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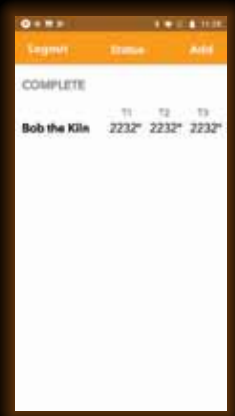


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*Above: Kazuki Takizawa,
Guardian 1.
Photo by Jordan Trimas.*

*On the cover:
Lucio Bubacco, Ulisse.
Photo by Anna Donadel.*

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Letter from the Editor

Farewell to a Rendering Rebel

Charles Ziegler Lawrence was a man who could have easily held his own in a conversation with the likes of Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, or Hunter S. Thompson. Whether reflecting on his life as a young artist in 1960s Greenwich Village or reliving the making of five windows for the National Cathedral, all of his stories were replete with an equal amount of psychedelic detail. Though the truth of the tale was never in question, the content was unbelievable.

From his obituary: Lawrence who died at the age of 83 on January 1, 2019, began his career in 1956 as an apprentice to master craftsman Rudolph Henrick Beunz. In the 1960s he attended design school at Pratt Institute, New York City, while working in the glass department of the Rambusch Decorating Studio, where he perfected skills in glass painting and color selection. In 1968 he went to work for the Willets Stained Glass studio in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, completing prestigious commissions for the National Cathedral, the Temple of the Latter Day Saints, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., as well as the University of Rochester and Penn State University. In the 1980s Lawrence established his own studio in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia, completing additional commissions for the National Cathedral; the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia; St. Mary's at the Cathedral, Andorra, Pennsylvania; the Burlington Bridge Commission in New Jersey; and the Gore-Tex Manufacturing Co., Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

The artist received The Stained Glass Association of America's Faceted Glass Design Award twice, the Interfaith and Forum on Religious Art and Architecture Award twice, and the St. Francis Xavier Chapel Award of Excellence. In 1994, the SGAA presented Lawrence with its Lifetime Achievement Award. A senior advisor for the American Glass Guild, he was also an associate member of the British Society of Master Glass Painters.

In 1994 Lawrence made his final window for the National Cathedral. In most cases, he didn't bother to make or apply the putty himself, but this time Lawrence combined linseed oil, whiting, and lampblack, then added one last special ingredient—the ashes of Angus, his beloved dog who had died and was cremated during the making of his previous cathedral window. Lawrence shared: "The cathedral was done, and Angus was in a safe place for the coming millennium. After that we will be together again. I am sure God knows how much I've missed him, and She will bring us back together. Until then, I know I will always have a friend in the cathedral and so will Tracy, Vanessa, and whoever else comes after them."

There will never be another CZ, as he was affectionately known, partially because stained glass and what it takes to conquer the craft has forever changed. But the art and the artist will be represented throughout the ages by his many bold, Gothic Revival style masterpieces.



Remembering CZ,

Shawn Wa

Shawn Waggoner
Editor



Charles Ziegler Lawrence

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Sasha Zhitneva

Finding Message in Material

by Colleen Bryan

Sasha Zhitneva engages material to capture moments and pose timeless questions about what she sees. This questioning has led her to consider the passage of time, how societies value materials, and why our current pursuit of convenience propels us in a headlong struggle against nature itself. Her current body of works employs glass and plastic in a dialogue that examines how people ascribe value; what renders materials precious or disposable despite their appearance, real cost, usefulness, and lifespan; and what the materials we use reflect about our self-perception and vulnerability.

Zhitneva observes that all materials are laden with context—historical, social, emotional—that contributes to their perceived character. “Glass is honored, held in respect and admiration, and addressed through an array of techniques that render it ultimately precious. Through a millennium, it has accompanied people to high places of reverence and distinction as medieval stained glass, crystal glassware, or a cast glass award.”

By contrast, plastic containers are a fitting metaphor for our society’s modus operandi—neat and transparent to the point of invisibility, used once and then discarded. Plastic insulates us from the potential discomfort of direct connection with the origin and use of either packaging or product. Plastic caters to our insatiable appetite for convenience. “Discarded containers are indeed the shells of our consumerist urges.”

Glass and plastic are cousins, Zhitneva asserts, but one of them is a bastard cousin, a fact that warps how we perceive its qualities. “In my work, I mold ornate glass over plastic and heat-shape plastic to mimic the glass. The two materials appear fused together. Stained glass is mounted on plastic in an attempt to still tell stories, even if they are difficult to decipher through our biases.”



Sasha Zhitneva, 55% Off, stained glass panel (painted, silver-stained, acid-etched glass) mounted on a recycled heart-shaped meat container, 10" x 9" x 2". Coincidentally, 55 is LV in Roman Numerals.

Finding an Artistic Voice

When Zhitneva began working as an artist, she did not even use materials but pixels. Of graphic design in the 1990s she declares, "Working on the computer was like playing with a miracle toy!" But the emergence of Web design convinced her that graphic design would soon become obsolete—pixel dust. Stained glass drew her with the same appeal to art but with the distinct advantage of being eternal. She turned her attention to stained glass in 1997, first designing for other people, then drawn to technical execution so she could design more efficiently. "Once I touched the material, I was captured!"



The artist moved quickly from stained glass to fusing. Her pieces ranged from 15-foot-tall stained glass windows to 15-inch fused panels resembling minute watercolor sketches. They included cascading chandeliers, intricately painted portraits, cast glass rings, and kiln formed necklaces. This shifting scale and movement from fusible to mouth blown antique glass and even to recycled glass jars presented roiling possibilities. She showed her fused glass artwork for many years and still teaches the techniques.

Zhitneva has displayed her fused glass artwork in galleries in Massachusetts, New York, California, and Seattle and at Sculpture Objects Functional Art and Design (SOFA) shows. Increasingly driven to respond to social, cultural, and environmental issues that arouse her passions, Zhitneva began to create artwork from discarded plastic, which she displays online under the tagline of refuSZed gallery.

Transitioning between Materials

One major theme that Zhitneva explored through her early glasswork was the passage of time. "I came up with a technique of fusing so that the image appeared to be drawn in watercolor. I felt as if the moment was captured there, preserved as if in amber, frozen forever in the fused glass." The artist developed an ongoing series of work she called *Pages from the Book of Seconds*, referencing the medieval *Book of Hours*, which similarly noted the passage of time while commenting on how that passage appears to be speeding up.

"I've done this work for many years, but when I started to think I wanted to explore more current issues I jumped to plastic, which has so many associations to our current ways of operating. The material provided a shortcut reference to many of the themes I was trying to tackle, and glass as a material didn't always give me the means and immediacy that I needed for my work."

Zhitneva started with environmental installations—dandelions made of two-liter plastic bottles, collected refuse with labels removed and assembled at the center. The spherical shape absorbed an enormous amount of material. "Comprised of 2,653 bottles, the piece was installed at Pocono Environmental Education Center at Dingman's Ferry, Pennsylvania. It was titled *skyPod, temporary installation 2015–2055*, because it takes 500 years for bottles to decompose." The aptness of that title would be demonstrated within a year of installation. "In 2015 a humongous storm hit that region of Pennsylvania. Many houses lost their roofs, and trees and power lines were downed, but this thing survived unscathed, as though nothing at all had happened."

Sasha Zhitneva, Oceans Deep from the Upcycled Identity series, heat-shaped recycled plastic bottle mounted on top of the sliced and slumped glass bottle, stained glass inclusions on both glass and plastic bottles, engraved flashed glass, and solder, 14" x 9" x 9". Photo by Pedro Garcia.

Environmental pieces were made of discarded convenience plastic assembled in forms that mimic nature and living things. Ruffly formations clinging to rocky landscapes or serving as wall hangings in her *deLovely* series draw viewers into an interesting discovery only to repel them on recognizing that it is made of plastic shopping bags. Balls of plastic bottles tumble on coastlines or are blown like milkweed along the façade of abandoned buildings. Tall trunks of plastic bottles tremble amidst a stand of birch trees. “The pieces look vaguely lifelike, but they have a hollow presence. I wanted them to give the viewer pause, to prompt some reflection on our habits, to help us realize that if we continue apace, all living things will be reduced to these ghostly facsimiles.”

While Zhitneva insists she is not making political environmental statements, her artwork comments on the fact that material we see as incidental retains an abiding presence. “We use plastic fundamentally in pursuit of convenience. In everyday life, when something comes in a plastic container we don’t even see the material, only the content and label. We dispose of the plastic immediately or diligently place it in the recycle as if it is going to disappear. We put it ‘away’ as though that is a place that really exists somewhere. Our use of plastic over the past 50 years has entirely covered the earth with the stuff.”

Still, the artist insists that hers is not a campaign against plastic. “There is no going back to primitive times when plastic was still oil in the ground. Many things associated with plastic are now inevitably part of our modern experience and will influence the earth going forward.” As an artist, Zhitneva reflects on that experience. “What I’m doing is just trying to make snapshots, to capture what I sense is our reality,” she notes.

The Artist Evaluates Her Materials

As a glass artist looking at the characteristics of plastic as a material, Zhitneva observes that it can be very beautiful. “Plastic has its own way of interacting with light. Beyond providing a shortcut to the environmental issues I want to point at, plastic diffracts light in a subtly different way than glass.”

Plastic also has its limitations, however. “Plastic alone doesn’t allow me to talk about issues such as why we are feeling so driven by convenience, why we use so much of the material so fleetingly, and what it is about our current state of mind that compels us to act in ways that show no regard for our damage to nature. With that recognition, after a few years of working exclusively in plastic statement art, I thought reintroducing glass as a medium would allow me to address such issues.” That is how Zhitneva’s current body of work came to be.

The artist summarizes the essential style of her work across media as a series of sketches. Fused works can take as many as 20 firings, and while enormously time intensive, she seeks an impressionistic sensibility. “I don’t want my work to look as though it was labored over for a long time. Attention to detail is important to me, but I want the effort to achieve detail to be hidden from viewers’ eyes, unessential to appreciating the final piece. Ultimately, I want my work to create a fleeting impression that lingers on the edge of awareness, not well remembered but evoking lasting emotion.”

Finding New Freedom

Zhitneva started fabricating plastic art with the structure she had learned through long tenure as a glass artist. That approach soon begged reconsideration. “Being a glass artist requires a strong regimen and a good deal of planning. There are many requirements for how a glass piece must be constructed and look to be deemed ready to be shown, but I found that plastic doesn’t lend itself to sketching and preplanning. This work develops viscerally, and the best directions happen in the moment. As I moved along, I began to allow myself more freedom.” For example, in developing a series called *X-Cavate*, she envisioned plastic containers as the carriers for stories that stained glass historically told in cathedral windows.

A Little Soldier Wedding Dream is an early rendering from the *X-Cavate* series. The soldier’s face is based on a window in Strasbourg Cathedral, Alsace, France. Then she fabricated *PUR* from a water bottle, referencing a window in the Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France.



Sasha Zhitneva, Apple Juice, sliced recycled plastic bottle, stained glass inclusions (painted, silver stained, acid-etched glass), solder, 10" x 15" x 4", 2014. The font is derivative of the most commonly used medieval lettering, Uncial script. The spelling is from the 12th century, and the style of imagery is typical for stained glass windows of that period (ex. Chartres Cathedral).

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Sasha Zhitneva, Innocenti, stained glass panel (traditionally painted, silver-stained, abraded glass) with an inclusion of a plastic bottle bottom mounted on a 13.5" cake cover, 5-1/2" x 13-1/2" diameter. A mixture of visual quotations taken from medieval windows of various cathedrals and different centuries demonstrates ever-present glorification of military solutions as patriotic loyalty. The phrase "swa heo no wære" comes from the poem "The Wanderer" (c. 960) and is translated "as if it's never been."

"I like them very much, but while these pieces were fun, they provided a very limited path of expression. It took me some time to realize that the glass didn't have to be windows. I started with rigid ideas that were much too left-brained. I later began to deviate from historical imagery and focus more on sculptural work. These changes helped me follow my own path in thinking about my artwork. Eventually, I began to allow both the plastic and glass materials to engage in a dialogue rather than thinking in such a choreographic way about which roles I would assign to each."

Artistic Shift

Zhitneva's artistic shifts led to a new series the artist calls *Up-cycled Identity*, which combines materials in a way that directly confronts how we perceive and respond to them. She seeks to challenge common perceptions of value by incorporating ignoble plastic with elevated glass in cohesive unified pieces. There is an indistinct demarcation between the two.

Technically, combining the materials is challenging. The glass part of any piece employs techniques such as fusing, painting, soldering, carving, and casting that Zhitneva has perfected over decades, but there was no generally accepted way of working artistically with discarded plastic. "I needed to come up with new techniques and means of working to get the effect I wanted. Still, the fact that I was able to solder, foil, and patina the plastic demonstrated its strength as a material."



*Sasha Zhitneva, Mountain View
from the Upcycled Identity series.
Photo by Pedro Garcia.*

In the beginning, it took a long time to finish even a single piece. Zhitneva worked to marry the mastery of color and imagery gained from previous glasswork with new elements of volume and shape in her first foray into sculpture. Her learning curve was steep and costly, a long road paved with rejects. "I started this work three years ago. Nothing I did in the first year was ever seen." Now after a lot of experimentation, the artist feels as though "the three of us—glass, plastic, and I—are finally in agreement about how a piece will come together. The work now comes much more naturally."

"I like the series *Upcycled Identity*, because the materials appear very well blended. You might not be able to distinguish the portions that are glass and from those that are plastic. *Oceans Deep*, for instance, is made of a slumped glass jug and a plastic olive oil bottle elaborated with mouth blown flash glass. It is not obvious where one ends and the other begins."

Demanding Examination to Elicit the Story

Mountain View began as a plastic seltzer bottle and a glass jam jar. The jar at the bottom part of the sculpture was sliced, slumped, drilled, painted, and silver-stained. The plastic bottle at the top was soldered and wrapped with copper foil. A pink appendage is hand-blown glass that was hand carved and painted, and the human figure at the bottom is cast glass. "The materials are transformed, and the amount of work that goes into fabricating those junk materials takes them out of the landfill and makes them precious."

The themes of these pieces are associative rather than representational. The series has lots of imagery tucked into crevices. They are not linear stories, but not entirely abstract either.

The artist combined and slumped a plastic seltzer and glass wine bottles and a glass jar to produce *XOXOXO*, translated *Love You, Bye!* The central figure is wrapped in a metal steel wire cape, and fused pieces stand atop a cast glass base. *XOXOXO* is a reflection on the casual way that our actions as consumers are driving many species in our ecosystem to extinction. "Elimination of whales and sharks could happen in such a nonchalant way that we might not even register their passing." Still, Zhitneva does not see this work as environmental art but a reflection of how she feels about what is happening.

These final pieces in the series look intentionally fragmented. "I wanted the merging of the imagery to appear spontaneous, as if the parts of a piece stuck to each other in the landfills and were discovered there as future relics. That effect is much easier to achieve in plastic than in glass!"

"This work is weird enough that people have to stop and examine it. We all live such hectic lives that we don't take time to stop and discover, but examination is rewarding. When viewers notice that the top part of a sculpture is plastic and not glass, they lean in to discover the images hidden in the work. They take time to examine the whole piece more deeply, to consider the questions it poses. That is the intent of my work."

Sasha Zhitneva, *XOXOXO* from
the *Upcycled Identity* series.
Photo by Pedro Garcia.

Assessing Value

In a separate series of jewelry, Zhitneva combines plastic with Akoya pearls. Each piece is a tiny locket that can be opened to reveal the pearl inside. "People immediately presume that the enclosures are made of glass. The deception of materials is part of the message—one does not pair junk material with something that is precious—but in fact, plastic is not cheap." We pay dearly for fossil fuels with money, environmental degradation, and wars.

Zhitneva has been interested in the pushback elicited by pairing plastic with materials that are judged to be more valuable. "When I started to show *X-Cavate*, even after it received several awards, I often got comments to the effect that 'the pieces are beautiful; just take them out of junk.' With the *Upcycled Identity* series I wanted to make the point that we can no longer separate 'precious' from 'junk.' Viewers must come to terms with the combination of material that we love and admire and the material that we find repulsive. We need to find a way of dealing with both in juxtaposition." **GA**

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Kazuki Takizawa

by Colleen Bryan

Kazuki Takizawa blows glass and runs a rental studio for glassmaking in the West Adams neighborhood of Central Los Angeles, California. The millennial artist arrived there five years ago on a personal journey that explores culture, language, and mental health as expressed and mediated through glass art.

Echoes of Early Life

The artist was reared in Hong Kong within a bubble of a transplanted Japanese community. There, his Japanese language and culture at once nurtured a sense of identity and isolated him from the surrounding Cantonese-speaking community. "It was normal for me throughout my childhood to be unable to communicate with others." When the family moved to Bangkok, Thailand, during high school, his sense of isolation deepened. Making art with his hands provided the boy a means of creative expression and of communicating beyond the language barrier. "I always felt comfortable in art classes and able to make things with my hands that other kids liked. That gave me a safe environment within which to develop skills and self-confidence."

When choosing college, Takizawa's goal was to advance his rudimentary knowledge of English. Following a chance exposure to a TV documentary on glassblowing, he impulsively thought "Why not?" and sought a university in the United States where he could pursue both English and glass. At the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the youth began a new life.

Immediately, Takizawa realized that his hunch about glassmaking was right. "When I stepped into the hot shop where I could use my hands and fire together to make something, I fell in love. I practiced obsessively, and it took no time to make art that expressed my emotional life."

His experience of immigration, however, was intensified isolation. "When I landed for the first time in America, my English was only so-so. My experience of this new environment seemed to peel my artwork back to elemental raw ideas springing directly from my emotions."

*Kazuki Takizawa,
Single Wing Goldfinch.
Photo by Jordan Trimas.*

Mediating Mental Health through Blown Glass

Beyond providing space, equipment, and tutelage in glass-making, the university glass program required students to talk about and critique their work. This process surfaced strong emotions and ideas that Takizawa describes as “not necessarily positive.” The work he felt compelled to make was fraught with tension, instability, and angst. Those pieces comprised the core of his undergraduate output.

Emerging Mental Illness

A friend from this period registered an observation that brought Takizawa up short. “He said he thought I was depressed, and I remember my initial reaction was fury.” Within Asian culture, Takizawa says, “the prevailing mentality is that depression is a sign of weakness, not spoken of, so I didn’t really know what depression was beyond feeling a vague sense of shame.”

Nonetheless, the young man hid himself to a counselor where he found insight and help to examine his emotional life. Eventually, Takizawa was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in which periods of hypomania alternate with depressive episodes. “Looking back at my artwork from that time, I am interested by how clearly it reflects what I was feeling even before I had words to express myself. One self-portrait presents a positive portrayal at a casual glance, but reveals a negative aspect hidden in the recessed detail. I am amazed by how the hands unwittingly render a direct representation of the psyche.”

As Takizawa proceeded through therapy to establish mental stability, he was intrigued that people who share a common diagnosis can follow the same course of treatment with markedly different outcomes. “You can read lots of studies about mental illness; take prescribed medications; be religious in your sleep, nutrition, and exercise; and regularly journal your progress. You can add Eastern philosophies and meditative practices to Western technologies, and all of that might help but may or may not result in recovery. Each person must find a place within himself or herself that clicks.” His respect for the challenges of the individual journey toward mental health set the course for Takizawa’s artistic explorations.



*Kazuki Takizawa, Oriole.
Photo by Jordan Trimas.*

Therapeutic Glass

Takizawa has used glasswork as therapy or meditation. He constructed *Auric Shelter* for a stressful finals week in 2010. Drawing on principles of color therapy and theories about how color and sunlight affect emotions, the installation invited viewers to step inside a shell-like solarium structure to experience the effects of sunlight on colored glass. The 11-foot-tall structure fashioned of plexiglass, steel, and resin stood for several weeks on the grounds of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The artist's continuing *Minimalist* series of blown glass sculptures was inspired by a TED talk with Joshua Fields Millburn and Ryan Nicodemus. The pair discussed how chaos in their lives motivated them to undertake a minimalist lifestyle. In his glass series, Takizawa builds layers of complexity within simple forms. "I work in black and white to simplify the visual and head space, then use unorthodox methods for cane and murrine pattern making. The process focuses the mind on simple decisions such as whether or not to throw an object away to arrive at the essential heart."

Vessels to Protect What Is Precious

At other times, the artist uses glass art to articulate both the struggle and the beauty that he and others experience as they embrace the challenge of mental illness. "I deal with my mental illness daily. Like an athlete training his muscles, I feel stronger than the normal person because of that struggle. The process sparks a constant stream of new learning and insights. I see beauty in the ways that people with mental illness seek their own ways toward healthy equilibrium."

These perceptions inspire Takizawa's *Container* series, his longest and most developed body of work. "Historically, glass was used primarily to make vessels to contain something precious. As a medium for vessels, whether colorful, transparent, or broken, glass tells a story. I want to make work that taps into that historical context. My *Container* series, which I've made for about eight years, references Venetian goblets as vessels used by the privileged class to protect something precious and separate it from the outer world.

The artist's glass vessels are also rooted in his Japanese culture. "Japanese language uses the word *vessel* to comment on a person's emotional caliber. A person is said to be a large vessel who has the emotional capacity to hold more of life's stressors without cracking, tipping, or overflowing. A person who is likely to collapse under less stress is said to be a small vessel." Both his *Container* sculptures and *Breaking the Silence* installation incorporate this notion of emotional capacity in symmetrical oversized Venetian goblets with stems reheated and tilted or lips poked with dots to add character, energy, and vulnerability.

During a particularly rough time in his own journey, Takizawa was drawn to seashells, which provide protection necessary to the animal's survival. Later sculptures in his *Container* series are adorned with shell-like shapes, feathers, and wings. "For me, these elements represent freedom and the possibility to move from one emotional space to another. I incorporated these elements as I grew healthier and matured as a person."



Kazuki Takizawa, *Auric Shelter*. Photo by Brad Goda.



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Takizawa's work communicates eloquence and nuance with few words. "I love stories and include them in my work, but I don't want to include language, which has limited my expression in ways that I don't want to limit my audience. I want any human being who feels emotions to be able to perceive my art."

Facing Down a Personal Demon

Within the prevailing stigma against mental illness, suicide elicits the deepest shame. In the United States, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death, and the rate has climbed steadily for the past decade. Suicide is so heavily stigmatized that the artist did not talk about his own bout with suicidal ideation until five years after the fact. Glasswork afforded Takizawa a means to explore the subject long before he was able to address it through language or therapy.

His *Re-puzzling Me* sculpture (2010) began as a pristine blown glass egg nearly the size of a basketball. The artist dropped the egg from the top of a bridge and watched it shatter on the ground below. Then he meticulously gathered and glued the pieces back together again. "It took a very long time to put the pieces into something of its original form, but it became a powerful visual representation of my internal emotional process. I found beauty and character in the cracks and textures and lines."

The faceted object now sits precariously atop a blown glass pedestal in a gallery. A length of sheer white fabric represents the height of the bridge from which the original egg was dropped.

"I occasionally do something impulsively violent in my work, followed by painstaking reverse engineering. This seems to be a direct result of my occupying both ends of the emotional spectrum. That provides inspiration for me. This sculpture loosely expressed my suicidal ideation, and it was therapeutic for me to drop a piece of glass in this exploration rather than myself."



*Kazuki Takizawa, Minimalist.
Photo by Robert Wedemeyer.*



*Kazuki Takizawa, Minimalist BWSM.
Photo by Robert Wedemeyer.*

Art Growing a Compassionate Community

Other installations in Takizawa's portfolio examine the community impact of the individual act of suicide. When a younger brother still living in Asia signaled that he intended suicide, Takizawa's family converged from their respective homes across the globe determined to intervene. There, beyond finding their loved one in crisis, they encountered the culturally embedded institutional barriers that obstruct people connecting to lifesaving help.

Fortunately, with the help of family, his brother eventually regained health and stability, but walking through the experience with another person changed how the artist deals with the subject in his art. "That painful and powerful experience shifted me from referencing my personal mental health to actively using my art to break through the general silence around mental illness. I am working to grow a compassionate community of people who struggle themselves with mental illness or who have family members who do."



Kazuki Takizawa, Breaking the Silence.
Photo by Jason Dowdle.

Takizawa designed *Breaking the Silence* as a site-specific performance installation for STARworks Glass Lab in Star, North Carolina (2015). The installation included rows of off-kilter clear glass vessels arrayed on a glass table. A water system rained water droplets onto the vessels over a two-hour period, during which each of the vessels collapsed or broke, toppling adjacent vessels in the process. The artist produced a three-minute video of the installation to encourage dissemination to a broader audience. In addition to the immediate profound loss, people who lose family or friends to suicide are themselves statistically more likely to die by suicide. "In this performance piece, I wanted to demonstrate that the effect of suicide ripples out to the entire community." The sequel *Breaking the Silence II* concerns suicide prevention and is loosely inspired by Zen calligraphy.

Takizawa admits that talking about suicide, bipolar disorder, and depression through his artwork was terrifying. "I was afraid that no one would hire me anymore." The reception for his work, however, has been emboldening. "I've started talking about suicide and mental illness whenever I have the opportunity to give an artist's talk." Unexpectedly, this leads him out of the profound isolation that accompanies mental illness and links him to others along the path. "My process is a lot about self-exploration, but I have learned that what feels deeply personal to me is familiar to others and provides us a means of connection."



Kazuki Takizawa, In Between Light and Shadow.
Photo by Cliff Bumgardner.

The Nexus of Health and Art

Takizawa has learned a lot about mental illness and works daily to stay healthy and emotionally balanced. This discipline allows him to continually learn new things and be productive. Keeping his health in check is sometimes a struggle, but also a source of inspiration, motivation, and strength.

His continuous challenge is balancing health and creativity. The artist is often asked in presentations: So much of your work deals with depression and suicide. Do you need to be depressed to make powerful art? "The short answer is No. I'm more productive when I'm mentally stable. I need to be healthy in order to create even if I draw the material and inspiration from periods of illness and despair."

Making the Intangible Real

One of Takizawa's goals as an artist is to address the powerful but intangible phenomena of emotions by creating something visible, tangible, and real. "I am curious about mental illness and how one becomes healthy. I create my glass to remember what I've learned about mental health and to give a tangible and visual anchor that other people can use as a reference."

In Between Light and Shadow (2017) speaks to the importance of shedding light on the membrane of invisible experience that separates us from one another, yet is real and active in our daily interactions. Created during Takizawa's residency at STARworks, the installation includes 1,100 cellophane glass shards suspended midair on fine steel filament. The thin, clear shards are hard to see in daylight and easy to walk into, but when spot-lit in a dark room they cast a large shadow on the wall behind the installation. Furthermore, because the shards are so lightweight and insubstantial, they shudder with any movement anywhere. Installed inside a quiet room, even a gate closing at the remote end of the huge building registers as movement in the shards.

The artist intends this installation as a metaphor for mental health awareness and the importance of shedding light on something that is difficult to see and understand. In a world grown increasingly chaotic and complex, the installation tunes and heightens the senses of observers, bringing an audience to calm reflection. "It reminds me of mindfulness exercises where you hold an object for 30 seconds, focus your senses and emotions on that object, and intentionally try to regain awareness and calm."

Facing Forward

As Takizawa moves forward, he is transitioning more firmly and permanently to a full-time presence in Los Angeles. Setting aside some of his itinerant teacher and traveling artist gigs, he is expanding his soft glass studio. Starting in September 2018, a new KT Glassworks website heralded the opening of a studio available for rent to other glassblowing artists in the Los Angeles area. On that side of the business, Takizawa produces interior and decorative product that is distinct from his cultural work.

The artist will continue to produce sculptures and installations that promote awareness about mental health and to engage gallery representation to distribute them. A show in March 2019 with River House Arts Gallery in Toledo, Ohio, will feature new sculptures in his *Container* and *Minimalist* series. "It is a privilege to show my work in Toledo where they have such a long and distinguished legacy of glassmaking." He is excited about new series of sculptures that are now ready to showcase. The artist also looks forward to developing a show for the Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles in 2020.

Many artists use their art and their hands to express their emotional lives. Takizawa does a remarkably honest job of it, placing cairns along the wilderness path to mark the journey for others who follow.

GA



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*Kazuki Takizawa at work.
Photo by Kelly Rosales.*



*Kazuki Takizawa, Six Wing Realgar.
Photo by Jordan Trimas.*

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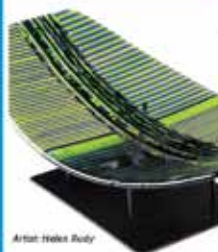


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Creativity

— SYSTEMATIC RECOMBINATION AND EXPLOITATION



by *Milon Townsend*

This will probably come across as the least “creative” approach, the least interesting to the restlessly questioning mind, the least appealing to the romantic in us, which thinks that creativity is some ephemeral, unidentifiable trait that cannot be nailed down. However, using systematic recombination and exploitation in our work is both the hammer and the nails. While not seeming creative, per se, to leave this out would be to rob oneself of a fundamental building block.

Systematic Recombination

How many ways can I put these seven elements together? How many different objects can I create if I put this part with that part in all the different possible iterations? Charting that out may very well illustrate for you an idea or pairing that might have eluded your normally searching spotlight of consciousness or save you from a blind spot that you might have otherwise overlooked. We all learned about the monk Gregor Mendel in seventh grade, and how he illustrated the basic principles of genetic variation by charting out dominant and recessive traits in plants, and we can use the same approach in our work.

In the early '80s, in the very beginning of my years in New York City (NYC) working with the balletic and dance communities, I had learned seven different dance poses. I can clearly recall sitting down with one of each of those figures and systematically holding each of them with every other one, in every possible pose or combination, to see if there were any viable pairings. Several of those designs ended up being the stalwart backbone of our wholesale line for the following 20 years. I would absolutely not have come up with them without having gone through that systematic process.



(Left to right) *Milon Townsend*,
Mermaids Under the Sea,
approximately 6" x 3" each, 2006;
Red Fritfrog, 9" x 4", 1995.

Ten years later, I developed a series of mermaid ornaments that I was selling wholesale to stores and galleries around the country. I needed a consistent overall approach to design, and using three different tails, I combined them with three different torsos to generate six poses. Changing the orientation of a piece can give it a very different appearance. Adding the variable of four different hair colors produced a total of 4 times 6, or 24 different possible mermaids. Since people like to order similar pieces in groups of . . . wait for it . . . six or 12, this worked out well, since multiplying the value of one piece by six or 12 or 24 or 48 created a very successful series of pieces that has been its own income stream for over 30 years.

I have also made dragons. The name of my business at the RenFests that I do is The Glass Dragon. Over the past 10 or more years, I have continually added and refined different poses of the dragons that I make. I need a consistent size so that I can sell them for consistent prices, and I have come up with a system for doing just that. Making a dragon body blank of about 6 inches in length, I can use it to create five different standard poses or styles of hanging dragon ornaments. I use five to nine different color combinations, producing a series of 25 to 45 different dragons, all based on the same standard body blank. Making the bodies is boring and repetitive, but it can be done during non-Faire hours so that the demonstration I do for patrons while we're open to the public remains interesting and entertaining.

Exploitation

Exploitation means to make full use of or to take advantage of. This is a bad thing when it comes to human beings, but it is great when it refers to an image or theme or color or technique. It means that when you come up with that most elusive of things, a good idea, you're free to develop as many different applications of that as you possibly can.

In my ideal world, people like to buy what I want to make, and if I make it well enough, I can generally make that work, since there are collectors of almost anything you could possibly want to make.

I've always liked frogs, ever since I used to catch them as a kid. I've studied them enough to have a good working understanding of their anatomy, articulation, coloration, and what aspects of their form can generate the graceful movement that has always attracted me to glass. I've made them as paperweights, in large sizes down to quite small, and in enough color combinations to create series of pieces with breadth as well as depth. I've applied frogs to the outside of scent bottles, illustrated them croaking, catching insects on their extended tongues, and leaping with water splashing all around them as they leave the surface. I've anthropomorphized them as dancers and made them as relatively large individual sculptures with highly detailed color patterning to create very lifelike representations.

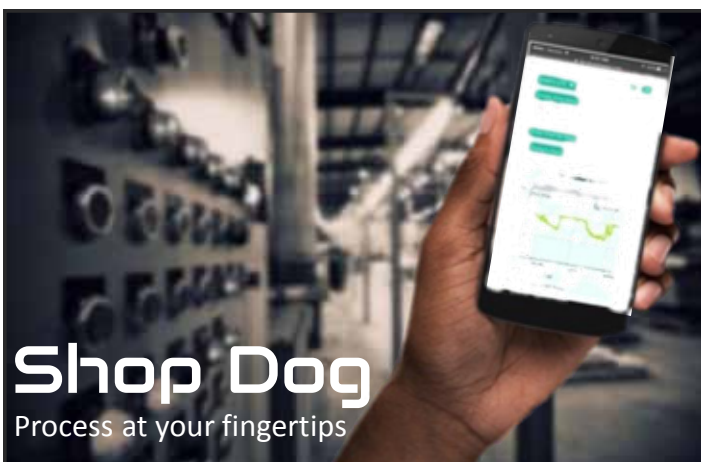


People collect them, which is not to say anything about business or money, but to refer to the fact that if I am able to regularly sell iterations of a concept or design, then I'm going to be able to afford the time and materials to take it to the next level. There's only so many of a thing you can invest in if they're just sitting around your workshop or attic or basement or garage in boxes. I'm just saying . . .

Other images or themes that I've been able to exploit are, say, dragonflies. Love 'em. Love the way they look; love the lacy filigree wings; love the color possibilities. Like to use them as elements in a more complex sculpture, say, being eaten by a preying mantis, or perching them on an iris or an orchid or a lily.



(Left to right) Milon Townsend,
Leopard Frog, 6" x 4", 2018;
Dragonfly Scent Bottle, 9" x 6", 2005.



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Any time you dive that deep into a thing, using and working it year after year for decades, you're inevitably going to come to a deep and true understanding that will shine forth in the work and make it as attractive as a flame is to a moth. Identify what you love and work it to death. Whoever said that if you find something you love, you'll never work a day in your life didn't have a clue. You'll work hard at that thing every day of your life because you want to, and you'll get so good at it that it will generate its own success. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. In India, it is said that if you're going to dig a well, dig a deep one. It'll define who you are to many. It'll serve to get you up in the morning and keep you up at night.

Finding Inspiration in What Is Around You

For me, for many years, it was dance—the human form in motion. I was based in NYC, and some consider that the world center of dance. I started making dance figures because my shop at the time was located in between the Joffrey School of Ballet and two other dance schools, and the dancers came into my shop. Carrying their huge duffels, walking with a turned out step and with their hair up in buns, they were an unmistakable presence. It was absolutely the idea of making work that would appeal to them that pushed that part of my work forward. Well, turns out that dancers don't have any money, but it was too late for me. I had discovered the human figure in motion, and I never looked back.

There is an endless wealth of material to build from in that genre. Moving from ballet to other forms of dance, to narrative pieces featuring correctly proportioned figures were almost inevitable steps. Developing them into wholesale lines caused me to make literally tens and hundreds of thousands of human figures. The image and motion were permanently etched onto my subconscious to the point that everything I make today is informed by those considerations. Darned if I can't make something without clean, flowing curvilinearity—something with graceful motion. I can live with that. The exploitation of the genre of dance has moved me into being, thinking, and making better work, and I will always be grateful for that.

GA




Milon Townsend, Dragonfly, 9" x 6" x 2".

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. Google "Milon Townsend images" to view more of his work and go to the www.bluemoonpress.com for his educational materials. You can contact him at milontownsend@gmail.com. The sequence presented here is excerpted from Milon's upcoming book on Creativity.



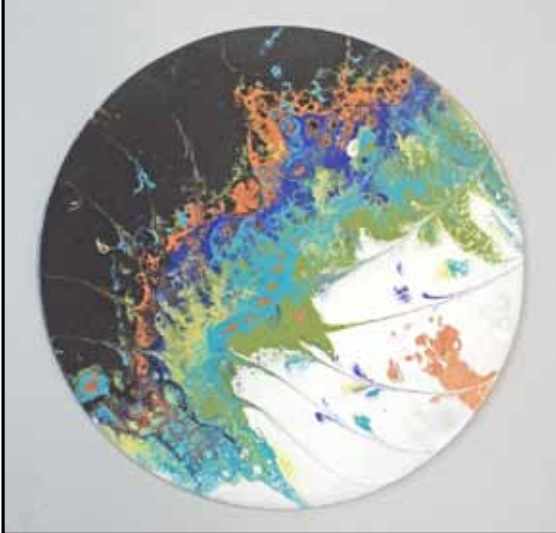
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GAS 2019, a Growing Glass Community Exploring Glass Beyond Borders



Making glass at the Morean Arts Center Glass Studio and Hot Shop.

by Tess McShane

Each new year brings a new conference for the Glass Art Society (GAS). During March 28–30, 2019, our glass reunion will take place in St. Petersburg, Florida, a burgeoning city that is quickly gaining international recognition for its glass studios, galleries, and museums. This annual event is just one of the many benefits of a GAS membership, giving artists and glass enthusiasts from around the world a chance to come together and celebrate the possibilities of glass art.

Opening Doors

“Glass is an amazing subversive material that allows us to find a common connection through material and skill,” says Natali Rodrigues, president of the GAS Board of Directors. “It allows us to look beyond differences in language and culture and brings us together.” Many witnessed this at the “Il Percorso di Vetro, The Glass Path” conference on the beautiful island of Murano, Italy, in May 2018. This historic event literally opened doors to both people and places rarely seen by the general public. GAS members were given an unprecedented chance to watch demonstrations take place in some of the oldest glass furnaces in existence.

“Il Percorso di Vetro, The Glass Path” didn’t just open doors to people who came to Murano. It also opened doors for those who live and work on Murano by bringing a huge group of artists and new ideas to the island to share their processes and techniques. These kinds of personal connections matter, because there is so much we can learn from others. The only way to do that is to keep on opening doors to new people and places.

Exchanging Ideas, Expanding Knowledge, Exploring Possibilities

One of the primary goals of the Glass Art Society has always been to connect people in order to build a community of glass artists and enthusiasts focused on exchanging ideas, expanding their knowledge base, and exploring new possibilities. Since 1971, GAS has expanded both in membership and in opportunities. In our nearly 50-year history we have held conferences in more than 32 cities in seven countries. With each new conference and each new place, GAS continues to evolve.

The organization's website and the Internet are also helping GAS to spread the love of glass around the world. GAS currently has more than 16,000 Instagram followers and thousands more on Twitter and Facebook. At last count in 2018, there were roughly 380,000 visits and 1,834,000 hits to the Glass Art Society website. This virtual world allows GAS to reach more people, promote its member artists, and continue to help create a greater public awareness and appreciation of the glass arts. These tools are valuable resources for the glass community and GAS members.

Connecting with Innovative People and Places

The GAS Board of Directors has also grown over the years to include members from a number of different countries. Included are members from Japan, Germany, England, Italy, Australia, The Netherlands, Mexico, Canada, and more. In his GAS Membership Award speech in Murano, Durk Valkema, Dutch glass artist and previous GAS board member said, "Our only hope of truly understanding the importance of a place is to be there, to engage all of your senses, to smell it and hear it, to walk the streets, to talk to the people, to experience some of the culture and environment."

Moving forward, the GAS Board of Directors has identified expanding its reach as one of the organization's top priorities. As such, GAS is exploring ways to increase membership and engage artists in a more significant way beyond North America. GAS has formed an International Task Force to find ways to include artists in this conversation and expand its reach to places around the world. Although expanding internationally has its own obstacles and challenges, the GAS Board of Directors believes it is an important step in taking GAS to the next level of excellence, and they are committed to taking the time to get it right.

Proposing New Ideas

GAS is also launching a unique new prize, The Glass Art Society International Artist Prize, in partnership with the British Glass Biennale in August 2019. This prize will be awarded by the GAS Board of Directors and signifies an international recognition of the winning artist by his or her professional peers. There is no comparable prize in the British Glass Biennale, and this new tribute shows a dedication and willingness from the GAS board to continue to play a larger role in international glass.

Sponsorship of the Glass Arts Society International Artists' Prize in the British Glass Biennale presents an invaluable opportunity for GAS to communicate the organization and its mission directly with new artists, makers, and visitors. More information about this will be announced soon.

Focusing on the Future

The Glass Art Society is excited about the future and what it holds. We hope to grow in the best possible way and hope that you will continue to help us expand our impact and reach by telling others about GAS and the opportunity it provides to glass artists around the world.

GAS knows that people are eager for more events like Murano and GAS conferences that have been held in other places overseas including those held in Australia, Amsterdam, Mexico, Tokyo, and Toronto. Our goal is to try to make that happen. As always, we thank you for being a part of our growing glass community, and we look forward with excitement to the many new people and places that the future brings.

GA

Visit www.glassart.org or follow GAS on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter @glassartsociety to find out more about becoming a member of the Glass Art Society.

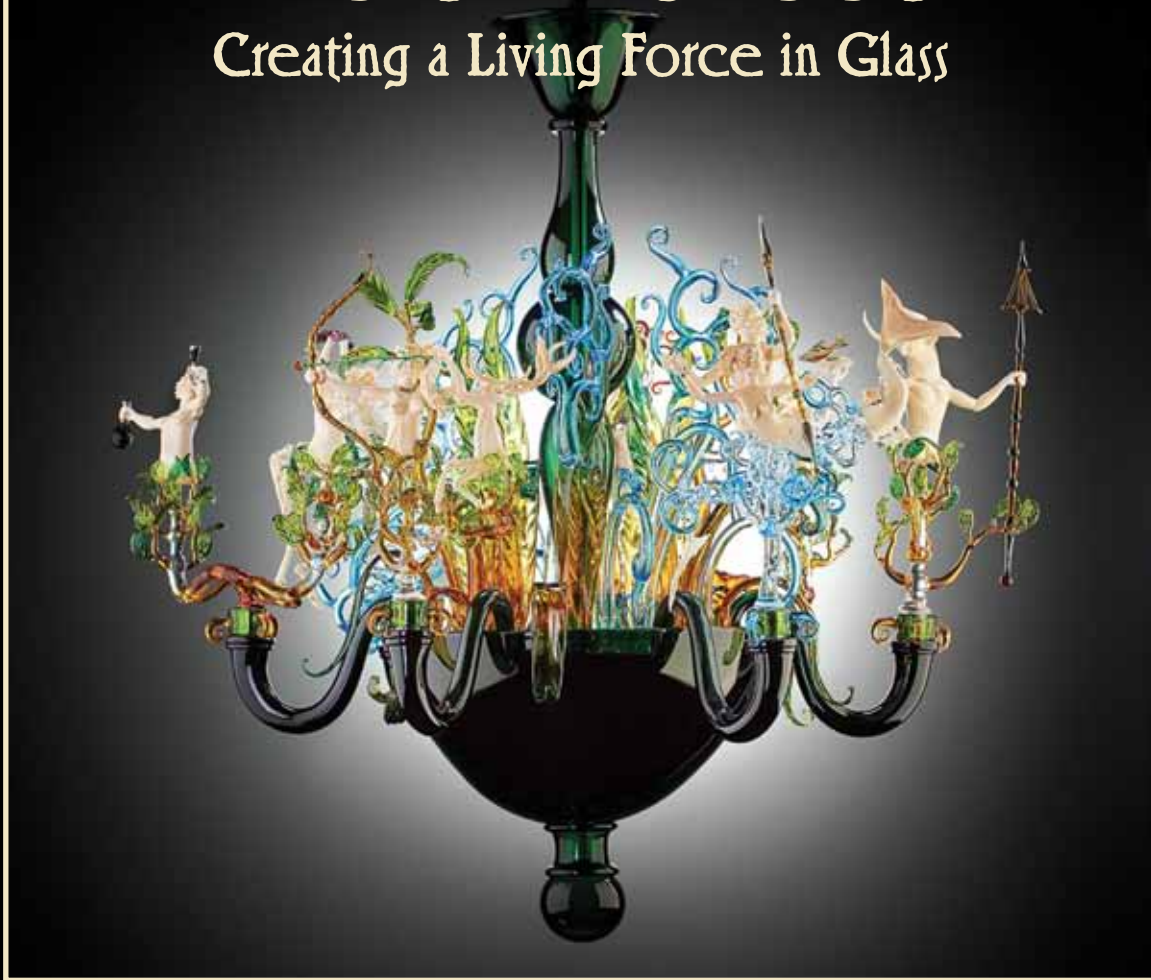


Amber Flame at Zen Glass.

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Lucio Bubacco

Creating a Living Force in Glass



*Lucio Bubacco, Olimpo, 1 m x 1 m x 1 m, 2016.
Photo by Norbert Heyl.*

by Shawn Waggoner

Lucio Bubacco travels around Murano and frequently to Venice in his gondola, rowing a la valesana—standing with two crossed oars—to power himself across the lagoon. A favorite pastime since childhood, journeying along the canals recharges his creativity and provides “vitamins” for his soul. Movement also defines his energetic flameworked sculpture, alive in terms of frozen action, but also anatomical perfection.

Born on the Italian island of Murano in 1957, Bubacco has been flameworking glass since he was a boy, beginning with small animals and beads. A fascination with equine and human anatomy inspired him to push beyond the perceived technical limitations of his craft to combine the anatomic perfection of Greek sculpture with the Byzantine gothic architecture of Venice. “Seductive motifs such as metamorphosis and transformation echo themes from our mythological past when sexuality was spiritual, not political.”

Bubacco’s large freestanding sculptures, worked hot and annealed during the process, are unique in lampworking. They are

made from 104 COE Murano soda glass canes. The epitome of detailed elaboration and narrative content, his mini installations can be seen in collections worldwide including Musée-Atelier du Verre de Sars-Poteries, France; The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York; Museo del Vidrio, Monterrey, Mexico; and Museo del Vetro, Murano, Italy.

Though formerly represented by Habatat Galleries, Michigan, Bubacco stopped his gallery relationships to devote himself full time to teaching, primarily at his Scuola Bubacco on Murano. In 2019, he will teach three courses, one in March, in May, and at summer’s end. The artist will also exhibit new work at a Roman theater in Pamukkale, Turkey. New technically challenging, mythological chandelier commissions are under way, and a collaboration with Alessandro Cuccato (Vetroricerca Glas & Modern Bolzano) on a bas-relief sculpture for a mega yacht that pays homage to Troy has recently been completed. To realize this work, Bubacco developed a hybrid technique combining flameworking with fusing.



*Lucio Bubacco, detail of Olimpo showing Perseo and Medusa, 2016.
Photo by Norbert Heyl.*



*Lucio Bubacco, Eros Satiro Ninfa,
37 cm x 25 cm x 18 cm, 2006.
Photo by Anna Donadel.*

Last winter a skiing accident kept Bubacco from his studio, during which time he completed two books. *Muran* features 170 original Bubacco watercolor paintings depicting the history of Muranese glass, and *Lucio Bubacco: Erotics* with essays by Andrew Page, Klaus Weschenfelder, and Steffen John, was introduced at GAS Murano in May 2018. Also available is *Lucio Bubacco, Eternal Temptation*, a one-of-a-kind book that combines a minimalist layout with luxury materials and texts by Dan Klein and Cristina Gregorin.

Storia Antica

A typical day in the life of Bubacco doesn't exist, because there is no set routine. "If I have a sad day, my work is sad. All of a sudden, there might be a collector who comes by and is passionate about what I do and how I work. This gives me energy that can change the whole day, completely change my attitude and, effectively, my work. Each day is a new start for me."

Although Bubacco's father Severino was a maestro at the glassblowing furnace, flameworking called to Lucio at a young age. "It was so nice for me to see this work carried out in small spaces, with wooden furnaces and stoves, everything done in a very primitive manner. I was attracted to the atmosphere and magic in these tiny spaces, the warmth of the lighting."

At the time, every family, every studio, and even the furnaces, made a standard series of animals that included deer, chickens, and stylized fish. No one annealed or tempered anything. Almost all glasswork was created very simply by individual families with no technology. At 15, the young Bubacco received his artisan's license and began marketing Venetian lampworked collectibles.

In addition to a quiet, less frenzied atmosphere than that of the glass furnaces, flameworking provided Bubacco with an inroad to individualized work. The glass rods integral to the process helped him create sculpture in his own style, in his own method. "In flamework everyone is an individual, without contamination from anything or anyone, just you and the glass. There's limitation in size, but freedom to be an individual. This is very important to me. Working with glass rods helps tell a story, one that continues moving forward but is still connected to previous pieces."

From Ghetto to Habatat

Following a stint as an assistant to a flameworking maestro, Bubacco opened his first studio in 1972 in the Jewish ghetto of Murano. There he worked with his uncle who gave him the keys to the place. "There was no heat. I was always clad in many layers of sweaters and jackets plus two pairs of pants. I made stylized animals like those from the 1950s, simple and fast."

In 1980, Bubacco began studying anatomical drawing with the Venetian artist Alessandro Rossi. This early fascination with anatomy, both human and equine, gradually compelled him to test the limits of his craft. Figures in movement became the new central theme of Bubacco's flameworked glass. The artist began to challenge any preconceptions that pigeonholed lampworking to the production of decorative objects and suppressed the sculptural potential of narrative content, composition, and thematic grouping.



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“The perfection and precision of my drawing was finally translated into the work I did in glass. That was so important for me. Rossi looked at my designs, looked at my glass objects, asked me questions about the technique, the anatomy, the proportions. Prior to that, I had continually justified the shortcomings and flaws of my framework as the fault of working in glass. I had to draw and design first, then work in glass at the same level, achieving the same quality of precision with no excuses. Rossi paved the way for my entrance into the world of fine art.”

From 1987 to 1989, Bubacco experimented with his first glass figures from carnival and mythology, leading the artist to his true calling and current aesthetic signature. As he became famous internationally, exhibitions, museum shows, and workshops followed. “I was very passionate about teaching the courses. The money that students paid helped me to create grander objects suitable for museums and larger-scale work that I couldn’t have made without their support and inspiration.”



*Lucio Bubacco, Troy, 65 cm x 50 cm x 40 cm, 2014.
Photo by Anna Donadel.*

Bubacco traveled to the United States where he made connections with galleries such as Habatat and learning institutions such as Wheaton Village. “The only other torch artists at that time were Ginny Ruffner and Paul Stankard. It was an honor for me to find a place in the world of glass art as a flamework artist. I was awarded a fellowship at Wheaton Village in 1993. I had many theories of how to work in my head, but I was finally able to put them into practice and was liberated from indecision and frustration. I knew I had made the right choice to focus on flamework, though I respected furnace work even more. My time at Wheaton was a cultural investment, a research project, and the most beautiful period in my life in terms of this kind of experience.”

In 1994, Bubacco collaborated with William Morris in Japan, making figures in the flame, virtually flat and two-dimensional, that Morris applied to vase forms. “He was very good at the time, and the results of our collaboration between flame and furnace were very important to me. Nijima Glass Museum in Japan sponsored the event, and the results of our work will stay forever in the care of the museum.”

Subsequently, Bubacco explored using the furnace in combination with the torch, incorporating figures with blown cups and bases using the avolio, a small oval sphere that separates the figures from the architecture. The avolio is added when the figure is hot, prior to annealing, so that the pieces can be worked and connected to the architecture at a later stage. The oval shape allows a piece to be heated without transferring the heat to the entire figure, limiting the risk of breakage. This is the cornerstone of Bubacco’s work.

“Larger bowls and bases added size to my sculpture, seemingly improving their value in a gallery or museum. I use architecture to improve the value of my work. It’s a kind of double play. Blown pieces add value to my work, and in turn my work becomes more important than that of the furnace.”

*Lucio Bubacco, Satiro e Ninfa,
32 cm x 25 cm x 18 cm, 2006.
Photo by Anna Donadel.*

The Heat Goes On

Flameworking has allowed Bubacco to realize his dreams in three dimensions in ways that paint or even ceramics never could. The fragility of the material seems only to add to its preciousness. Because it is fragile, it is always governed, watched over and attended to, or isolated in a moment of time.

Bubacco's themes have always addressed issues of good and evil. Romanticism, a sense of attraction or erotica, is expressed in classical style. Above all, a mythological message and spirit are conveyed. "There are dreams and symbols that become material in mythology. Flameworking allows me to put my mythology into materialized pieces, something of me in a solid form. The attraction of Greek mythology is the drama—death, war, the tragedy of love, what I feel inside. It allows me to exaggerate emotions and sensations in my interpretations, to dramatize the part of love that is erotic, or depict a god that is dramatic but also very loving and playing with nymphs. In certain cases, a mythological form can become part animal, the instinctual animal, that is part of all of us. There is a need to have contact with nature, with the part of us that is animalistic."

Nowhere are these ideals more evident than in Bubacco's 1999 *Divine History*, a commission by the former director of the Ducal Palace in Venice. Originally a nativity, the piece developed into a *Divine History* to allow the artist to downplay religious iconography. A complex story, the work includes Michael the Archangel, myriad angels, and shepherds with sheep, all in ivory crystal transparent color. A war scene in the middle depicts scenes of pagans who don't follow Christian religion, an interpretation of a synagogue with Jews in traditional dress, and Roman soldiers in a chariot collecting money from the Jews. Dead figures and bodies partially submerged in glass form a kind of holocaust. A tree with vultures symbolizes the death and violence of war.

"There is a little of everything, the contrast of both ends of life, hell in the base and heaven at the top. Thus, the work became the *Divine History*. Having the opportunity to place my work among that of some of the greatest Venetian artists such as Tintoretto from the

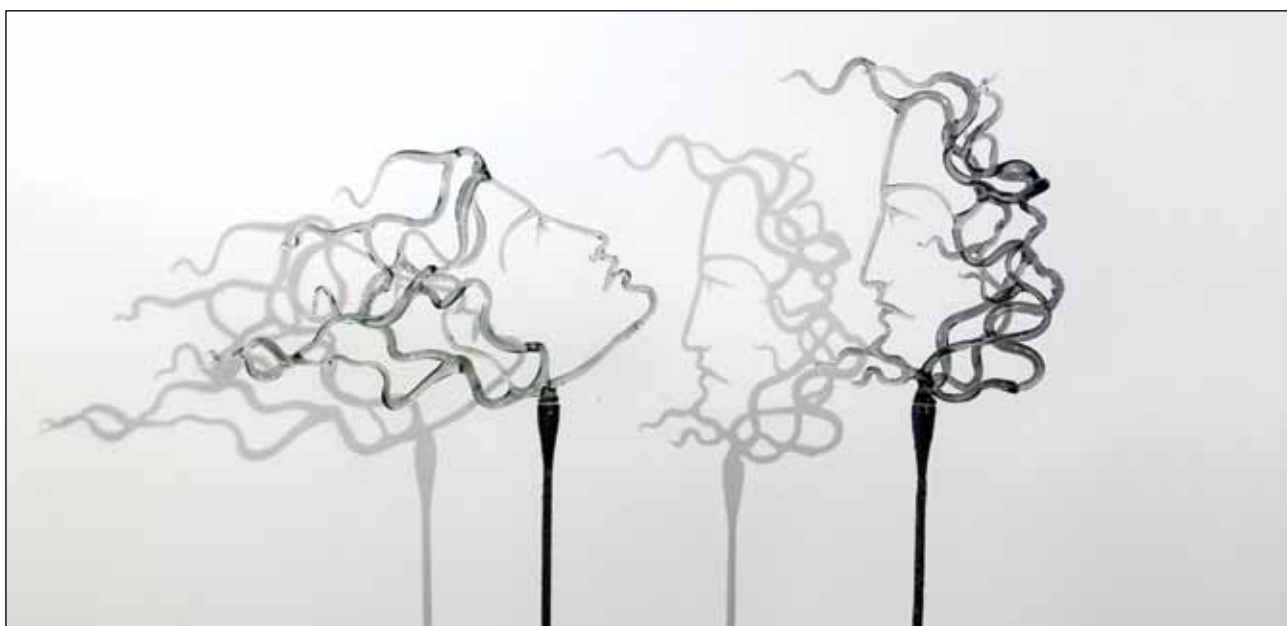
1600s, the height of the baroque period, I had to create something fantastic to merit being in this incredible space."

The entire piece was flameworked except the bowls of the cups and the bases, which were blown in the furnace. Bubacco designed the architecture in three parts. The central part, which is in three sections, measures 1.5 meters high. There was naturally a need to make the structure solid, so the artist performed a professional study of the weight and balance limitations. In the cross, the inside structure extends upward, and the outside figure extends outward to create balance.

Figures were applied hot, and the centerpiece was annealed 15 times. For every piece that was added, the whole structure had to be reannealed. The sculpture was modified and improved multiple times. What was estimated to require 20 days ended up taking 40 days of work. *Divine History* was exhibited at the museum in Venice and later traveled to Museo del Vidrio in Mexico, then to Habatat Galleries in Chicago.

In 2008, Bubacco created *Eternal Temptation*. The artist devoted a year to his magnum opus to the exclusion of nearly all else. It marks both a high point and a milestone in his career. Comprised of three parts, *Inferno* is on the right, *Paradiso* on the left. Both are designed with matching symmetry. The third part is positioned in the center. Demonic figures represent the tortured soul of the artist. Three chandeliers carry the viewer's gaze upward and add height to the ensemble. The remaining scenery is comprised of a series of columns and lidded vessel forms, each terminating in a mask or finial of some sort.

The series of blown vessel forms and chandeliers were produced in three different glass workshops with the exception of the small lampwork vessel with a nude male figure at its center. This small footed vessel is the composition's focal point and the only vessel form entirely produced by Bubacco. Finally, enamel painting was applied to the surfaces of the blown glass central vessels in *Paradiso* and *Inferno*. Bubacco's work references Dante's epic poems, but inspiration was also found in Gustave Doré's illustrations of the *Divine Comedy*.



Lucio Bubacco, Bacan, 180 cm x 40 cm x 40 cm, 2017.

Photo by Anna Donadel.

In Bubacco's 2015 *La Barca dei Dannati* | *The Boat of the Damned*, the artist avoided conveying real suffering and torture. "The damned dance a sensual dance, which for me is a way of drawing attention to the attraction of forbidden fruits and sin or the ever-present weakness that we are led into by temptation. This kind of seductive physicality is conveyed by the colors used—dark purple for flesh and dark metal bronze for the flames that form the boat."

While working the figures, Bubacco considered each element as belonging to a jigsaw puzzle, simultaneously a unique piece yet part of a whole. As he modeled each figure, he envisioned its place in the overall scheme. Watching him work is akin to ballet or musical theater. The theater in the act of creation is reflected in the work of art itself.

The Chihuly of Flameworking

In the case of blown work, a champion such as Dale Chihuly promoted hot glass in public places around the world through his installation art. In the same way, by extending the size, content, and sophistication of his sculpture, Bubacco pushed flameworked glass deep into fine art territory.

It's difficult to keep economics from blocking evolution. For an artist's work to evolve, ideally he would spend every day in the development of new ideas or processes. "I live here in Murano where everyone produces to earn money, not to make art. My evolution is connected to my financial stability and being responsible for the school. My work evolves only six months out of a year, and in those six months I try to find something new, something original inside of me. I'm inspired by life in the moment. In every minute after minute there are new sensations that can materialize into new ideas."

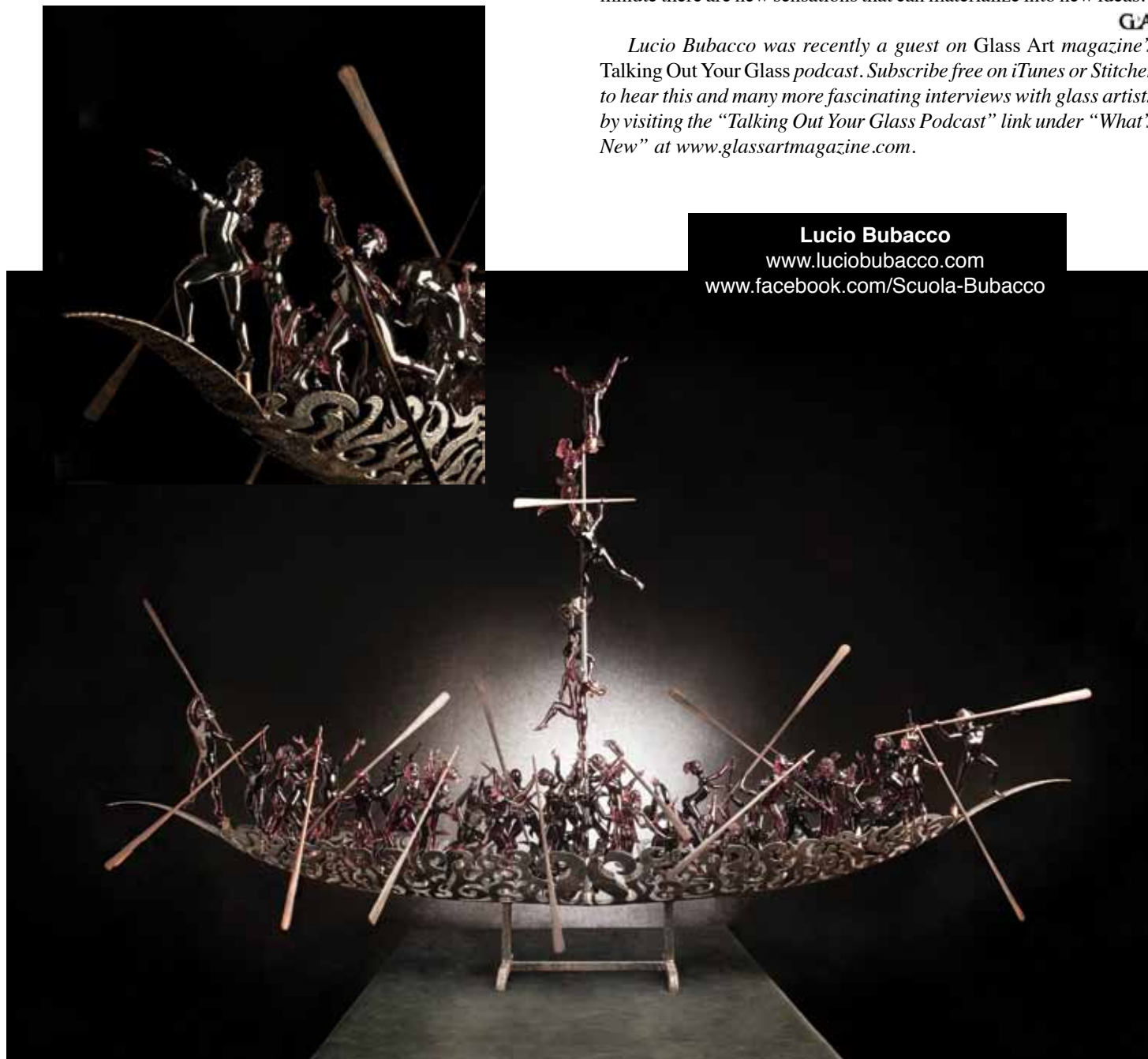
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Lucio Bubacco was recently a guest on Glass Art magazine's Talking Out Your Glass podcast. Subscribe free on iTunes or Stitcher to hear this and many more fascinating interviews with glass artists by visiting the "Talking Out Your Glass Podcast" link under "What's New" at www.glassartmagazine.com.

Lucio Bubacco

www.luciobubacco.com

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Lucio Bubacco, *Barca dei Dannati*,
200 cm x 170 cm x 60 cm, 2017. Iron structure of the boat
created by Daniele Donà. Photo by Anna Donadel.

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(Left to right) Stephanie Trenchard, *Falling Apart*: Emmy Hennings, assembled sand cast glass with glass inclusions, 32.5" x 10.5" x 4.5", 2018; *Coated Women*, sand cast glass with inclusions, 19" x 5" x 4.5" each, 2016.

Stephanie Trenchard Telling Women's Stories in Glass

by Margaret Zinser Hunt

Stephanie Trenchard's vibrant and engaging body of work encompasses both painting and cast glass sculpture. She is best known for the innovative synergy between her painting and hot glass creations, vehicles for her storytelling. The castings she creates, often assembled from multiple pieces nested together, have characteristic rich depth and intense color.

Trenchard's formal training is in painting, an area on which she focused at Illinois State University. After earning her BFA in 1984, she and her husband, glass artist Jeremy Popelka, moved to the San Francisco, California, Bay Area. At the time, she was designing textile patterns, which she licensed and sold under a private label.

The couple relocated to Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, in 1997 where they built a hot shop and gallery, which they share. Each of them lends a hand to the other on their respective bodies of work. They also engage in joint teaching projects, most recently in Thailand.

As Trenchard assisted Popelka with his work in the hot shop, she discovered glass casting, a way to translate into glass some of the patterns and imagery from her textile designs. Shortly after, she used Paradise Paints for the first time. Hand painting with vitreous enamel allowed her to directly apply her painting skills to glass art, revisit some of the themes from her painted work, and develop the narrative themes that characterize her current award winning art, which is exhibited in corporate and museum collections.

Synergy in Painting and Glass

While developing her career in glass, Trenchard continues to paint landscapes, abstracts, and portraiture in oils. She deeply connects with the direct practice of painting and finds it a complement to the process-intensive aspects of glass casting. She finds that painting allows a different freedom than working with glass, which is so often dependent on materials, process, and time.

Painting techniques inform much of her work with glass, and conversely, glass has influenced her approach to painting. She finds analogous effects that can be achieved both in painting and in glass in terms of transparency, opacity, luminosity, and density. For example, the pigments she uses from Williamsburg Paint come in different grinds that impart varying textures to the paint, much in the way that different frit and glass powders affect the luminosity in glass.

Trenchard underscores an important distinction, however, between working with glass and oil painting. While the aim in her painted landscapes is to create depth on a two-dimensional surface, her aim in cast glass is often quite the opposite. "With painting, I'm trying to increase the depth with hue and luminosity. With casting, I'm almost trying to flatten out surfaces with a 3-D image on a background."



(Clockwise from top) Stephanie Trenchard, Potawatomi Park, oil on canvas, 30" x 30", 2018; Vilas, oil on canvas, 54" x 54", 2018; Bayshore Drive, oil on canvas, 2018.



Cast Work Narratives of Women

The artist's painting and cast glass work overlap the most in the use of portraiture as a vehicle for telling stories of women's experience in art. An avid reader, Trenchard has long been drawn to biographies of remarkable but underrecognized female artists. She is particularly interested in how motherhood and partnership have shaped their careers. A mother herself, Trenchard has long examined the practical realities of balancing the demands of a successful career in art with those of parenthood and partnership. These stories are told in imagery that surfaces in many of her pieces, often assuming the shape of totems made of several cast pieces that fit together.

In *Tertiary Colors*, Trenchard references the third tier of the color wheel, where colors are more nuanced. In that piece, she focuses on three American women artists—Alice Neel, Florine Stettheimer, and Elaine de Kooning. The images of chairs speak to the artist, and in her research she found that all three women had done seated self-portraits. *Tertiary Colors* gives these three women their "seat at the table," with each woman represented above her own seated self-portrait. The three chairs in this work, part of Trenchard's visual vocabulary, serve to create a commonality between these three women.

Alice Neel appears in another piece, *Motherhood Trinity*, that examines her life as a parent. Neel had two children, the first of whom was taken from her. Her research found that Neel was somewhat of an absentee parent to her sons. *Motherhood Trinity*, a triptych of castings, asks the viewer to ponder Neel's relationship with her children. Women centered themes of these works by Trenchard illustrate the ways in which the lives and work of women artists of the past can have specific relevance for contemporary women artists as they wonder about the balance between art, motherhood, and partnership.



(Clockwise from top) Stephanie Trenchard, *Nine Teapots*, assembled sand cast glass with inclusions, 18" x 18" x 4.5", 2016; *Motherhood Triptych: Alice Neel*, assembled sand cast glass with inclusions, 24" x 24" x 4.5", 2012; *Tertiary Colors*, assembled sand cast glass with inclusions, 18" x 16.5" x 4.5", 2016.



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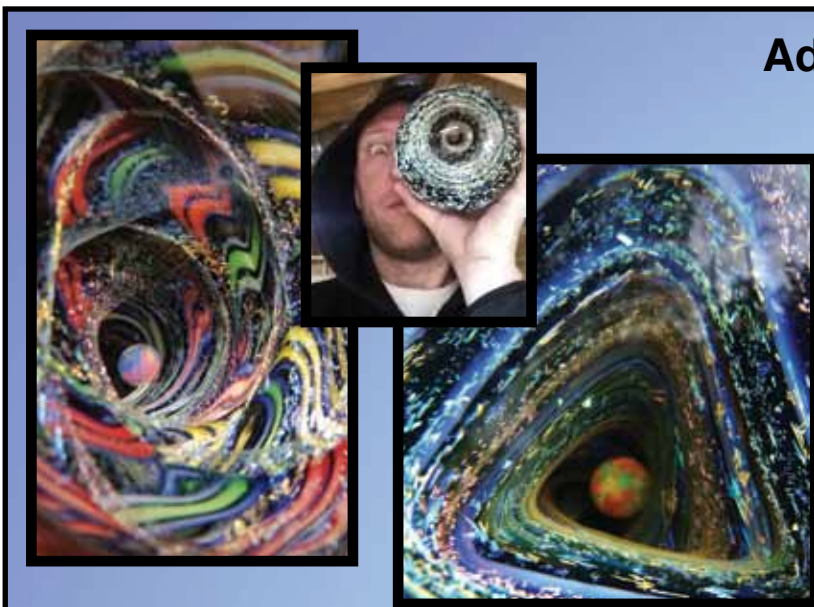
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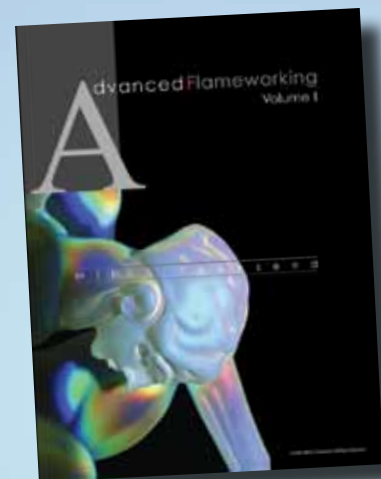
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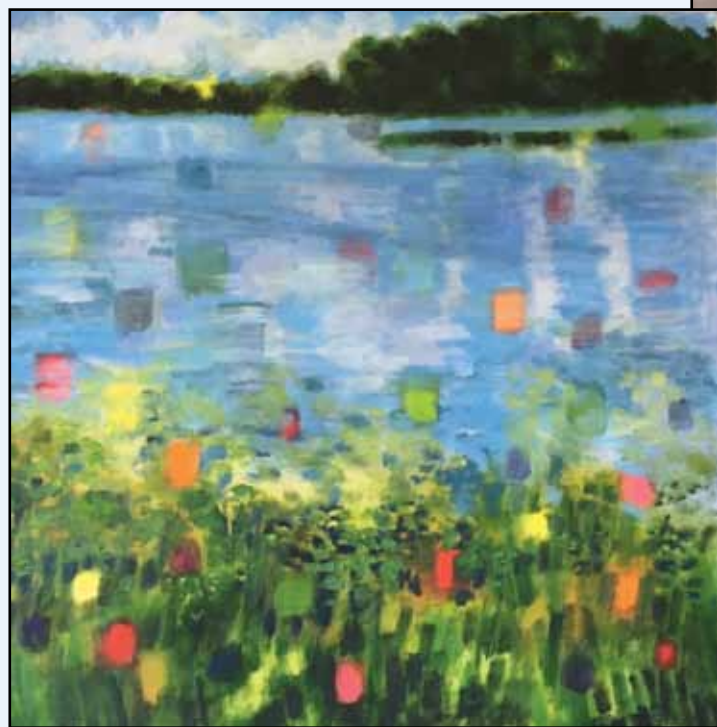
The Casting Process

To create her glass castings, Trenchard starts with a drawing that outlines both the content and form for the piece. She then off-hand sculpts interior object or figure components at the bench. Popelka and Trenchard's studio assistant, Chelsea Littman, assists with the work at the bench and with casting. Once the sculpted components have been annealed and cooled, Trenchard adds more color and detail to the sculptural object using Paradise Paints. She stockpiled a supply of Paradise that has sustained her long after the closing of the Paradise Paint Company. Don't hesitate to contact her if you have any extra paints gathering dust in your own studio!

Before casting, the artist creates wood forms of the same shape as each cast element. The wood forms are hammered into a compressed sand mixture then carefully removed, leaving a void to act as a mold for the glass. The sand mixture she uses includes a fine, sifted sand that is mixed with a small amount of bentonite and occasionally cornstarch. The bentonite helps to bind the sand, and the cornstarch acts as a resist, helping to prevent sand from sticking to the glass after casting. She uses an acetylene flame from a torch to carbonize the interior of the mold or uses spray graphite to further ensure that sand doesn't end up in the finished casting.

Once the mold is created, Trenchard focuses on creating the background color and patterning. She uses stencils made from Bristol paper and adds color by sifting glass powders over specific areas, strategically removing a stencil, sifting powder, replacing the stencil, and repeating that process until the entire base of the future casting has color.

Using a ladle, a first layer of molten glass from the furnace is poured into the sand mold. With the previous prepared interior objects sculpted and painted, they are heated



(Left to right) Stephanie Trenchard, *Soo Lake series*, oil on canvas, 36" x 36", 2017; *Soo Lake series*, oil on canvas, 20" x 24", and *Ephraim Woman*, assembled sand cast glass with inclusions, 26" x 8" x 4.5", both works 2018.

in a kiln, and the enamels are "fired" in a glory hole. The objects are then transferred from the kiln to the casting on a punty or pastorage, which is essentially a big spatula for glass, and are carefully positioned onto the first layer of glass while still molten. As long as the interior objects don't have very small components that can soften too quickly, they can be slightly repositioned. Another layer of molten glass is then poured into the mold, entirely encasing the components. Trenchard explains that this can be a tricky process, since bubbles can easily be trapped in tighter angles, and the vitreous enamel on objects that move too much can flake or bubble. Once the final pour is complete, a hand torch is used to polish the top surface of the casting, which can also serve to remove any bubbles near the surface of the glass. The finished casting is cooled slightly, removed from the mold, and transferred to an annealer. Because these castings are quite thick, annealing can take up to a week.



(Clockwise from top) Stephanie Trenchard, *Purple Path* series, oil on canvas, 36" x 36", 2018; *Business Men*, assembled sand cast glass with inclusions, 18.5" x 16.5" x 4.5", 2016; teaching in Thailand; process shot of casting one of the *Coated Women*.

Teaching in Thailand

In 2016, Trenchard and Popelka were invited to Thailand for a spectacular project. Bangkok Glass is one of the largest glass container manufacturers in Southeast Asia and has several plants throughout Thailand. They sponsor many community projects, including a soccer team, and sought to fund the construction of a fine art glass academy. The academy became BG Glass School and is now associated with Silpakorn University.

The couple was invited to help with the planning and equipment acquisition for the school and to teach the first group of students. They contracted with John Childs to build the equipment for the studio, constructed in the middle of one of the Bangkok Glass factories. Once the studio was built, they traveled to Thailand and taught the first seven students, all MFA or BFA students interested in making glass art. The eight-week glass course focused on furnace work including foundation techniques, off-hand sculpting, basic shaping, and cane work. They returned later in 2018 for an invitational exhibition as part of a glass festival at the school.

GA

Visit www.stephanietrenchardart.com and www.popelkaglass.com for more information on Stephanie Trenchard's glass art.



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Modeling Glass

A New Way to Sculpt Glass

by Lois Manno and Bob Leatherbarrow

Photography by Lois Manno

Modeling Glass, developed by Lois Manno of Glass Bird Studios, is a new and truly unique product that transforms glass powder into a smooth and firm, nonsticky, clay-like material that is easily formed and sculpted with a variety of simple tools. Manno has used it to create her signature styles—detailed and highly realistic bird feathers (Figures 1 and 2) and masks (Figure 3).


Imagine what you can do with glass that is malleable at room temperature rather than at 1500°F.

Modeling Glass (MG) is a two-part compound—a granular binder and a liquid medium. When mixed together with either Bullseye or System 96 glass powder or frit and water then kneaded, it becomes a pliable dough or clay. Easy-to-follow instructions are provided with the Starter Kit, and larger containers of the Powdered Binder and Liquid Medium are sold separately. Follow the instructions to produce a firm material that can be rolled into coils and other shapes or a flat slab. Textures imprinted onto the surface with various tools will be preserved. MG also works beautifully when pressed into silicone molds, and pops right out when dry.

The compound, which can be modified to a more fluid consistency by adding water, can be applied with a palette knife or other tool. A mixed ball of Modeling Glass can be stored for months when wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and placed in a resealable plastic bag. If the material dries out, it can be remoistened by kneading a few drops of water into the ball. Just remember that any time you are working with glass frits and powders, you need to use a respirator mask or other breathing protection.

Tips for Working with Modeling Glass

The easiest way to start working with Modeling Glass (MG) is to place a ball of it on a nonstick silicone baking mat, cover it with a sheet of plastic wrap, and roll it into a flat slab, much as you would roll out a pie crust. Resting the edges of the rolling pin on two guides made from 1/2-inch-wide strips of 3 mm glass allows you to control the thickness of the slab. Once the plastic wrap has been removed, the slab of MG can be cut into a basic shape, such as the outline for a feather (Figure 4). Other design elements, such as a quill for the feather, can be rolled out as a coil using a different color of material and added to the base of the feather shape. To ensure a firm bond between elements, brush on a thin film of water along the contact. The same process can be used to make leaves or other shapes.



(Figure 2) Two glass wild turkey feathers mounted on a piece of cedar wood. Each feather is approximately 4" long.

Next, with the moist project still on the silicone mat, place it in a kiln to dry at 200°F for a couple of hours. Drying time is determined by the thickness of the piece—the thicker the piece, the longer the drying time. Crack the kiln to release the moisture that evaporates from the MG. Once dry, the shape will easily lift off the baking mat. If it sticks firmly, the project is still damp and needs more drying time. Although by now the MG is a fairly fragile material similar to a cookie, the edges and surfaces can easily be smoothed or shaped with clay tools and sandpaper. The entire project can then be sculpted into elegantly smooth shapes with fine details.

Tack-fuse the project at 600°F per hour to 1275°F and hold for 10 minutes. This will not only harden the MG into sturdy glass but will also preserve the fine detail in the texture. Surface tension will cause any lines cut through the material to open, and the project will shrink from 15 to 20 percent. Some colors such as Bullseye Opaque White 0013 and French Vanilla 0137 may not fully mature with this schedule. Holding the temperature at 1325°F for an hour or more will help mature the colors. The more heatwork that MG receives, the more vibrant the colors will be. When MG is fired to a full fuse, the colors will fire true.



(Figure 1) A collection of fused powder feathers. The largest feather is approximately 13" long.

(Figure 3) Lois Manno, Four Seasons masks. The base of the mask is clear Tekta, and all the design elements are made with Modeling Glass, then tack-fused to the base. Each mask is mounted in a shadow box measuring 12" x 12".

Inexpensive Versatility

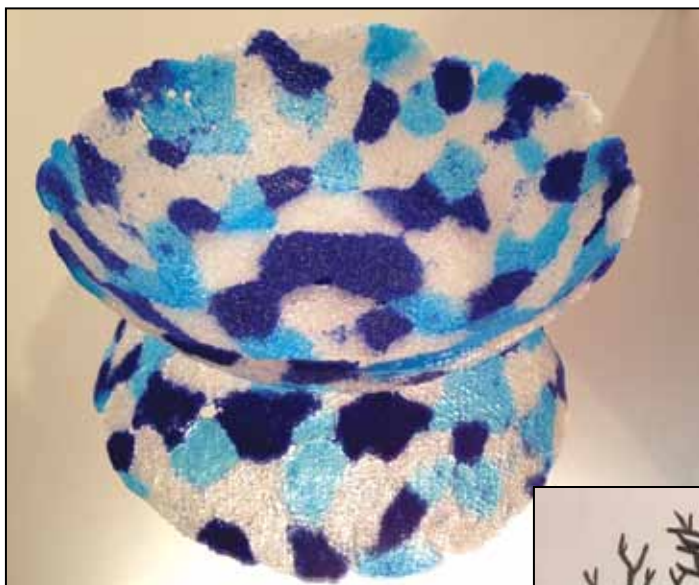
MG can be formed in many different ways using inexpensive, readily available tools and techniques that have been developed for other mediums, most notably clay. For example, it can be rolled into coils or slabs and cut into shapes, and the surface can be textured with simple clay modeling tools. The MG can be quickly textured with flexible mats or textured rollers commonly used for ceramic applications. Stacks of multicolored sheets can be compressed with a rolling pin, cut into strips, and turned on edge to form thinly striped color bands. It can be made into long rods and ribbons that can be assembled into coiled bowl shapes. MG can also be tack fused to create design elements that can be added to projects in subsequent firings (Figures 5 and 6).

Try rolling out a slab of Modeling Glass. Then once it's dried in the kiln, paint the surface with enamel paint such as Unique Glass Colors, Colors for Earth, or Fused Master. After the enamel has dried, use a pointed tool to create a sgraffito design by carving into the surface. Preshrink the painted panel of MG by firing at 600°F per hour to 1275°F and hold for 10 minutes. Place the fired panel onto two layers of 3 mm sheet glass and full-fuse, and the imagery remains exactly as designed (Figure 7). MG also works with fine frit, resulting in a dense material that can be used in interesting ways, such as creating a faux *pâte de verre* bowl (Figure 8).

After the design has been completed and fired to temperatures ranging from tack to full fuse, projects can be slumped into a final shape in conventional molds, over stainless steel draping forms, or on a pliable stainless steel screen.



(Figure 7) Sgraffito raven panel made using enamel paints over a square of unfired Modeling Glass, then full-fused onto backing glass, 6" x 6".



(Figure 8) Modeling Glass mixed with fine frit used to make a transparent 6"-wide bowl.



(Figure 5) Tree elements made with Modeling Glass, then prefired to shrink before tack fusing onto a backing panel.



(Figure 6) Lois Manno, Winter Woods at Sunset, 9" x 12".

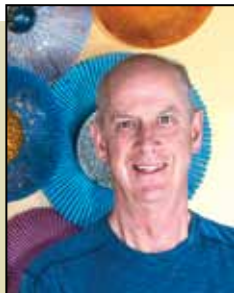


(Figure 4) A flicker feather before firing that measures approximately 3" x 17". The smaller feather next to it is an actual flicker feather.

You can find more information on Modeling Glass by visiting www.modelingglass.com. Product information including tips and FAQs, videos about mixing and making shapes, comprehensive classes, and retail sources are available on the site. There is also a Modeling Glass Facebook page. Become one of the early adopters and explore the enormous creative potential of this new way of working with glass powder and frit.

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Bob Leatherbarrow established Leatherbarrow Glass Studio in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, in 1988 and has created original kiln formed glass ever since. Known for his innovative styles, techniques, and designs, he has taken an experimental approach to developing unique textures and color palettes using glass powders. His glass bowls and sculptures explore the subtle hues and delicate beauty of naturally occurring textures and encourage the viewer to ponder their origin.



In 2008 Leatherbarrow moved his studio to Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, where he continues to make glass and write e-books on his signature techniques. He has also been a popular instructor on both the national and international kiln formed glass scenes. Visit www.leatherbarrowglass.com to learn more about his work.

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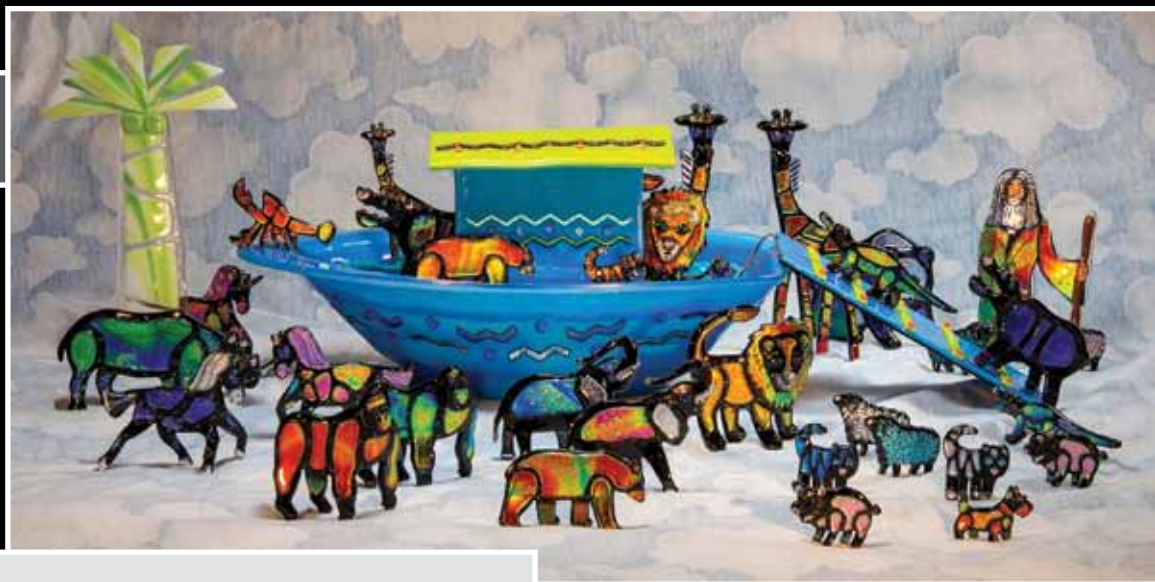
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by Dana S. Baldwin

Each year, Coatings By Sandberg (CBS) sponsors the company's Dichroic By Design contest as a way to demonstrate the unique designs that can be created using dichroic glass. Artists from all over the world submit work to be considered for inclusion in this spectacular event. CBS continues to be amazed by the skill and creativity shown by these artists, and 2018 was no exception.

CBS awarded over \$2,500 in gift certificates for CBS Dichroic glass to the first, second, and third place winners, those selected for honorable mention, and the Contest Coordinator's Choice award. We extend our sincerest congratulations to all of these exceptional artists.



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Fish Totem

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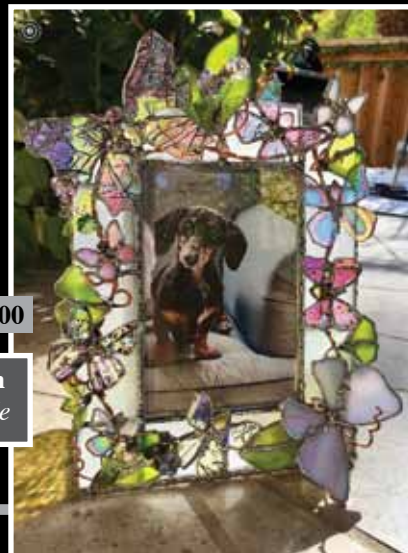
Lynne Wolfson
Mom & Dad



Jon Simpson
Lost World

Contest Coordinator's Choice, \$100

Aline Papazian
Butterflies & Me



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Linda MacNeil Fine Jewelry Designed in Glass

by Colleen Bryan

Photo of *Floral Primavera* by Michael Tropea Photography

All other photos by truslowphoto.com



Linda MacNeil is a fine jewelry designer whose work primarily emphasizes glass. Her glass elements are often set in nonprecious gold-plated metals, but even when she incorporates precious stones or metals, the luxurious material is neither the central focus of the piece nor what drives its value. “Important to me means solid design.” To each glass part she applies a variety of techniques such as kiln casting, cutting, carving, drilling, polishing, and acid polishing that render each piece of artwork unique and makes it precious.

MacNeil’s signature aesthetic is formal, classical beauty guided by a strong sense of color and bold form. Characteristically, clean lines often combine in striking geometric designs with sculptural qualities.

While decidedly contemporary, many of her pieces evoke the slightly exaggerated proportions and stylized designs of Ancient Egypt, the bright opulence and stark contrasts of art deco, or the abstractions from nature favored by modernist painters. MacNeil cites some historical precedents that influence her work—Lalique, with his use of imagery, his willingness to integrate a broad range of materials, and demonstrated mastery across that range; Cartier, with his intricate detail, elegant craftsmanship, and mechanical devices hidden inside his art objects; and Magritte, the surrealist who elevated the ordinary and questioned the expected while operating from a depth of personal understanding that MacNeil honors and seeks to emulate in her artwork.

Linda MacNeil, Primavera Necklace series, no. 68, 2016.

MacNeil introduced her first metal and glass jewelry in 1979. While her lifetime portfolio includes sculpture, architectural installations, hand mirrors, and lamps, the artist has worked exclusively on jewelry since 1990. MacNeil distinguishes herself from most contemporary jewelry designers in her use of glass as the main element in fine jewelry and in doing her own glasswork and metalsmithing, all while setting a high standard of quality and beauty in her chosen art form.

If You Want It, Make It

MacNeil entered the world of making via metalwork. An artistic family through successive generations drove home the message, “If you want it, make it.” Early enterprise saw the New Hampshire teenager making hammered belts and silver necklaces to sell at local street fairs.

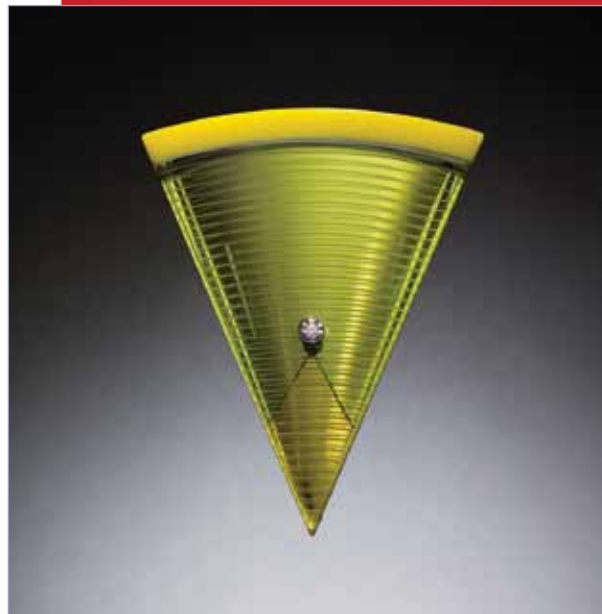
The young woman studied at the Philadelphia College of Art in Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston. She encountered glassmaking in 1972 while in art college, where she also met glass artist, teacher, and future husband Dan Dailey. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1976.

MacNeil and Dailey have been together for 45 years, guided by some advice her father gave her. “Dan was teaching a lot in those years. When I told my parents we were getting married, my dad, a machinist, told me, ‘That’s fine, but never forget to stay an individual. Don’t live your husband’s life. You’ll be a happier person if you have your own.’ That has been so important for me as a woman over the years. Dan respects that, and my kids are proud of it. We collaborate on a lot of facets of life, but the beauty of it is that Dan has his own career and I have mine.”

The couple does work in the same building, use the same equipment, and work the same types of glass. “He has employees and a business to run. I do not. I run the household. He’s good at helping, and we share tasks. He respects my career and is considerate of what I need to do to advance it. In our complex, I have my own private workbench and studio with a door where people knock before they enter. I have my own music and a table with tons of glass pieces laid out as inspiration. I walk out of that sanctuary into the main studio to share the equipment and facilities and fabricate my designs.”

The two artists share parallel interests in glass and metal. Still, when it comes to their artwork, she sees clear distinctions. “Dan’s work is all about narrative, which my work isn’t at all.”

Many artists, particularly some who work across mediums, articulate that artistry lives in the execution of a concept rather than in quality craftsmanship. MacNeil gives herself no such pass. “I got a degree in jewelry and metalsmithing, so I bring those skills in addition to glass working. Early on, I worked in ivory, ebony, plastics, and resins. Over the past 45 years I’ve mastered a broad range of glassworking techniques, and I am committed to finishing each piece with the highest level of skill. Over time, I have developed my own techniques for achieving unique colors and forms. If I haven’t mastered a material or technique that I want to use in my work, I can try to find someone who has that mastery to either advise me or make a part for me. Otherwise, I can’t make the piece. My clients expect concept, quality craftsmanship, and wearability from me. I expect it of myself.”



(Top to bottom) Linda MacNeil,
Necklace no. 140 from the Mesh series, 2013;
Necklace no. 112 from the Mesh series, 2004;
Mirrored Brooch, from the Brooch series, no. 91, 2015.

Studio Environs

MacNeil and Dailey live in an historic dairy farm complex in rural New Hampshire where people pay attention to architectural qualities and authentic renovations. They refashioned a Federal style farmhouse, horse barn, and cow barn into a home and studio. She enjoyed working with her architect grandfather, who as a young man had been on the committee to restore Williamsburg, Virginia, to assure that the renovation of their farmhouse conformed to historical design “right down to the nails.” Thirty-five years later, with endless attention to detail, it provides a satisfying and private place from which to create.

Having work and family home located together worked well, particularly in childrearing. “Both our kids, now in their late 30s, are artists, and we are all proud of what we do.”

The respect for quality and beauty, for things that are well made and for the people who make them, extends across generations of MacNeil’s family, bonds her relationship with Dailey, and reverberates through their community of collectors. “Dan and I both know a lot of the people who own our work. We’ve met them at galleries and shows over the years and see them socially or at glass functions and fairs. They give us insight about other walks of life beyond our artists’ path. We enjoy the mix.”



(Left to right) Linda MacNeil, Collar no. 24 from the Neck Collar series, 2016; Sublime from the Brooch series, no. 80., 2013; Mondrain Brooch from the Brooch series, no. 85, 2013.

Knowing One’s Clientele

MacNeil showcased the community of collectors for her fine jewelry in her book *United in Beauty: The Jewelry and Collectors of Linda MacNeil* (Schiffer Art Books, 2002). “I wanted to make a book that celebrates the women who own my jewelry. Each woman has a strong personality and is professionally secure. Most have careers and have the strong character that it takes to wear a piece of statement art on their bodies. They are proud to wear my artwork.”

Many of the collectors have come to know each other over time, and a clubby interaction develops when they come together. “I get a kick out of having an opening where six people show up wearing my pieces. Most are knowledgeable about the art world and are very clear that they are adorning themselves with one-of-a-kind art. They relate to each other, because they have similar interests.

Some of MacNeil’s clients refuse on principle to buy jewelry made of precious metals and stones, given their costs to the Earth and to third-world miners. They nonetheless are willing to pay significant prices for base materials that the artist transforms into fine jewelry.

From MacNeil’s perspective, knowing her clients means, “I’m not designing blind and not designing for trends. I do my one-of-a-kind art and follow the inspiration I find. I’m happy in this moment to have a life where I can make whatever I can think up.”

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Styles of Work

MacNeil's website catalogues seven series of necklaces, collars, and brooches that she has created since the 1980s, each of which develops in a somewhat different direction. Her series are not sequential and do not represent phases in artistic exploration. "I may make several necklaces in a series, stop altogether for 10 years, then resume it."

The artist moves between series working concurrently on different pieces, a work pattern she compares to a hummingbird darting from flower to flower. She commonly works a necklace through until she hits a wall in its design and execution, then sets it aside in a tray awaiting further inspiration. Sketchbooks help her plot composition as well as plan the material and steps that are required for each piece of jewelry. The sketchbooks also keep her organized as she moves between pieces.

Working in Series . . . Floral

MacNeil's *Floral* series is a meditation inspired by nature. Details in the jewelry suggest flowers and other plant parts or insects. A favorite example of the *Floral* series is *Primavera 98 – 2016*. "Occasionally, I am moved to invest in precious materials like gold and diamonds to make a major piece. This necklace was one such piece."

The artist engaged a diamond setter to make the parts outside her wheelhouse. "I sketched the necklace concept, including fan shaped arcs of diamonds arranged bigger to smaller. I made a brass model to give the fabricator the idea of what I wanted, including finished glass elements that I could work from cast glass. The diamond setter fabricated the pointed shapes, made the settings, and determined the size of stones we'd need. He then bought and set them. I took over after that. It was fun to work back and forth with someone else."

MacNeil had difficulty balancing the necklace to make it lie smoothly around the neck. "I couldn't get each element to flow nicely without binding. I didn't want an obvious mechanical look to the linkage. It was nearly finished when I grew frustrated and put it away for a year in disappointment. I didn't take it out again until the curator of a museum saw it sitting in a tray and told me to finish it. 'We need this in your show.'"

With that impetus, MacNeil resolved the problem with the metal linkages and completed the necklace. It has become a favorite. "I enjoy its elegance. I enjoy the funny, almost clear yellow of the center pendant, the heavy textures of the green glass leaves, and the single pop of red at its center. Color is such a deep part of my work. I made this as a showpiece just for myself, and I am not in the mood to sell it just yet."

Linda MacNeil,
Bouquet Necklace
from the *Floral*
series, no. 99, 2016.

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Working in Series . . . Mesh and Neck Collar

MacNeil's *Mesh* series was pivotal for the artist's career. This series, started in 1995, made it possible for her to make other pieces. *Mesh* was one of her most popular series, though she is not doing much work in it at present. The mesh necklace comes in different diameters and is easy to wear under a jacket. The art is the pendant, relatively less involved and quicker to make, and therefore possible to offer at a more affordable price point. "I like the design and love working with the stark contrast of the ivory and black colors. I gave *Mesh 112-04* to the Montreal Museum of Art. This is me."

The *Neck Collar* series is currently absorbing the artist. *Neck Collar 24-16* is one variation among many of the same design, rendered with different colors and characters. "This series is fun, elegant, and all about color. It is very popular. The collar is gold plated. Sandblasting gives the metal and glass surfaces a fractured look rather than shiny, glossy finishes, and the acid polishing smooths over the fractures to produce a satin look. This process pulls out the form."

"I enjoy the stationary character of the *Neck Collar* pieces. Unlike a chain or mesh, the collar stays structured and retains its form against the body. A supportive main frame provides design possibilities beyond the flexible assembly of components that make up a traditional linked necklace. The neck collars are probably my most sculptural necklaces, because functional restrictions are minimal and the format invites invention. The collar is a very simple form, making the pendant sculpturally important.

Standards of Wearability

"The purpose of jewelry is adornment. Some of my friends use the human body as staging for far-out art that I'm not sure is even jewelry anymore. My clientele and I are more conservative than that." Even with sculptural art, MacNeil strives for jewelry that adorns and complements rather than something that overpowers the wearer.

Art in jewelry requires considerable engineering for balance so that collars and pendants hold their position even as the wearer moves through life. "Scale matters. Details matter. I am an artist. My clasp has to look beautiful and work reliably and easily, so part of every design is a beautiful catch that is going to work."

The artist considers the functional demand for comfort to be as important a standard as sculptural or architectural qualities for gauging the artistic success. "My clients know what they want and what feels good." MacNeil designs her jewelry for wearability, which means that a piece must feel good to wear for an entire evening. Since glass can be heavy, she tries to lessen the weight of heavy glass and assure that edges are not vulnerable to chipping.

"I am responsible for my work, which is expensive, and people expect quality. If it doesn't function properly, my clients will return it. I am the type of person who will take the responsibility to fix it for free until it is right, and my clients trust me to do that."



(Left to right) Linda MacNeil,
Necklace No. 119 from the *Mesh* series, 2009;
Necklace No. 32 from the *Lucent Lines* series, 2008;
Necklace No. 132 from the *Mesh* series, 2012.

Releasing Work

Throughout her career, MacNeil worked with a handful of craft galleries to show and sell her work. They hosted events for guest lists that grew steadily over 40 years. In 2008, shifts in the gallery sector tumbled that model. These days, name recognition accounts for most of MacNeil's commissions. To keep visibility, she attends annual SOFA and other big shows a few times a year and looks for opportunities to mount solo and museum shows.

The artist's works are in the permanent collections of more than two dozen of the world's premier art museums across the country and on four continents. In 2001 MacNeil staged a retrospective of her work at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, resulting in the *United in Beauty* book. The Museum of Glass (MOG)

in Tacoma, Washington, featured a retrospective on her work as its first exhibition of jewelry in 2016. She is currently negotiating a show of current work with another museum that is tentatively scheduled for 2021.

Now MacNeil is working madly to fulfill commissions from the Tacoma show. "Five concurrent commissions are really quite a lot for me. I work with my clients to accommodate the needs and wishes of each person regarding fit, colors, approval, and drawings. I send them pictures of models and sometimes travel to meet them to try on a prototype."

This individualized approach to commissions drives high satisfaction among MacNeil's clients and can be essential from the artist's standpoint. "My *Elements 41-05* design was exciting and stressful to make."

The design itself looks simple—two concentric circles of 18K gold crusted with tiny diamonds, with polished clear glass studs arrayed at uniform intervals. "The client is exacting, able, and used to spending as much as she wants to get whatever she wants. After approving mock-ups and models all along, she changed diameters at the last minute and wanted it shorter. But there was no way to go in, as one might with a hanging necklace, to shorten or lengthen the chain. It had to be completely reconstructed, and in my world, there is no such thing as adding charges for change orders. It was scary!"

The artist manages such pressure by knowing her clients from the collector community and never asking for a deposit. "All my clients are very patient, realizing that it is only me making this work. I try to stay communicative, but I want to be free to work without a deadline."

MacNeil's goal with each piece is always "to make something unusual—a construction that pushes my concept further with each piece. It is an active process, deliberative, sometimes taking years before I consider a piece to be resolved. Ultimately, I intend my pieces to be artistically significant within the context of my art and in relation to the historical works I find inspiring."

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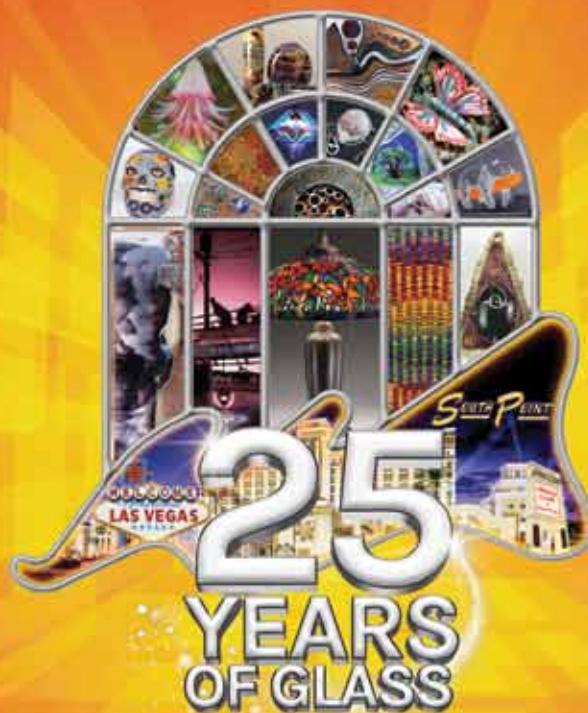
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So You're Going To Be a Stained Glass Man

Words of Wisdom from Joep Nicolas

Third generation Dutch stained glass artist Joep Nicolas (1897–1972) learned his artistry while working in the studio founded by his grandfather Frans in 1855. Considered to be the father of modern stained glass, Nicolas received his first in a long line of awards for *St. Martin of Tours Dividing His Cloak* created for the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. To escape the ravages of World War II, the artist and his family emigrated to New York City in December 1939, and within a few months the artist had won great acclaim for an exhibition of his work in Orrefors Galleries.

By 1941 Nicolas was creating freelance work for Rambusch Decorating Company and had fulfilled commissions throughout the United States by the time he returned to the Netherlands in the late 1950s. He created his distinctive work by painting directly on the glass without using traditional cartoons, giving his windows a refreshing freedom. His daughter Sylvia, who worked alongside her father for many years, completed his final commission of 13 windows for The Church of St. Pancratius in Tubbergen, Netherlands. The church, which already held windows created by her great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and cousin, now has windows by Sylvia and her son Diego Semprun Nicolas as well.

My mentor Dick Millard always liked to see this letter by Nicolas printed periodically. It reminds us why we work in this incredible medium. Read it for the first time or re-inspire yourself with it.

Tony Glander, President, American Glass Guild

The following is a letter by Joep Nicolas reprinted by permission from an article in the Fall 1984 issue of Stained Glass Quarterly.



Sylvia Nicolas, *Untitled*, 22" x 16".

Photos of Sylvia Nicolas work by Kathy Jordan

What on earth made you decide to embrace this craft? I never decided to become a stained glass artist. I studied law and philosophy, but I got involved in this career probably by atavism and circumstance. I've been swept on by an affluence of commissions, and looking backward, I still cannot understand why Providence decided, or even tolerated, that I should make all these square miles of glass windows. But then I know other fellows, quite prominent in the field, who started out as cabaret dancers, as jazz players, or bellhops. Those, just like myself, are the doomed ones—or call it the chosen ones—who apparently had no alternative.

But you, my dear? You could be a politician or a salesman or an insurance broker or anything. Why then a stained glass man? I can only visualize two valid reasons: (1) because you like the idea of engaging yourself in this most poetic activity, or (2) because you do not like the way stained glass is made nowadays and you want to go about it in a different way.

The first reason testifies to a romantic predisposition, the second to a nonconformist mind. Neither one nor the other characteristic alone would suffice to make you achieve greatness, so I hope you have both and subscribe to reason number one as well as to reason number two. That classifies you among the romantic revolutionaries, who are dangerous in politics, inadmissible in the business world, but quite valuable in art.

They are the people who, out of a vague veneration for ancient sacred glories, would like to overthrow the triteness of the present, the hollow formulas, the platitudes, the compromises between pseudo intellectualism and profit motives. They are the ones who will put up a fight even for a lost cause, for a magnificent folly, those who can take it when a smart guy tells them they are in the wrong racket. But they will have to carry with them these two seemingly opposed elements throughout life—the ideal of ever escaping, ever receding beauty and the clear vision of the possibilities and oppor

tunities to realize this ideal—if not in entirety, then at least partially. They must be dreamers as well as critics. They must be poets as well as debunkers of hollow phrases, subjective visionaries as well as sober appraisers of objective conditions and human reactions.

If they are only romantic dreamers, you may find them weeping over the intended beauty of their own mediocre products. If they are only revolutionary modernists, they will pride themselves on daring exploits that bypass purpose, and history soon will deflate their boisterous products.

You will hear some dreamers talk about dripping jewels and symphonies in color only to discover that their jewels look like a gaudy platter of assorted jellies, and their symphonies might be more akin to the appalling chant of a calliope. Others will talk about the purity of the craft, which should subsist on rigid lines and primary colors, which should go back to elementary or stylized forms, banning all pictorial or literary elements. You will find them in contemplation before their straightedge saints, their slipcover simplifications, their

ecstatically gesticulating robots, executed in neon sign colors, all of which constitute an already well-worn convention of not-so-new modernism.

Of course, there are also dreamers who think that they perpetuate and constantly revive the old traditions of centuries about which they have some crooked notions. They will sell you a quick-frozen Chartres with politely sterilized faces from Elizabeth Arden, or else they might emulate more heroic styles with bearded bogeymen attired in nondescript drapes, hangings, and tablecloths. You will also find that they express themselves repetitiously in a host of symbols, which nobody asks for but which people will accept readily because there was some space left.

Besides these wide-eyed dreamers of many varieties I must mention the solid sleepers, who by the law of inertia and of least resistance go on producing, while they sleep, that kind of window that might be called the common denominator of all the values least stirring, least discussable, and least noticeable. These people are not dangerous; don't quarrel with them. They are nice fellows. They attend conventions, sing the praise of the craft, quoting and misquoting great poets. Then they return to their comfortable beds, which are supported by their "libraries" or "archives" chiefly made up out of thousands of devotional images of French or Italian extraction and widely peddled by Barclay Street. They excel in sweet faces, and I do not know why they remind me of morticians revamping the "beloved face" and arranging dignified funerals.

My poor young friend, what should you do now that you have heard all these diatribes? What can you do without ranging yourself in one of these derided categories of dreamers and sleepers? Please laugh about my bitterness and do what you like to do.

Tomorrow I might go about making something that a well-meaning person inadvertently will call dripping jewels. Many times I have enjoyed hearing people rave about the splendid colors in one of my windows, which in reality was a monochrome grisaille painting. I also was happy sometimes making pure windows with nothing but a few pieces of pot metal and some strips of lead, and not a bit of paint. Although I do not believe in stylizing or simplifying, I know that style and simplicity are essentials of any work of art. But style is different from willfully enforced stylization, and simplicity is the contrary of simplification. This simplification business is rather a yearning of the entangled and inhibited mind, frequently coupled with inadequate draftsmanship.

Enough now of all the things that are not so good. After all of this you have a right to ask me for some positive directions—and here they come.

First of all, even I subscribe to this dusty adage: "The art of stained glass must be a handmaiden of architecture." Dusting it off for everyday use, I interpret it as follows: Never spoil a building by making a window that is too noticeable and looks heterogeneous or too self-advertising. This is a limitation put on your creative and subversive instincts, especially because your services are seldom called for in quite modern buildings. Mostly you will be submitted the plans of an edifice—and let it be a church, for that matter—that even in modernized version recalls some historic style.



Sylvia Nicolas, Untitled, 18" x 12".

Now, you don't have to consult nooks and find an exact affinity. You do not have to ape windows of that certain style. Go at it with an open mind. See first how much you can subdue the light without obliging the people to pray in the dark or to sit forever with artificial illumination. If you make them too light, you err equally.

Determine the right medium and study the scale—the distances in the space. Do not cram too-large figures in the openings. Decide how much you can do and how rich you can go for the allotted remuneration. From the beginning you must plan the engineering of your execution. This may influence the character of your composition. There are ways and means of saving on labor in order to spend on the meaning and grace of your product. A resourceful mind can say much with little. And in the matter of color, old Mr. Goethe may be quoted: "In der Beschrankung zeigt sich erst der Meister," which means, "Only in moderation is mastery."

Now, here is a general rule that goes for all windows, no matter if they are rich in color or if they are severe and nearly monochrome or they have a lot of painting or are sober and simple in treatment. What counts is the harmony of contrasting values.

Too many equivalent values will destroy each other. Space your heavy elements and weigh them out against lighter ones, be it in colors, matting, or even in lead concentrations. It is an error also to make windows in which all the pieces of glass are approximately the same size. The interest starts by contrast of small scraps against large slabs. A window with nothing but tints is bloodless. A colored window without some whites is choked to death.

I do not care if you use perspective, but it never should look like reality. Your perspective can only be admitted if it fits into the underlying abstract composition in such a way that the window goes on in its overall rhythm—having as it has in the first. The perspectival elements should be highly arranged and skillfully used as bidimensional divisions of the surface.

Don't be afraid to tell a story, but tell it in the right measure and fit it into the stresses that divide and uphold your surface. You may sometimes go into great detail, but all the detail must be subordinated to the equilibrium of unequal values. It never should disturb the harmony of the great volumes.

Your subject matter must be a pretext for composing, and expression must never disrupt composition. This requires good draftsmanship. If you have to worry over a face or a hand or drapery, your composition is threatened. On the other hand, your composing ability must be instinctive and spontaneous. Otherwise you might willfully distort your figures just to force them into the arabesque you are striving for. You see, in between all these abysses you have to perform like a tightrope walker—don't fall to the left, don't fall to the right, but go straight ahead. If you are afraid, you certainly will fail. You've got to acquire great ease and grace. Nobody is interested in your audacity nor in your fear. Work and work and try to be a well-balanced human being. The qualities of mind and heart will put their mark on your work.



(Left to right, Sylvia Nicolas, *Untitled*, 18" x 12"; *Untitled*, 15" x 10".





Joep Nicolas, Untitled, window mock-up, 13" x 8" (each panel).

This is a proud program, my friend. If you feel like living up to it, be welcome, then join us in the limbo of forgotten artists and artisans. That's what I call it, for we know that in a mechanized world we are serving a lost cause. We are working our heads off, and none of us will achieve fame or fortune. Someday you may create a gorgeous set of windows for a new church. The Building Committee puts out a nice booklet, in which your windows are even reproduced. The names of everybody are proudly displayed—the architect, the contractor, the salesman of every part and detail. But do not look for *your* name. You did not sell these windows; you only made them. So what? Would you prefer to be a lawyer, a politician, a banker, or for that matter, a salesman of stained glass windows? Let them have their particular brand of fame and fortune. If you love your craft, if you love to work at it, honestly and devotedly, there will be in your life more beauty, more joy, and more poetry than in the tortuous existence of a movie star. So you've got to do it for this motive alone, because your predisposition fits into a handicraft, which is a far greater art than many more pretentious ways of self-expression. Clean of plutocratic desires in the midst of a plutocratic world of publicity maniacs, you've got to be an anonymous, not-so-well-paid stained glass man—not for fame, not for money, not for any form of recognition, but just because you cannot help loving it.

GA

Joep Nicolas.

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Celebrate Glass, an Historic Conference AGG and SGAA Together in Texas

by Tony Glander

The 14th annual 2019 American Glass Guild Conference has a great twist to it! For the first time, the American Glass Guild (AGG) and the Stained Glass Association of America (SGAA) are joining together in San Antonio, Texas, June 3–5, 2019, with pre-conference classes on June 1 and 2. This historic conference will be a great opportunity for members of both organizations to network alongside their shared interest in stained glass. Conference hosts Jack Whitworth, Bryant Stanton, and Cynthia Courage have been working hard to organize an incredible event that will not only have everything AGG members have come to enjoy at a conference, but even more through networking opportunities with the SGAA.

Cynthia Courage shared: “The presenters and guests that we have lined up for our amazing event are diversified and very dynamic. The schedule of events is emerging with professionals and artists from around the planet coming to attend. The energy that is building within both organizations is exciting and thrilling. We know that this event will be historic, but mostly it will be a group of extremely talented people all in one place at the same time. This type of momentum means that anything is possible, artist’s dreams will be expanding, and relationships will be forged. It will be fun!” With all of these plans in place, it’s easy to understand why the slogan for the conference is “Celebrate Glass.”



Helen Whittaker and Keith Barley at Helen's studio in York. Photo by Kathy Jordan.



Educational Opportunities

Both organizations will be working hard on the annual scholarship auction to provide scholarship funds for both the AGG and the SGAA. The American Glass Guild Auction is the sole source of support for the James C. Whitney Scholarship Fund, which has awarded over 100 scholarships thus far to worthy recipients, many of whom have traveled nationally and internationally, allowing them to hone their skills and expand their knowledge. Items in the auction range from books to tools and, of course, original stained glass panels from some of today’s best artists. The bidding in the silent auction tends to be civil, but the live auction is traditionally spirited and much laughter takes place. Knowing that each organization uses these funds to encourage the education of stained glass practices keeps everyone motivated.

*Cynthia Courage panel in honor of the 2019 joint AGG/SGAA conference.
Photo by Tony Glander.*



David Fode panel, Praying Mantis.
Photo by Tony Glander.

The members' exhibition will take place at the hotel where the events will be held. Sixteen panels from each organization will be on display throughout the conference. Last year's AGG exhibition included work from Hallie Monroe, David Fode, Amy Valuck, and Cynthia Courage. The Courage panel was in honor of the 2019 joint conference including a dichroic skyline of San Antonio. Valuck's panel included traditional stained glass art incorporating fused glass elements. The combination of both organizations will make this year's exhibition truly amazing.

An incredible array of workshop opportunities has been arranged for June 1–2. Nationally noted artist Gail Stouffer will be opening her studio to the conference with a workshop on incorporating graphics in fused glass. For attendees who like high tech, White Cloud Drones and Jules Mominee will be offering an intensive day entitled "Drones and Documentation in the Field." This class promises to be fun as well as educational. Workshops still being developed at this writing focus on glassblowing, kiln casting, and traditional glass painting. Instructors for these workshops are always selected from the best in the industry for their talent as well as their enthusiasm.

Renowned Speakers

This year's speakers bring their extensive knowledge and experience to the stage. Mary Clerkin Higgins will be presenting a talk about a recent restoration project, and the ever-entertaining Ken Leap will be discussing his incredible research that has been focusing on glass enamels. Leap will also discuss a college program he instructs at Bryn Athyn College where students learn and create incredible stained glass.

Three well-known architectural glass artists will also share their insights at the conference. Helen Whittaker, creative director at Barley Studio, York, is a renowned artist and designer who is highly regarded for her new stained glass windows and architectural sculpture in glass and copper. She will be presenting a talk on her inspirational work.

Laurel Porcari's full-time focus for over a decade has been on large-scale commissions. Busy creating both private and public pieces, her work is featured in the permanent collections of New York's Montefiore Medical Center, Baylor University Medical Center, and more. She will discuss her fused glasswork, from gallery pieces to large-scale installations. In addition, Laurie Wells from Old World Stone will be talking about modern stone repair in today's architecture.

Demonstrations, Auctions, Awards, and Tours

Also planned for the conference are a number of demonstrations. Sasha Zhitneva, an award-winning designer and artist who has worked creatively with glass since 1995, studied in Russia, Spain, and the United States. She will show the techniques and tricks that go into her fused glasswork.

Vic Rothman worked at the Greenland Studio before opening his own studio in 1991. Over the years he has worked on a number of Tiffany and La Farge window restorations and will demonstrate restoration techniques, including proper reinforcement practices. Tony Glander will also share fused glass techniques and discuss adding a layer of dichroic coating to lend extra flare to stained glass work.

Throughout Monday and Tuesday, attendees will have the opportunity to bid on an assortment of classes, tools, glass, and incredible stained glass panels that are all part of a scholarship fundraising auction to benefit both the AGG and the SGAA. The fun goes on into Tuesday night, when a number of pieces will be offered as part of a live auction that promises laughter and applause. Tuesday evening will also host the traditional awards banquet, where the leaders in the industry are recognized with the appreciation they deserve.

Stained glass tours will be offered on Wednesday. With San Antonio being such a great walkable city, it offers a number of sites available to those who wish to simply stroll the town. There will also be a bus tour to the best work that the San Antonio area has to offer.

If you have an appreciation for stained glass, there is no better event than this conference. Not only will it celebrate glass, but it will also offer attendees a chance to network as well as get inspired and educated with the best and most dedicated stained glass leaders in America today.

GA

Visit www.americanglassguild.org for more information on becoming an American Glass Guild member and be sure to attend this great conference.

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CS-5630 Dimensions

- Exterior with top closed: 70 ½" W x 53" D x 52" H
- Exterior with top raised: 70 ½" W x 63" D x 76" H
- Interior: 56" x 30" x 17" (15 ½" deep when measuring from quartz tube surface)
- Flat load floor, 30" from ground level

Introducing the Paragon CS-5630 clamshell kiln with quartz tubes

Deluxe quartz tubes

Imagine the huge glass pieces you could make inside the new Paragon CS-5630. Enjoy complete access to your artwork from the sides and front. Add delicate stringers or frit without having to move the shelf into the kiln later.

The roof elements are protected in 10 quartz tubes for a cleaner kiln interior. There is less dust in the kiln, because there are no element grooves in the top.

Heat from the top, walls, and floor

The CS-5630 is 56" x 30" x 17" high. With elements in the floor, walls, and roof, you will enjoy unsurpassed heat distribution. The digital controller uses Power Ratio technology to vary the heat output between the top and bottom elements.

Extra insulation and woven gasket

Lift the kiln top section with handles in the front and sides and with assistance from gas springs. The roof is 3" thick ceramic fiber, and the walls are 3" firebrick backed by 1" of ceramic fiber board (4" of total wall thickness). The extra insulation helps to maintain even temperatures. A woven gasket between the kiln top and floor helps to hold in the heat. The floor

surface is a convenient 30" high from ground level. The 4 ½" thick firebrick floor includes two expansion joints.

Watch the glass through 2" x 3" peep-holes mounted in the left and right sides. The kiln includes locking casters.

Motorized vent for firing molds

If you fire molds, you will welcome the motorized Orton Vent Master, which is mounted in the back wall of the kiln. The vent, mounted on rubber isolators to prevent vibration, removes moisture from the kiln to reduce rust. The vent is standard on the CS-5630 and plugs into an auxiliary output in the back of the kiln. This allows you to turn on the vent through the digital controller.

Low maintenance

Deluxe, long-lasting mercury relays are standard. Gain convenient access to the electrical components by removing a single panel. The kiln includes access panels for replacing quartz tubes.

Rugged

The CS-5630 is the very picture of ruggedness. A ledge in front of the kiln protects the brick floor from damage caused by leaning into the kiln. The digital controller is mounted away from the

heat for long life. The kiln base is welded from 2" x 2" steel tubing; the upper kiln frame is welded from 1" x 1" steel tubing.

Optional touch screen controller

Order your CS-5630 with the optional Sentinel Smart Touch controller. The Sentinel can check the voltage and amperage and can be programmed with easy-to-follow screen descriptions.



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