

# Meeting Challenge with Creativity

by Susan Purser Hope

The wondrous thing about humanity is our ability to meet tremendous challenge with creativity. Our recent pandemic experience led to remarkable innovations and adaptations, many of which have been integrated into the work world as ongoing practices. Organizations needed to reach out to their members during this time, bring them together, and provide a palpable experience of community.

The Contemporary Glass Society (CGS) faced this challenge with effective action. CGS, as the premier supporter and promoter of contemporary glass art and glass artists in the UK, worked diligently to not only provide community, but opportunity.

During the pandemic, CGS reached out to its members online through various events, including biweekly newsletters, weekly Zoom talks by glass artists, and online selling exhibitions. Membership boomed as artists responded to the opportunity to meet and create a rapport with other artists. Although times have returned to normal, many of the COVID-inspired innovations at CGS continue to address members' needs. Membership continues to grow.

CGS's online shows are one of the ongoing provisions for its members. The philosophy behind these shows is to provide a platform for glass artist members throughout the world to exhibit their work. The number of non-British members increased greatly during this time. International glass artists appreciated the assistance that CGS offered them through its worldwide online services.

These online exhibitions are a wonderful enablement for new artists who have not previously shown their work in public. They can dip their toes into the water alongside more experienced and well-known artists. All of the shows are *selling* exhibitions, offering an excellent opportunity for artists to showcase and sell their work. This was especially important during lockdown when all of the galleries were closed.

(Above left) Sarah Davis, *Running Hare*—Golden, 35 cm x 45 cm. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Elena Fleury-Rojo, Message in a Bottle, 23.5 cm x 47.5 cm x 10 cm.  
Photo credit: Sophie Booth Photography.



Rachel Elliott, Fuzzy, 110 mm x 115 mm.  
Photo courtesy of the artist.

The shows' themes are diverse and cover a wide range of topics, allowing everyone to exhibit their work. There are six shows per year, each lasting for two months. There is no limitation on technique, and a diversity of different ways of working is encouraged. Online exhibitions also enable CGS to feature the work of other organizations with which it collaborates. Such is the case with the Guild of Glass Engravers, as this traditional technique is not well represented among CGS members.



Sue Burne, Beauty is a Flame, height 20 cm.  
Photo courtesy of the artist.



Teresa Chlapowski, Divine Feminine, 44 cm x 33 cm x 10 cm.  
Photo credit: Agata Pec.

## 2024 Online Exhibitions and Events Overview

### Spring Awaits

**Theme:** A new year is upon us. We look forward to longer days, light breezes, and sunshine. Spring—a word that evokes images of gambolling lambs, crocuses breaking through the earth, and trees dressed in greenery so bright it dazzles the eye.

**Event:** Brighten up the gloomy months by displaying a riot of joyous color and budding beauty. We will celebrate the awakening of new life in spring in all its blossoming, blooming gorgeousness!

### Invitation to the Guild of Glass Engravers

**Theme:** CGS has invited members of the Guild of Glass Engravers to exhibit online. This is an opportunity to experience the exquisite craftsmanship and subtle beauty of engraved glass.

**Event:** At “Meet the Makers,” hear about the mysteries and techniques of a skill that most of us do not possess.

### Cycles of Life

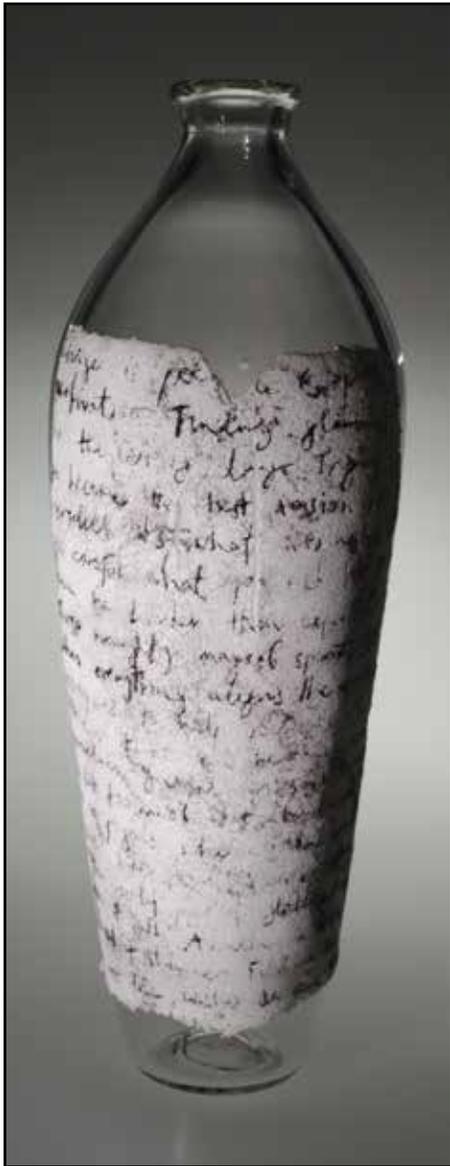
**Theme:** From the smallest microbe to the Antarctic blue whale, we all experience the cycle of life from cradle to grave. Shakespeare wrote about the *Seven Ages of Man* in a play: the infant, the schoolboy, the lover, the soldier, the justice, the pantaloons, and the elder.

**Event:** The rhythm of life has a powerful beat, so show us your journey through the natural world. Even your glass pieces go through a cycle of creation!

### Cultural Traditions

**Theme:** Traditions develop around religion, holidays, food, dance, clothing, language, music, crafts, and pastimes. They can also encompass anything else important to your cultural background.

**Event:** Traditions help form the structure and foundation of our families and society. Show us what is important to you and what your legends are.



Sophie Longwill, Wishing Vessel II,  
45 cm x 16 cm x 15 cm.  
Photo credit: Allison Burrell.

**Patterns:  
Composition and Design**

**Theme:** Pattern is an arrangement of lines or shapes in which a design repeats at regular intervals across a surface. Patterns exist all around us. We can find a pattern in the trees, passing cars, ice crystals, our thought processes, or in our clothes. A pattern is also an arithmetic sequence, a regularity in the world, a feature of human-made design, or an expression of abstract ideas.

**Event:** What does a pattern mean to you? How do you express it in your work? Let us see your compositions!

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