

# The Birth of Kathy Barnard's Freestanding Outdoor Sculpture . . . And How She Used Kickstarter to Fund It



by Shawn Waggoner

Could you raise \$26,000 in 60 days to create the art project of your dreams? It wasn't easy, but that is exactly what glass artist Kathy Barnard did. She installed her first outdoor laminated sculpture at the Children's Park of the Scuola Vita Nuova Charter School in Kansas City, Missouri, in the fall of 2013. Fabricated at Derix Glasstudios in Taunusstein, Germany, the piece became a reality thanks to Barnard's successful Kickstarter campaign combined with grants and support from private donors.

"From the date my Kickstarter campaign was launched, I was obsessed with promoting it. When I reached my goal, I said I'd never do it again. But it worked! I just would caution people to be ready for the intensity of work. It sounds like such a good deal. You put it on the Internet, and thousands of people could see your work potentially. But they don't unless you work really hard."

## Kickstarter

In 2011, Barnard attended a seminar in Germany sponsored by Lamberts and Derix. She arrived a few days early to meet the Derix staff. After all, they had a long distance relationship dating back to their 2000 work for the Mormon Temple, Church of Latter Day Saints in Houston, Texas, with stained glass by Graham Jones. Barnard created all of the carved glass, and Derix produced the stained glass for the project. This meeting inspired a discussion about her returning to make new work at the studio.

When she returned to the United States, Barnard began asking fellow artists and student friends from the Kansas City Art Institute how they fundraise. Many mentioned an online funding platform called Kickstarter. For those who don't know, Kickstarter requires the fundraiser to establish a goal amount for the money being raised. If the fundraiser doesn't reach 100 percent of that goal, they keep none of what *was* raised. At the time of Barnard's campaign, 60 days was the longest time period Kickstarter would allow her to raise her goal amount of \$22,000.

She wanted to launch her Kickstarter campaign in September 2011 to correspond with the beginning of the Monarch migration. But her video was delayed, and she wasn't able to launch until November, the dreaded holiday season when donors could be strapped for cash.



Kickstarter fundraisers are required and encouraged to offer unique and desirable rewards for those who back their projects. Barnard offered everything from handmade notecards for \$1, \$5, or \$10 donations to crystal pendants that she hand carved with 20 different designs for \$100 donations. Vases and carved mini paperweights were offered for higher pledges. For a \$5,000 donation, backers received a large vase or custom stained glass window. Shipping was factored in to the donation amount after extensive research was done on the cost of boxes, time to pack and ship, and international and domestic shipping.

Barnard ended up hiring a full-time assistant to help her organize everything. "That was one thing I didn't factor in, was paying someone to help me get all of the rewards out to my funders. And Colleen is still here!"

One other factor Barnard did not consider fully was the list of donors she would access to fund her project. "I chose the school to donate the work to knowing that it had a base of donors and current supporters. But I did not consider that many of those people were 80 and 90 years old and unfamiliar or uncomfortable with donating money through Kickstarter online. It doesn't draw from PayPal or a bank account. And people can't just write you a check. You have to have an Amazon account to donate. Lots of these people just didn't understand the concept."





**The Monarch Migration**

Barnard’s successful Kickstarter project raised \$26,000, which she put toward creating an outdoor art glass installation that tells the story of the monarch butterflies’ migration and metamorphosis. This sculpture, which measures 10-1/2 feet tall by 3 feet wide, was created using a variety of art glass techniques including stained glass, laminated glass, painting, acid etching, and sandblasting.

“The Kansas City area lies within the migratory path of the monarch butterflies. Many groups, including Scuola Vita Nuova, have created butterfly gardens to lure migrating monarchs so as to witness one of nature’s most fascinating phenomena. Additionally the butterfly gardens serve as learning tools for children, teaching them about the environment and butterfly facts such as the following: Did you know it takes four generations of monarchs, from caterpillar to adulthood, to make this migratory journey in the spring to the North for the summer months? And then only one adult super monarch will make the 2,600 mile return flight back to Mexico and Central America, their winter home.” This is such an intriguing story that National Geographic devoted an entire segment to it in its 2012 *Great Migrations* series.

Barnard’s laminated art glass sculpture features one large, bright orange-and-black monarch butterfly set in a field of brilliant blue. In addition, there are many smaller Monarchs flying within a dynamic design of graceful swirls of red glass indicating the migratory path of the butterflies with the colors of blue and green glass illustrating the oceans and landforms of North, South, and Central America. On the sculptural base, an illustration of the process of metamorphosis from caterpillar to chrysalis to the emerging adult butterfly will be painted. “More teaching and learning through art!”

**Derix Glasstudios**

Multitudes of funding methods were used to realize her dream. Barnard’s travel and lodging in Germany was paid for by the Linda Lighton International Artists’ Exchange Program grant (LIAEP) administered by the Kansas City Artists Coalition. The materials used in the creation, fabrication, and installation of this unique laminated art glass piece, its steel base and frame, and the on-site installation at the children’s park and butterfly garden was funded through Kickstarter.

Monetary gifts from private donors and commissions from clients funded the additional pieces of art glass made while in Germany. Barnard spent five weeks working with Derix Glasstudios artists and created two *Monarch Migration* pieces, 10 laminated glass pieces for a garden tower (private commission), two smaller Monarch pieces, and some experimental pieces of slumped glass (fired, painted, and kiln fired).



Dale Brown and Jerry Tribble from W. Carter & Associates Glazing Company, Kansas City, Kansas, getting the art glass ready for transport and installation.

Derix decided what techniques would be used based on Barnard’s rendering and how the piece could best be realized. Barbara Derix and Karl Heinz Traut assigned her a project manager and technician. Barnard’s *The Monarch Migration* required five pieces of 36 inch-by-19 inch blue flashed glass. Butterflies were applied as a secondary layer on top of the blue flashed glass. Under Barnard’s direction, Derix craftsmen acid-etched the work, which she later painted and etched. The flashed glass was fired to create the continents on clear antique. More butterflies were individually made and applied on the third layer. They were sandblasted, acid etched, painted, fired, airbrushed, and hand painted on glass. Lacquer-based paints were painted on cold to create the pathways—the flights of migration.

Barnard also designed and created a carved glass piece that became part of the permanent collection of art glass in the Derix Studio Gallery, allowing the artists there to watch, learn, and practice sandblasting techniques under her guidance.

“My time at Derix was invaluable. I got to experiment with so many techniques I had never done because I don’t own the equipment or didn’t have the expertise. At Derix there are many people who are experts at what they are doing, whether it’s painting or slumping or acid etching. When I came back, my head was full of ideas for outdoor sculptural pieces in glass. It helped me realize that glass can be installed and used and viewed by people without the constraints of a building. I like being able to walk around this work and see the light hit it at all different angles.”

Barnard’s goal is to transport some of her laminated outdoor sculptures back to the United States so that people will understand and see for themselves that glass can be installed and enjoyed outdoors.

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*Find out more about Kathy Barnard’s history and projects in etched and stained glass in the November/December 2013 issue of Glass Art.*



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