made us appreciate the potential of using social media and digital platforms for enabling us as a very small management team to be able to offer more alternative ways for community involvement. It has made us aware of minority groups within our glass community that we should reach out to and made us appreciate the potential to collaborate with other organizations and heritage craft groups. We can also become more involved in outreach work within schools and colleges. Some of this is for the future, but we are looking at how we can continue and expand these services during 2021 and at the same time make CGS more resilient for the future.



Bruno Romanelli, (*obvs*), Pallene, lost-wax cast glass, 46 cm x 26 cm x 5 cm, 2018. Private collection. Photo by Andy Smart, AC Cooper Photography.

Alison Kinnaird, *Lockdown 2020*, full image and detail, optical glass sheet and black Bullseye glass, LED lighting, steel mount, wheel-engraved and sandblasted, 48 cm x 28 cm x 13 cm, 2020. Photo by Robin Morton.



Looking Ahead

So what about 2021? Well, we are continuing all of our weekly events featuring exciting new talent such as Chris Day, one of the few black glassblowers in the UK. Famous international artists such as Bob Leatherbarrow are joining our next International Day, and every online exhibition for our members will be selling shows. The CGS theme for 2021 is all about collaboration in a range of innovative and different ways between artists, different crafts, museums, and galleries.

We also wanted to celebrate one of the positives that has resulted from this worldwide pandemic—the unity, good humor, and support that there has been amongst all the members of the contemporary glass community. Consequently, we have organized an exhibition specifically to celebrate this unity as we head toward a future spring, where a vaccine will hopefully see life relaunched.

The CGS members, who form a close community of glass artists, have extended their hands across the world to glass artists who are not members of CGS—not only from the UK but also internationally—to take part in a selected online show. *Hands Across the World* runs from January 11 through February 26, 2021, so come and visit us on our new website. Happy Thanksgiving from all at the Contemporary Glass Society. **GA**

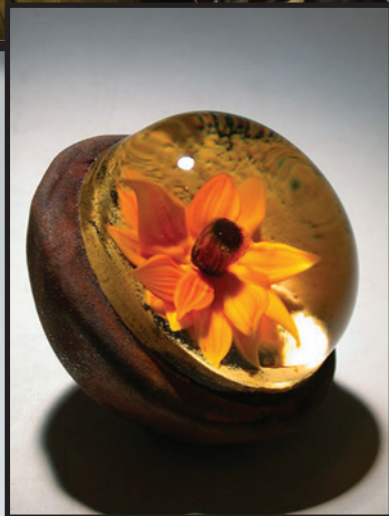


Visit www.cgs.org.uk for a look at all of the offerings available from the Contemporary Glass Society and information on how to become member of CGS.

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The Power of the Flame

Transforming the Common into Something Special



by Melissa Ayotte

I wish I could write about my work as a glass artist in a linear way, as if I could say something like, “I made the tiger lily by coating orange Effetre glass over yellow and rolling it in a powdered brown.” Then I could say with certainty how one piece is frameworked to another and in so doing creates, say, the rose, the leaf, the tendril, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Having been brought up among the tool of fire and the gift of nature, I realize that the flame is more than a flame and the natural world does more than enter into the well-domed or roughly hewn sculptures I make. My work is transformation—or as the alchemists called

it transmutation—using fire to change glass from solid to fluid states. In that change, form is discovered or created from what was previously a dull rod of red, blue, yellow, or green. Alchemy, a power or process that changes or transforms something in a mysterious or impressive way, is a dance at the edge of where the flame meets the supercooled liquid called glass.



(Counterclockwise from top left) Melissa Ayotte working in the flame. Photo by John W. Hession; Sunflower Rusted Vessel, Narcissus Stone, and Time Capsule. Photos by the artist.



Art in the Moment

Life as we know it commonly appears linear. We move through our days accumulating things, experiences, moments as if in a fragmentation, pointing to processes on a timeline that we use to create order and comfort in our lives. We often think of ourselves as working from a check list—this, then that, done, then check, next—but working in the flame, making art from the moment, is a different worldview. The fire to material, the material to the hands, the hands beholden to intention—each aspect is interdependent on the medium.

The glass will not obey a schedule or regimen imposed by our limited perception of time. Instead, there is a process, one step following another, until in the creative now this process is dissolved and transmuted. The glass, when touched with heat, converts from a supercooled liquid to a more fluid state. It can be plunged into hotter and hotter parts of the flame, but even then, the application of hotter states only pushes but does not force obedience. The glass obeys its own properties without a thought for itself. It is, after all, only matter. The artist must read the glass by the hand, the flame, and the intention.

Flameworkers exist on the edge of this matter—the matter of bending and shaping what is a supercooled solid into malleable liquid. Then they return to sculpt the matter of intention brought into existence with the hand. Art exists on the tip of this intention—the blended state between forming and creating. The great art takes hold of the beholder, sculpts the sculptor, and removes the boundary or distance between each. There is no process in that creative now, and the artist transcends boundaries, falling into a state beyond time.



(Left to right) Melissa Ayotte,
Navaho Basket. Photo by the artist;
Circulus with Dahlia Bouquet.
Photo by Morgan Karanasios.



*(Top to bottom) Melissa Ayotte,
Native Sunshine Basket, 5-1/2" tall;
the artist working in her studio.
Photos by John W. Hession.*



(Left to right) Melissa Ayotte, *Man in the Moon* and *Circulus with Ranuncular Bouquet*. Photos by the artist.



From the Flame through the Hands of the Artist

The alchemist turns to her medium, her right hand turning the gas and the left, the oxygen. There is a spark, then the low hum of powered flame. For power and big heat, she gives more oxygen. The sword-shaped flame, blue in the center, trails off into the orange-reds as they dance in the outermost regions of heat. This is the working flame.

A translucent rod rises in the hand. The alchemist strikes a piece in the coolest portion of the flame, then drives it forward into the blue heat. Solid begins its relative roll toward liquid. A hand turns the rod back and forth. The other side reaches for a yellow, thin fiber like a filament of glass. Both hands come together near the fire—right translucent and left the thin, solid yellow—and they are warmed by the act of creating. She inserts the stamen into the clear rod, then again another and so on until the clear is nearly filled with tiny dots inside.

Thinking of and nurturing the intricacy and intimacy of a flower's stamens, the alchemist draws the delicate rows inside the translucency until they appear true to form. She puts down the yellow fiber. Pollen that she sees only in the mind's eye lands on the workbench, which is where the bees would come to pollinate the field.

The artist puts down one rod, picks up the tweezers, reaches into the clear glass, grabs at the end, and pulls it finer. The reach is asking to get nearer, closer, to what nature shows. The flame flickers through her breathing.

Realizing the Essence of Work

What does the application of force day after day bring in the fire? Moments accumulating into a body of work. *Work*. The word itself demands to be explored, since it is multilayered. The levels of this measure are commonly put onto something, for example to apply work, as in rolling a rock up a hill.

Flameworkers arise with a purpose tied to fire. The morning salutation begins with spark, flitter, and flame, and the day ends with a forceful snap of pressure leaving the torch lines. In between, they sit married to that which comes before the window of their lives—lilacs, morning glories, sunflowers, cardinals, orioles, wrens, turtles, frogs, the gifts of beauty released back into the wild by the careful application of fire and glass.

The dancing flame reflects off the purple didymium lenses of artists who are stilled in the mastery, becoming one with the medium. Years are spent praising nature by pressing their own human nature toward what it really means to be a flameworker.

I suppose it could have been something else—a different subject, another material maybe. I am thus far a daughter of the torch, a medium myself, plunging the solid into a world not possible to describe in pure linearity. It brings me back, tied to form from the other world, untied to the regimens of time. The medium is like interstellar space, the dark matter of human consciousness, or creativity. We can only understand or claim to know it by looking at the outcome we have when the work is deemed finished.



(Left to right) Melissa Ayotte collab with her father Rick Ayotte, Millefiori. Photo by the artist; portrait of Melissa Ayotte by John W. Hession.



Melissa Ayotte
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www.ayotteglassart.com
www.instagram.com/ayotteglass

Becoming One with the Medium

I see the flameworkers' gift as forming inside their relationships to the medium. This union is a deep fidelity to process—the attention given to the properties of glass. It is not a delineated step by step, but rather an intuition danced with through the hand—the feel of the glass. The music hits the airways from a series of motions made by the musician. We may gaze upon those chords, the sheet music, break down the how to, but what ignites us is the sound. The flameworkers mastery shows in sculptures attentively placed in a collector's home, encapsulating the experience rendered at the tip of intention.

As the artist and poet Rose Slivka wrote, "The craftspeople and artists are poets transcending, reaching inside and beyond the physical nature of the object." As I grow as a human being, so does my ability to work with glass. Sculptures originally viewed as a paperweight turn into stones, native baskets, cairns, and now the *Circulus*. The bottom line is that the creative life multiplies by one's willingness to sit at the tip of that intention—to develop, to grow, and to explore the inner reaches of the inspired flame. **GA**

For Melissa Ayotte, the same curiosities that drew her artist father Rick Ayotte to glass initially drew her to the study of psychology, understanding human motivation, and behavior. Her interest in mind sciences led her to become more interested in the arts. While finishing her master's, Melissa began to assist her father in his studio and realized that she had found her true interest. In 2000 she spent time assisting at Stankard Studio and began working full time at Ayotte Glass Studio, where she continues to create glass art.

According to Melissa, "The spherical shape of the paperweight provides a structure from which I can evolve my own sense of creativity, ultimately aiming to evolve the art of paperweight making." The artist aims to push the limits of the paperweight, creating novel pieces that reflect her sense of Nature—earthly, human, and divine.

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DELTA GAMMA'S SERVICE FOR SIGHT HELPING THE FBC SUPPORT THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED



by Alyssa Stoney,
Gamma Phi-Arizona State Delta Gamma Collegian

The place where people believe a vision loss is a diagnosis, not a disability, houses a playground lined with colorful glass tiles. They are not only visually appealing but also appealing by touch to those who are not able to see them.

The Foundation for Blind Children (FBC), located in Phoenix, Arizona, is a school for visually impaired children and adults. The FBC was founded in 1952 in Phoenix by the parents of blind children who were looking for services for their families according to Steve Pawlowski, Director of Communications and Development for the FBC. The creation of the school could have not been accomplished without the help and support of Delta Gamma Fraternity. "The Delta Gammas stood alongside those parents from day one, helping the FBC incorporate and fund the salary of our first teacher of the visually impaired," Pawlowski shared. "Together, we're able to offer hope, answers, and opportunity to our clients of all ages."

Delta Gamma's members strive to live up to their motto "Do Good" throughout their community. The organization's international philanthropy, Service for Sight, has the aim of supporting those who are visually impaired. The FBC in Phoenix is the fifth Delta Gamma school in the nation.

Planning a Wonderful Tactile Experience

Teena Tabor, Membership Adviser for the Gamma Phi Delta Gamma chapter at Arizona State University, spearheaded the glass tile project for the playground at the FBC. She said she has always been interested in the glass medium but actually began working with glass six years ago.

Initiated into Delta Gamma in 1986, Tabor was and has been very involved ever since holding several positions as an alumna. She began to work closely with the FBC in 2013. "I thought that glass could create a wonderful tactile experience. I have wanted to do something for the FBC for several years, but I just didn't know what I wanted to do."

Tabor was not expecting the scope of the project to be as large as it became. The goal of the tiles was to create a design that the children would be able to touch and feel using three-dimensional objects with edges, curves, and ridges. When she brought the idea to the FBC, she thought she would be creating some tiles to install in trays that would be used in the classrooms as sensory objects, but she left the decision up to the FBC to choose where they thought the school needed tactile art. They came back to Tabor and explained that on their playground were 18 inset panels that were created to someday hold art, but there were no set plans in place yet. Tabor said she jumped at the opportunity and began the project.

Fulfilling a Vision with Glass Art

The Delta Gammas discovered that they were going to need to create 558 tiles to fill the slots on the playground. That would add up to 1,116 pieces of glass, since each tile had a double layer. “We anticipated that we would have to take a couple of years to finish, but we had so many volunteers who wanted to participate in the project that we finished creating all of the images on the tiles in just four months.”

On each tile there was a mosaic image made from glass scraps and thousands of glass dots that were all created prior to starting the project. There were also corresponding tiles with the braille words, which were created using the glass dots, that represented the image. The project included different themes such as sea life, birthdays, toys, zoos, numbers, letters, and more. Each panel contained 13 image tiles and 12 corresponding braille tiles, with one large center tile that had braille applied directly to the tile.

Tabor and the volunteers who were helping with the project started by coming up with images to represent each theme, then tracing those onto each image tile. Tabor shared: “Once the base tiles were made, the components were constructed, and the patterns were traced, the volunteers took over and began their own interpretation of each image. They used the dots and small glass scraps held in place with plain white glue to mirror the images and braille. Each tile was then tack fused to adhere the components to the base tile while still keeping the texture for the children.”

Once the tiles had their images on them, they had to go into the kiln. Tabor explained that all of the tiles used a total of 100 kiln firing cycles of about 13 hours each. The thousands of dots created also had to be fired in the kiln, so the kiln was on overdrive for a few months.

After the images were fired onto the tiles, they were all mounted on a backer board that was cut to fit the inset spaces on the playground. Then silicone grout was applied to fill the gaps between the tiles. Finally, the Facilities Manager at the FBC installed the artwork.



(Far left to right) Arizona State University Delta Gamma members proudly displaying their artwork; Overhead view of the work in progress showing patterns, components used, and a Braille guide for labeling the picture tiles; 18 panels of tactile images along the playground wall; Close-up of the Sea Life panel; commemorative plaque with the Delta Gamma motto.



Celebrating the Importance of Volunteers

When the project was completed, a dedication plaque to Delta Gamma was added next to the panels. "The FBC has always been very supportive of anything Delta Gamma wants to do for them," said Tabor.

The project could not have been completed without help from the Phoenix Delta Gamma Alumnae chapter as well as Gamma Phi-Arizona State members of Delta Gamma. Forty-five members from the alumnae chapter gave a total of 405.5 hours on the project, and 78 Gamma Phi members gave 194.5 hours for a total of 600 documented hours. Tabor also spent a lot of additional time that she did not take into account as part of those numbers. Luckily, in the process there were only three tiles that needed to be re-created. One broke in the kiln, one was dropped after the very last firing, and another one was broken during installation.

Tabor was excited to see how the tile project brought Delta Gamma members together as collegians and alumnae. The project allowed Delta Gammas to connect with each other and form new connections through conversations while creating the project. "This project had meaning that inspired members we hadn't seen in a long time," Tabor said.

Mara Boiangiu, Vice President of the Foundation and member of the Gamma Phi Chapter of Delta Gamma, helped organize and lead the collegiate members through the process of participating in the project. "The most memorable part about creating the glass tiles for the FBC," shared Boiangiu, "was that the Delta Gamma women were able to be a part of something that will not only be displayed for the public but will also be a long lasting part of the Foundation for Blind Children's educational decor."

(Clockwise from top left) Seven of the 18 panels; adhering the last panel onto the backer board; Phoenix Delta Gamma Alumnae chapter members beginning their journey.

The collegiate members of Delta Gamma worked on creating the glass tiles during their Service Saturday events during the Spring 2020 semester. "For the women who are unable to volunteer at the FBC, they were still able to leave their impact on the organization. For those who are avid goers at the FBC, it strengthens their feeling of purpose and enjoyment by helping with the FBC's mission," Boiangiu said.

The project was originally planned to be completed and unveiled to the kids and their families at the FBC's annual Spring Festival, but due to coronavirus restrictions that event didn't happen. The FBC has been closed since March 13, 2020, but a few students and teachers were able to return to in-person school at the beginning of October 2020. Their feedback after seeing the tiles has been overwhelmingly positive so far. Tabor shared the sentiments of all those involved with the completion of this project when she shared, "We look forward to the day when all the kids can experience the new playground."

GA

Visit www.seeitourway.org to learn more about the Foundation for Blind Children. For more information on Delta Gamma, visit www.deltagamma.org.

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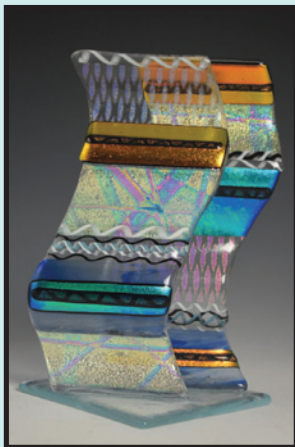


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Anika van der Merwe

South African Style



*Portrait of the artist in her studio.
Photo by Judite Howell, Silver Dune Photography.*

*by Amy Moritz, writer for the
Stained Glass Association of America*

Anika van der Merwe doesn't recall a time when she didn't have a brush in her hand. Family stories have her painting before she could walk. Painting wasn't something she did. Rather, it was part of her genetic makeup. Today, she is at the top of the community of stained glass artists and glass painters in South Africa.

Working on both new panels and restorations, Anika often takes on the challenge of creating stained glass domes. "A few years back I was asked to do a restoration on a very old dome that was imported to South Africa from Argentina. It came in pieces. At least half of the dome was destroyed, and the rest hardly had any lead left. I started researching all I could about domes and dome restoration. The job itself was an incredible learning experience in profanity and the amount of bleeding and crying one could possibly do on one singular job, but it was worth it in the end.



Anika van der Merwe, Dome Restoration colored drawing detail. The commission for a new dome unleashed Anika's creative side. Photo courtesy of the artist.

"The restored dome generated a very definite interest, and I started getting inquiries, one of which is the dome I'm currently working on. The client has allowed me artistic freedom, making this one of the happiest commissions I've had up to date. It also comes with its own challenges, though. I am still learning as I go along, from figuring out how to do concentric circles that line up once the curved panels are glazed to making sure the glass doesn't buckle in when it's installed. I've never had to do so many supporting bars on one window in my life!"



Discovering Art Glass

Van der Merwe's love of painting drew her to study Fine Arts at a school then called Port Elizabeth Technikon, now Nelson Mandela Metropole University, in Eastern Cape, South Africa. While there, van der Merwe had the opportunity to meet Nelson Mandela. "It was only brief. I got to shake his hand, and he was off. That smile, though—it lights up a room, or a country even. What an amazing man he was."

As part of her studies at the university, van der Merwe was able to take a class in stained glass. She was hooked and it became her major. Unfortunately, the course of study did not teach glass painting, something she was keenly interested in. That interest pulled her away from her native South Africa to Great Britain.

"After a few years of trying to learn more on the subject of glass painting, I found myself in London with a one-way ticket and 50 pounds in my pocket. It was a rough few weeks until I finally found a studio that was willing to give me part-time work—a lot of cementing and grunt work. Later, I was working for a few more studios and finally had the opportunity to learn glass painting in my free time after work. Soon enough I was painting for more than one studio, and I'd say that most of my experience came from doing restorations and figuring out the painting processes of the old masters."



(Left to right) Anika van der Merwe, Finished Dome (details); Anika completing the design.

Photos courtesy of the artist.

In 2008 Anika was unable to get a visa to stay in Great Britain, so she returned to South Africa and settled down in Cape Town. However, it wasn't an easy route to becoming a stained glass artist.

"I spent seven years holding down three jobs until I was able to rely solely on stained glass for an income. I did sales and worked as a waitress. In my free time I tried to fit in as many windows as I could, slowly building up my studio. It was a stressful time, but it paid off in the end."





(Top to bottom) Anika van der Merwe, dome design drawing detail. Photo by Judite Howell, Silver Dune Photography. Sample color palette for the dome, colored drawing of the dome design, and Anika planning design features. Photos courtesy of the artist.

Exploring Ways to Expand a Medium

There are still stresses and challenges involved in building her business, Silver Stain Glass Studio, in South Africa. The foremost of these is sourcing materials and equipment.

"In South Africa, our access to stained glass is very limited, so I've had to start exploring different avenues to take my stained glass to the artistic level I envision. There are no readily available tools, brushes, or paints. I've had to source and import almost everything in my studio today. It's been a challenge and still is, but I believe it's these challenges that have pushed me to explore the medium further. That is what I love most about it."

What Anika also loves is the small yet talented and supportive group of stained glass artists in her country coupled with the potential to not only grow but to translate vibrant South African art into glass. "The glass community in South Africa is very small. I'd even say it's rather niche, but the talent is large. It is a very supportive community, and people are willing to share and help each other out. It is an industry I would love to see grow bigger in this country. There is definitely an expanding interest in stained glass here, in a restorative sense as well as taking the art form beyond the traditional.

"South African art certainly has its own style, but I feel it hasn't really made an impact on stained glass in this country. The glass medium's potential is still largely unexplored. That is a good thing, though. In fact, it's brilliant. The possibilities are endless. I am privileged to be a part of this colorful country and aim to reflect that in my art, hoping to inspire a bigger interest in stained glass here."



The Women in Glass shine again in the Winter 2020 issue of *The Flow*®. With over 100 examples of fabulous flameworked art from around the world plus tutorials from Judy Carlson, Marcia Knack, Emily Marie, Kim Fields, and Dana George, there's something for everyone.

On the Cover
Lion Fish by Sandra Young
Photo by Simon Bruntnell Photography

Above
Necklace
by Shelly Woollvin

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Artists Inspiring Artists

Along with inspiring interest in stained glass in South Africa, van der Merwe is motivated by the work of other artists who are expanding the possibilities of the art form.

"I have many inspirations, in particular Sylvia Laks," van der Merwe said of the Costa Rican artist. "Her techniques with enamels, shading, and the use of glass are out of this world."

"I would say I am more inspired by artists today, taking the medium beyond the traditional ideas of what stained glass is supposed to be. We are surrounded by so many glass artists exploring the medium and pushing boundaries. It's very exciting to see what people are making and coming up with every day!"

The rest of the stained glass community was excited to see what van der Merwe was doing in 2016, when her Instagram account created a social media buzz when she posted photos of her painted fish. Those pieces continue to be some of her personal favorite creations, and the response from the social media community was a welcomed positive reinforcement.

"The fish are all freestanding pieces in their own right. They are personal pieces that I did in my free time in which I experimented and indulged myself. I think they were a stepping-stone for me, a time when I started breaking away from doing traditional reproductions and began to do my own work, so the compliments I received were so much sweeter. It's great receiving compliments on your work, but even better when it's your own original art."

"When you work for yourself there isn't much praise or many pats on the back. Social media helps with that. The encouragement brings another dimension to my work and pushes me harder to produce better work and more pieces. I am grateful for it." **G&A**

The preceding profile is an excerpt from the Fall 2019 issue of Stained Glass Quarterly published with permission by the Stained Glass Association of America.



Anika van der Merwe, Fish Panel.
Photo courtesy of the artist.



*Taking a break with a favorite pet. Photo by
Judite Howell, Silver Dune Photography.*

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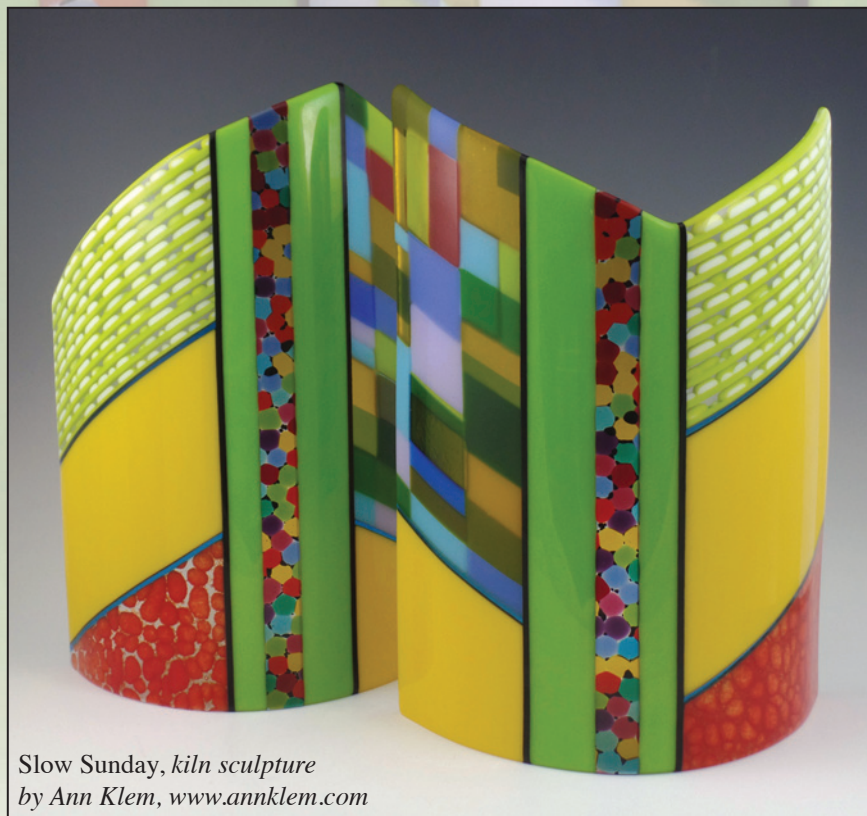


Anika van der Merwe, Fish Panel.
Photo courtesy of the artist.

Amy Moritz is a professional journalist and former staffer at the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA). She currently serves as a Literacy Coordinator with Literacy Buffalo Niagara and enjoys getting together with the SGAA crew for coffee and pitching in to write about the organization's glass community.



A Look at Multilevel Firings for Glass Art



Slow Sunday, kiln sculpture
by Ann Klem, www.annklem.com

by Dennis Brady

Many artisans ask if it is possible to load shelves in multiple levels in their kilns the way potters do. It is possible, but the results are rarely satisfactory, since pottery doesn't require the temperature accuracy needed for glass. Potters often fire using ceramic cones to control temperature. The cones they use have a temperature variance as much as 100°F (40°C). That's the difference between a tack fuse and a full fuse. So much temperature inaccuracy is completely unacceptable for glasswork.

Early glass artisans soon learned that cones could not be trusted for firing glass. In order to be sure they got the results they wanted, they would peek into the kiln instead. When the glass had fused to the amount they wanted, they would turn the kiln off, allow it to cool, and manually turn it on and off to control the rate that the temperature dropped. Even that wasn't reliably accurate, so they convinced kiln makers to install electronic controls to provide an accurate temperature measure in the kiln. We now have electronic controllers for our kilns that can be programmed to reach heat to a specific temperature and remain at that temperature for a specific time.

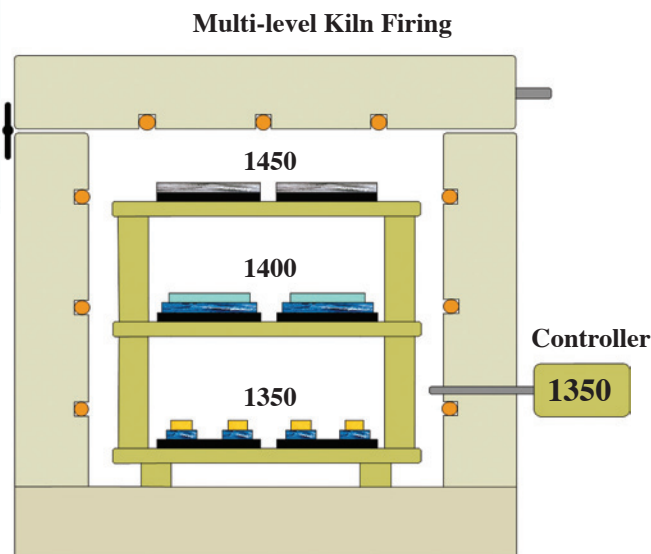
Comparing Glass to Pottery

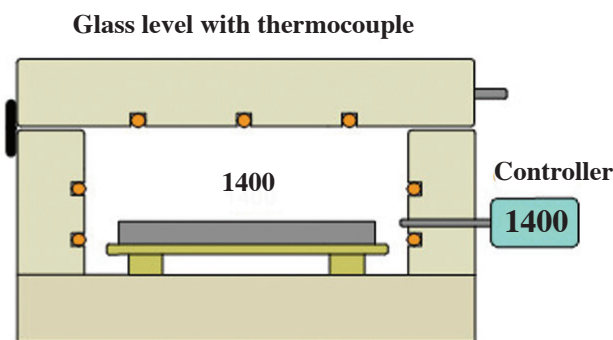
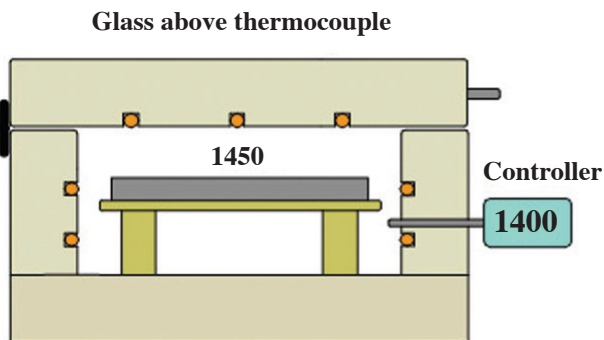
Glass artisans thought that if potters could load multiple levels of shelves into their kilns, they should be able to do the same with glass. In theory, that should work. In practice, however, it usually produced unacceptable results at all levels.

Heat rises, so obviously the temperature in the upper part of a kiln will be higher than the temperature in the lower part. That means glass on a higher level shelf will receive more heat than glass on a lower level shelf. Many artisans assume they can control that principle to produce different levels of fuses at different levels. That would seem to indicate that they could accomplish the following—a full fuse on the top shelf, a contour fuse on the middle shelf, and a tack fuse on the bottom shelf. That works in theory but not in practice. There are a few factors that prevent doing this from being predictable.

Thermocouple Accuracy

The thermocouple reads the temperature in the kiln and displays a reading on the controller or pyrometer. It reads the temperature of the air at the level of the thermocouple. If glass is placed at that level, the thermocouple will be displaying the temperature in the glass. If the glass is placed higher, the glass will be at a higher temperature than the thermocouple reads. If the glass is placed lower, it will be at a lower temperature.





Element Relativity

If your kiln has side elements, heat will come from the sides of the kiln and rise in the kiln. If you have a shelf above the side elements, the heat is likely to be trapped under the shelf and fail to rise the way it would without a shelf obstructing the heat rise.

If your kiln has lid elements, a shelf between those elements and any glass on a lower shelf beneath that shelf will restrict heat from reaching the glass at a lower level. The thermocouple will instruct the kiln to continue applying heat until the heat is the requested temperature at the thermocouple level. The obstruction from the upper shelf will hold much more heat at the upper level than you expect.

Heat Distribution

One of the first things glass artisans learn when fusing glass is the importance of temperature accuracy and how important even heat distribution is to achieve that accuracy. Anything that impedes or obstructs heat distribution in your kiln will make it harder, perhaps impossible, to achieve that accuracy.

Heat Retention

Whether you fire your kiln loaded with a single shelf or with tiers of shelves, how well the kiln holds heat after the elements are turned off will affect how much heat is applied to the glass. When you fire with lid elements, the kiln lid stays hot and continues to apply heat even after the elements are turned off.

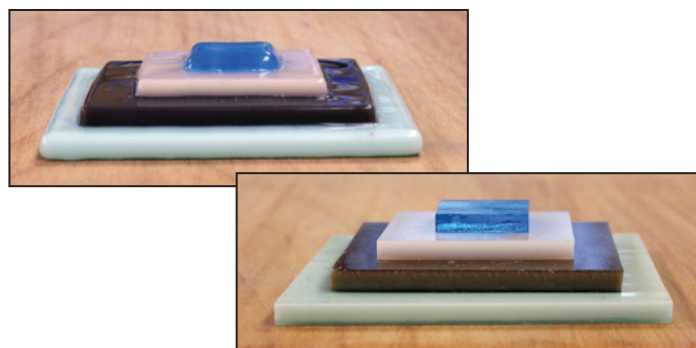
In this photo, both tile stacks were fired with the identical firing schedule in the same kiln. The one on the left was fired with only the side elements on. The one on the right was fired with only the lid elements on.

Annealing

Some artisans anneal batches of glass in kilns with multiple shelves. This works, but it runs the risk that some of the glass will be annealed at the wrong temperature.

Exception

It's a good practice to avoid firing multiple layers of shelves in your kiln. However, one exception is when you fire everything in the kiln to a full fuse with a long enough hold to be sure everything is fully fused. It doesn't matter if some of the projects are fired too high as long as all of them are fired high enough to achieve a full fuse. This can be done with full shelves the way potters do, but it works much better if you use partial shelves offset at different levels to encourage air flow to allow relatively even heat distribution.



Squares Comparison

Final Thoughts

Other than the exception for loads of full fuse projects, firing kiln loads with shelves at multiple levels is a bad idea that should be avoided unless you have a **very** high tolerance for failure. Glass kilns are made shallow for a good reason. **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.



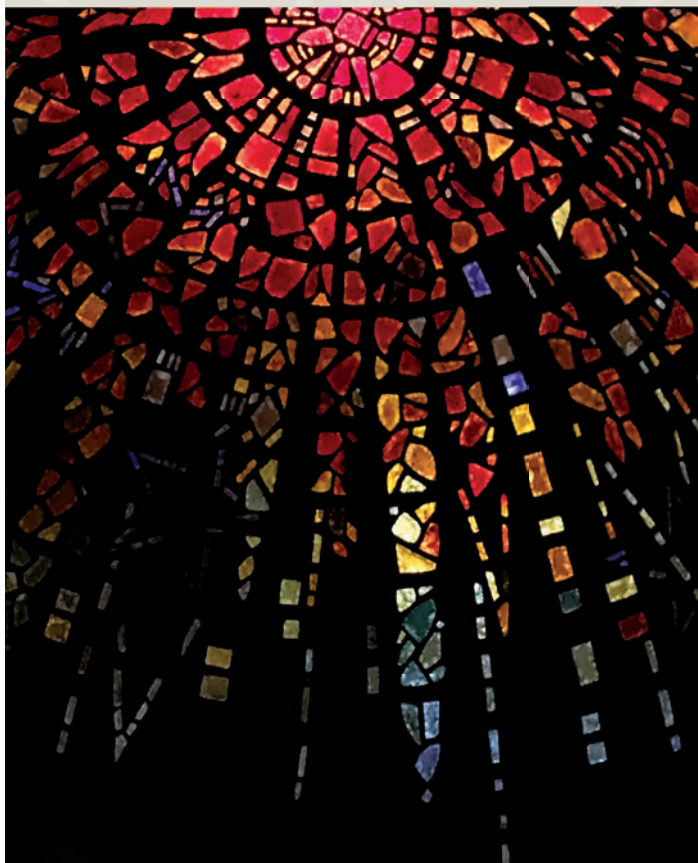
Dennis teaches extensively in his home studio in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and as a guest instructor in several other countries. He is also a contributing artist to GPQ's live and recorded Glass Expert Webinars™ and Master Glass Artisan Lecture Series™. His "push the boundaries" approach to 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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Current Temp: 68 °F

Manual Set Point: 3 %

Output: 3.0 %

Process

Sequence of Operations

- Valve(s) Proven Closed
- Heat Requested
- Blower Energized
- Air Pressure Switch Satisfied
- Valve(s) Energized
- Ignition Transformer Energized
- Flame 1 Established
- Flame 2 Established (if used)
- Fault Detected

Flame Quality (0-58 microamps; >49 indicates good flame quality.)

Profile Status

Profile Status: Off

Step Type: End

Current Profile: 0

Current Step: 0

Current Set Point: 0

Remain Step Time: 0 : 0 : 0

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