

# Building the Plane in the Air The 2021 ISGB Online Gathering



*Janis Miltenberger, Bird on a Teapot.  
Photo by Peter Kuhnlein.*

*by Floor Kaspers, Educational Director*

The International Society of Glass Beadmakers (ISGB) held its annual meeting, *The Gathering*, virtually on June 10–13, 2021. The official slogan was “Reimagine *The Gathering*,” but the phrase that became almost synonymous with *The Gathering* turned out to be “Building the Plane in the Air.” The physical ISGB Gatherings have always been filled to the brim with presentations, classes, and a bead bazaar. There are also many informal activities such as open torch night, a bead swap, and simply getting together with so many like-minded glass artists. Creating an online experience was, to say the least, a challenge. However, I feel that we have risen to this challenge and created a full educational, inspirational, and simply fun Gathering!

## Something for Everyone

The general schedule we worked from was the “normal” schedule for *The Gathering*. We started with four online pre-Gathering classes, with something for everyone from beginners to experienced beadmakers and glass artists. The online classes were also the kickoff of our new online educational platform, which will bring together a great deal of resources for our members, starting with the recordings of our *Second Sunday – Creators and Makers* series. The response to these online classes has shown us that there is a great demand for this type of educational opportunity, and we are currently working on creating additional online educational content to provide even more training for our members.

*(Above right) Photo of Janis Miltenberger,  
keynote speaker, by Lynn Thompson.*

Janice Miltenberger, our keynote speaker, inspired us by kicking off *The Gathering* by encouraging us to focus on the process we use to make our art. Are we being true to ourselves? Are we creating in a way that benefits us and those around us? With an open heart and an open mind, we were ready to start creating and learning.

What followed was a varied lineup of presenters and a series of social activities. We had a virtual Show & Tell, a glass-themed cocktail reception, a bead bazaar on our Facebook page, and much more. There was also a virtual Flame Off with four artists in three countries working live at the torch in their studios on a collaborative piece of art. Mauro Vianello from Venice, Italy, made us all feel like we were walking around Murano, hopping into local studios and having an Aperol Spritz in an enthusiastic and, for some, emotional video.

There were understandably some mishaps along the way—people getting lost in the technical world of Zoom accounts, passwords, etc.—and that is where the phrase “building the plane in the air” was so well suited. We all missed the hugs, hanging out at the pool or the bar just talking about glass, seeing all the beauty of glass art in person, but we had people participate who had never been able to come to a physical Gathering. It was also more international than ever, with time zones sometimes being a challenge.

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Professor Michael Barnes MD FRCP, CGS Board member and sponsor of the Graduate Prize, also noted that it was a pleasure to once again judge this year's prize. "Considering this was such an awful year in many ways, it was great to see so many entrants and such high quality. As always, we struggled to give the prizes with so many good pieces to choose from. However, a winner emerged and there were several really high-quality Runners Up as well as Highly Commended and Commended entrants. Well done to everyone, and I really hope that the prize will help some excellent artists become established in the glass world."

### Commended and Highly Commended Artists

The CGS *New Graduate Review 2021* is a 16-page publication, which will be circulated to all CGS Members & Associates. It will also be circulated through *Neues Glas - New Glass: Art & Architecture* magazine.

**Highly Recommended Artists** included in the *Review* are:

- Wai Yan Choi, MA, Royal College of Art, London,
- Belinda King, BA, De Montfort University, Leicester,
- Pratibha Mistry, MA, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham,
- Rosie Perrett, BA, De Montfort University, Leicester, and
- Moon Ju Suh, MFA, Edinburgh College of Art.

**Commended Artists** included in the *Review* are:

- Kate Courtney-Taylor, BA, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham,
- Catherine Dunstan, MA, University for the Creative Arts, Farnham,
- Shona Escombe, HNC, City of Glasgow College,
- Steven Graham, BA, University of Stirling,
- Ossin Hanrahan, BA, Crawford College of Art and Design, Ireland,

- Chengyu Li, MA, Royal College of Art, London,
- Ethel Moir, BA, Crawford College of Art and Design, Ireland,
- Tamar "Nikki" Palmer, BA, University of Wolverhampton,
- Áine Ryan, BA, Crawford College of Art and Design, Ireland,
- Bethany Walker, MA, Royal College of Art, London, and
- Samantha Wuidart, De Montfort University, Leicester.

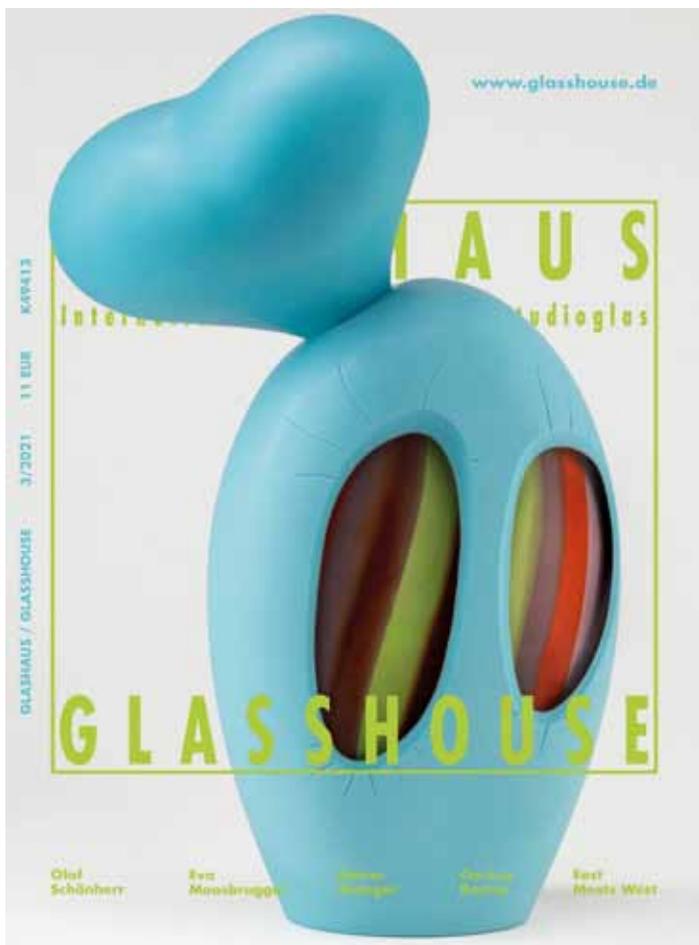
This publication will give CGS an opportunity to showcase work from the talented prize winners plus work from several more emerging British and Irish graduates. It is vital to promote all glass education courses, since more and more creative courses are threatened with closure.

### Thanks to Our Sponsors

We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors who provided financial support and prizes for the Glass Prize and the *New Graduate Review 2021*, without whom this would not have been possible. A sincere thanks to Professor Michael Barnes MD FRCP, The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London Charity Fund, Creative Glass UK, Pearsons Glass, Warm Glass, *Neues Glas - New Glass: Art & Architecture* magazine, and Alan J. Poole.

*The Contemporary Glass Society is widely regarded as the foremost organization in the UK for promoting, supporting, and encouraging cutting-edge contemporary glass and glassmakers within the wider art world. Visit [www.cgs.org.uk](http://www.cgs.org.uk) for more information on CGS, its upcoming events, and becoming a member.* **GA**

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*Mauro Vianello, one of four artists who took part in the Flame Off.*



### Exploring New Educational Possibilities

As the new educational director of the ISGB, this online Gathering makes me more eager to explore the new possibilities that our educational platform, ISGBeducation.org, brings. Oddly enough, my body also felt like I was at *The Gathering*. Jet lag—I am from the Netherlands—was swapped for a lack of sleep due to virtual cocktail receptions in the middle of the night. Being the last one in the bar was swapped for being the last to hang out in the Zoom room and starting to explore the filter options.

We don't yet know what 2022 will bring for the ISGB and *The Gathering*. However, we will be working on creating online content for our members no matter what. **GA**

*Visit [www.isgb.org](http://www.isgb.org) to find out how to become a member of the International Society of Glass Beadmakers and learn more about additional educational resources and upcoming events.*

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