

CGS at the Pyramid Gallery

by Pam Reekie

The Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) will be presenting a selected exhibition of glass by 33 of its members of the Contemporary Glass Society at Pyramid Gallery in York, England. *Life Forms*, which opens at 11 a.m. on September 11 and runs through October 30, 2021, will feature glass inspired by structure, form, and evolution in the natural world. This show, which had been set for 2020, was unfortunately postponed by Covid, but now exhibitors and attendees can truly celebrate these wonderful life forms.

CGS is the United Kingdom's foremost organization for supporting established artists as well as up-and-coming makers and for promoting contemporary glass in the wider art world. The organization invited its 950 UK and international members to submit for entry to their fifth exhibition at Pyramid Gallery in York, UK. From a submission of 84, the selection panel offered the exhibition to 33 glass artists including: Carolyn Basing, Mim Brigham, Isobel Brunson, Tabitha Burrill, Helen Eastham, Dominic Fonde, Jianyong Guo, Dot Hill, Catherine Hough, Katherine Huskie, Max Jacquard, Naomi Jacques, Susan Kinley, Yuki Kokai, Rebecca Laister, Monette Larsen, Nicky Lawrence, Jon Lewis, Roberta Mason, Anthony McCabe, Wendy Newhofer, Tracy Nicholls, Yoshiko Okada, Rebecca Rowland-Chandler, Helen Slater-Stokes, Nancy Sutcliffe, Angela Thwaites, Noreen Todd, Elizabeth Welch, Frans Wesselman, Sue Woolhouse, Sandra Young, and Maria Zuleuta.



Roberta Mason, *Porifera VII*, 33 cm high. Photo by the artist.



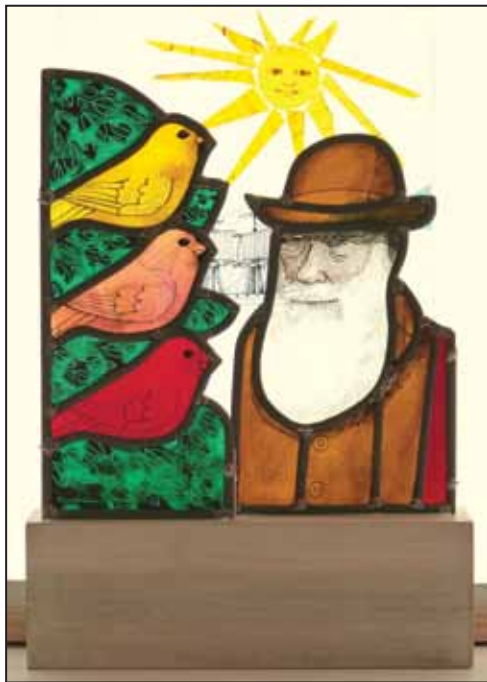
Roberta Mason, *Porifera CA*, 26 cm high. Photo by the artist.

Celebrating Nature in Glass

With the broad ranging title *Life Forms*, this show includes a great variety of interpretations of the theme in forms that include fused wall pieces, cast forms, pâte de verre sculpture and wall pieces, blown and cold worked vessels and forms, and waterjet cut glass. Also included are painted and leaded glass, fused glass bowls, engraved bowls, lampworked glass, and mixed-media sculpture.

With the many recent protests about climate change and extinction of species, the organizers wanted to celebrate nature and natural forms while marking the 200th anniversary of the launch of the ship that would take Charles Darwin on his two-year voyage to the Galapagos Islands. *The Beagle* was launched on May 11, 1820, and Darwin eventually published his seminal work, *On the Origin of Species* in 1859.

Pyramid Gallery has a long-standing reputation for showing and representing contemporary glass artists in York that goes back to 1982 and has been working with the CGS since 2008. Gallery owner and manager Terry Brett was part of the selection panel along with glass artist Effie Burns and CGS Administrator Pam Reekie. "We have selected a variety of styles that represent different techniques, but with a view to how the whole show will look," says Terry "It is important to me that we include work by both high-profile glass artists and those who are closer to the beginning of their careers. The standard is very high, as is the imagination of the artists in interpreting the theme."



*Frans Wesselman, Finches of the Galapagos, stained glass panels on plinth, 42 cm x 28 cm x 9.5 cm.
Photo by the artist.*

York is a center of excellence for stained glass, so it is very appropriate that one of the center pieces of this show is a painted and leaded glass portrait of Charles Darwin by Frans Wesselman. This beautifully made study includes three varieties of finches that gave Darwin the necessary data to help him formulate his evolutionary theory.

In contrast to the Darwin portrait, the plight of coral reefs is alluded to in the work by Roberta Mason. She will be showing three vessels inspired by the marine animals known by their scientific name, *Porifera*, or more commonly, sponges. These creatures are recognized as the least evolved creatures in the animal kingdom, but they are also extremely numerous with about 5,000 different species.

Visual Lessons

The exhibition promises to bring something of a visual lesson in natural science as well as a treat for collectors of glass. It will open with a public event that will be attended by some of the artists. The exhibition is then open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except for Sundays.

Close to the Minster and situated on Stonegate, one of York's busiest streets, the gallery is housed in a 600-year-old building that is owned by the National Trust. The building is distinctive but small, with an overhanging first floor that is typical of mediaeval buildings in York. Because of its small Victorian window, the building is easy to miss, but in the upstairs gallery, a great deal of glass will be on display in a charming setting.

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Visit www.cgs.org.uk to learn more about the Contemporary Glass Society and how to become a member. For more information about Pyramid Gallery and its upcoming events, visit www.pyramidgallery.com.

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