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Lee Harris

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Above: Amanda Simmons,  
detail of *What's Your Position?*

Photo by Shannon Tofts.

On the cover:

Lee Harris, *Green Murrine Sea Turtle*.

Graphic Design by Triple Graphics.

Photo by Bart Harris Photography.

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## LEE HARRIS, GLASS SCULPTOR

### *Loving the Spirit of the Glass*

*Lee Harris, Elegante, large-scale green sea turtle, 28" x 26" x 16".*

*Made as a tribute to Glass Maestro Elio Quarisa.*

*Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by Bart Harris.*

*by Vicki Schneider*

**M**any artists develop intimate relationships with their medium. In the case of sculptor Lee Harris, glass is his best friend. He lives and breathes glass from the moment he gets up in the morning until he goes to sleep at night.

“One hundred per cent of my time, my mind is processing, creating, and working in glass,” explained Harris. “When I wake up in the morning, I think about glass. I think about what I want to make

next. I start making notes about how I’m going to approach the next piece, because a lot of it is just my own will and my own approach. Throughout the day, I’m thinking about glass even though I may be talking about other things. Then in the evening, I’m drawing. When I’m going to bed, I think about physically handling glass and gathering it at the glory hole. My mind is focused on glass one hundred percent of the time.”

## Inspiration and Focus

Harris' relationship with glass is a spiritual journey. The people he's met in his life inspire him, especially the maestros who are still with us and the blessings he feels from those who have passed on, but he believes his real teacher and guiding light is the spirit of the glass itself.

"Everything around me inspires me. I feel like I'm channeling the spirits of other glass maestros that I love. Something bubbles out that's completely different. It's almost like a third person is making this work in front of me through my hands."

While Harris is never lacking vision, his challenge is keeping his ideas contained. "I found fairly early on that it wasn't the case of what I wanted to do within glass or sculpting. It was more a case of staying focused, because the world of glass is so endless. There are so many directions you could go. I just keep bringing myself back to the center line. I created my own guardrails of sculpting."

During his first 10 years, Lee sculpted only sea life such as fish, stingrays, sea horses, turtles, and octopi. As he introduced other animals and larger pieces, his sculptures became increasingly difficult to design and execute, especially because none of his work is glued. All of Lee's work is done hot at the furnace with his team of three to six assistants.

"As soon as I open the furnace door," Lee reflects, "I feel like my best friend in the world is right there. It really is a living spirit. Molten glass is not a passive, inorganic thing. It's an organic, illuminating conglomerate of all life on earth. It's made of our ancestors and contains all the spirits on earth. Glass is made of calcium and iron, plus all the organics and inorganics in your blood and your skin and your bones. Everything that is in that shovel of dirt that we take and melt becomes glass. Once I open the furnace door, all the ideas come to me and I feel like I'm with my best friend who's going to guide me through it."



*Lee Harris, Hope, 10" x 8" x 6" each.  
Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by Bart Harris.*

From an artistic perspective, Harris' central goal is to infuse joy into his pieces. "When I sculpt a fish, dolphin, or rhinoceros, I'm not trying to make perfect work. I'm trying to imbue the personality of the creature within it. I'll add subtle things like crow's feet or gesturing in the face, lips, and corners of the cheeks. There are different aspects of any creature that give it that twinkle in the eye and its personality."

When one speaks with Harris, his enthusiasm and passion are palpable. That energy was overpowering until he taught himself to consciously and deliberately slow down. "When I gather the glass and I start to watch it and listen to it, when I'm more patient with it and I slow myself down, breathing and relaxing and taking time before I make my moves, I've found that the glass responds positively to me. I really feel it guides me where it wants to go, how it wants to be. It's what Elio Quarisa used to say to me about loving the spirit of the glass and trusting the spirit of the glass. I learned over time that glass knows when you love it more than life itself."



(Left to right) Lee Harris, *The Hunt*, solid sculpted hammerhead sharks, 20" x 10" x 12". Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by Bart Harris; Polpo d'Oro, hot assembled, diamond wheel cold worked colossal octopus on glass coral, 32" x 18" x 18". Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by ImagineLIKE.

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## Sculpting for Future Generations

Since Lee's childhood, he's had a fascination with nature and a deeply felt sensitivity to the tenuous existence of all species. A painful feeling in his heart drove him to sculpt endangered animals. According to Harris, the permanence, brilliance, and beauty of the glass make it the perfect medium in which to capture vanishing nature. Lee has committed himself to making the most beautiful work he can so future generations might experience long-lost species and become more sensitive to the plight of endangered animals.

"Glass is more permanent than bronze or iron. Unless you drop it, there's no shelf life to glass. Five-thousand-year-old Phoenician glass looks like it was made yesterday. If I'm going to sculpt in glass, I've got to make the most beautiful work I can make, because what I'm making is permanent."

Harris isn't motivated to sculpt for economic reasons. Although it would be nice to sell his work, he's not passionate about finding venues or diverting his energy away from creating. He sculpts for the joy of doing the work and expressing himself. Between his Chicago, Illinois, studio/home, a former stained glass factory, and his Los Angeles, California, home and studio, he has stored over 350 completed works. He thinks a place like the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago would be a perfect location to house an installation of his sea life sculptures and hopes that one day it will come true, but in the meantime, he's not going to let sales and marketing activities distract him.

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Lee Harris, *Against the Tide*, bronze turtle on blue and green sculpted and embossed glass coral base, 10" x 5" x 5".  
Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by Bart Harris.



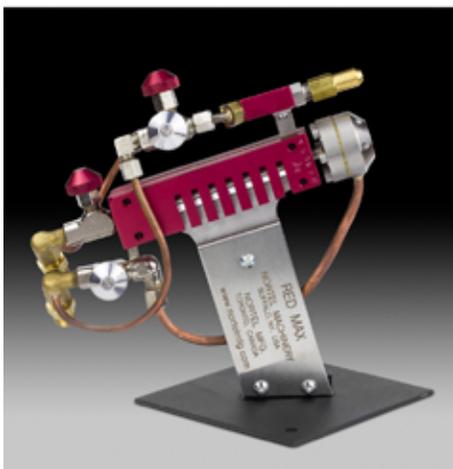
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## Life before Glass

Historically, Harris earned his income in real estate development, an interest that pairs his fascination with architecture and art with his passion for glass. He speaks glowingly about the architectural gems in Lincoln Park and Wrigleyville, two formerly blighted Chicago neighborhoods in which he built his successful real estate company.

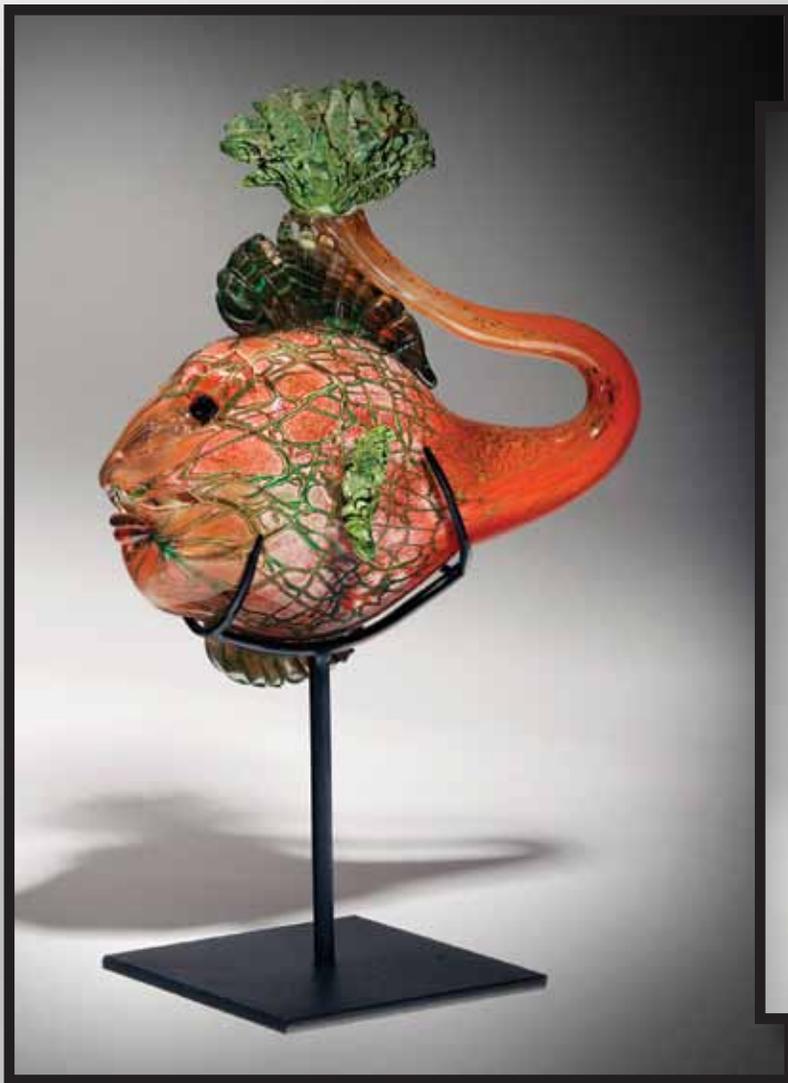
During his first two years selling real estate, Harris worked six days a week and reportedly called or met 120 people a day. He loved interacting with people and learning about their stories, joys, and aspirations. "The key was having everyone joyful, finding the right people, and matching them up to the right buyer. When the prime interest rate rose to 28 per cent, it caused me to creatively solve clients' financial pressures and challenges." Continuing to build relationships throughout that challenging time set the stage for the overwhelming influx of business he experienced once interest rates receded. Once that happened, business was so intense, he needed help. He reached out to his friends and developed a sales team whom he taught to sell. Lee created Lee Harris Realty, a company distinguished by its camaraderie and focus on the needs of its customers.

After 17 years of working at the incredible pace of seven days a week, day and night, Lee and his wife started exploring alternatives. Since the age of eight, Harris had wanted to be an artist. Then in his forties, after exceeding his business goals, he gave himself permission to finally pursue his spiritual goals in sculpting.

Harris' first foray into the arts was metalsmithing. "I always loved Tiffany and Galle," Lee recalls. "That was a fundamental love since I was a little kid. I started envisioning that I could make pieces like the bronze bases and sculptures of Galle and Tiffany." He studied metalworking and bronze casting under a very nurturing instructor at Lillstreet Art Center in Chicago and found that he loved it. At an age when some people start thinking about retiring, he was starting over. He worked with metals from 1993 to 2000, when he and his family took a seminal trip to Murano, Italy.



(Left to right) Lee Harris, Baby Hippo, orange and purple crackle on blown glass, 11" x 6" x 6". Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by ImagineLIKE; Born of Nature, cracked green and red pod with Black and Aventurine Gold sculpted head, 15" x 8" x 10". Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by Bart Harris.



## A Life Changing Visit

While in Murano, the Harris family visited CAM Furnaces. After buying some of Maestro Pino Signoretto's work, Harris and his wife watched a glassworker at the furnace. Not inhibited by his own total lack of hands-on glass experience, Harris asked Adriano Poletti, the manager, if he could assist the maestro. With great diplomacy, Poletti explained that their insurance and unions wouldn't permit that. Lee responded, "That's fine." Then to his wife's shock, Lee confidently added, "But I'm going to come back one day, and I'm going to work at *this* furnace!" Years later, not only did Harris return, but he assisted the legendary Signoretto, and to add to his joy, he proudly invited Poletti to watch him.

"From the first moment I saw molten glass being transformed at the furnace, I was obsessed with watching the maestro. I would constantly watch videos—anything I could get on the Internet. To this day, I watch different people work or look at glass. When I'm not sculpting glass, I'm looking at old pieces, new pieces, shards, broken pieces. I can go into a studio anywhere and spend hours just looking at the pieces on the ground and admiring the ways that the powders and colors interact and the effects that they create."

When Harris returned to the States, he found the only place in Chicago where one could study hot glass was through a program offered by the Art Institute of Chicago. Lee signed up for a series of weekend classes with Lance Friedman and recalls, "As soon as I started, I felt like I was home."

Left to right) Lee Harris, Spirit of San Miguel DeAllende Fantail Hipster, green and orange crackle, 18" x 19" x 4"; Scipione Borghese, Man of Peace, black powder with silver leaf, 20" x 14" x 10. Dedicated to Medici Pope of the Renaissance. Graphic designs for both by Triple Graphics. Photos by Bart Harris.

## Firebird Community Arts

Harris currently spends half of his time in Chicago and half in Los Angeles. While in Chicago, he works out of Firebird Community Arts in the East Garfield Park neighborhood and plays an active role in its programs. Firebird Community Arts, previously called Project FIRE, combines glassblowing, mentoring, career, and leadership opportunities for youth injured by violence. Its holistic program provides trauma psychoeducation, case management, and medical treatment to 18 youths per session. They primarily offer hot glass instruction, with additional programs in ceramics, stained glass, and lampworking. At some point Lee became more and more involved in teaching these young people and was inspired by them and their stories.

Harris feels very strongly about his involvement with Firebird Community Arts and the promising youth who participate in its programs. "It became part of my love. To a great extent, my life led to this point where I can use my art to help effect positive change."

## Future Plans

All one has to do is speak with Harris to be consumed by his enthusiasm and passion for glass. His outgoing personality, positive attitude, and knowledge would make him an excellent instructor, and that's exactly what he wants to do. He's had a few opportunities in the past, but not nearly enough. If Harris has his way, his future will include many exciting teaching adventures in which he will tell, show, guide and, as he says, "unguide" his students. He hopes to open their imaginations so they can approach glass as the limitless, enduring medium he sees it as being. Lee also hopes to connect Firebird Community Arts with the Los Angeles area where primarily inner-city kids will have opportunities to explore glass and its life changing powers.

"I just can't stop. I approach each day with a hunger, embracing the unknown with the confidence that if I submit to its vagaries, I will learn and thrive. As long as I'm alive, I'll be sculpting glass with my last breath." One can only hope that eventuality is many years and many awe inspiring creations in the future. **GA**



(Left to right) Lee Harris, *Ascension*, pair of life-size green sea turtles with LED Lite glass on 5' iron stand, 5.5' x 36" x 36". Graphic design by Triple Graphics. Photo by ImagineLIKE; using the 3000°F oxy/propane torch for the finishing touches on the green sea turtle flippers. Photo by Bart Harris.



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*Vicki Schneider follows the tradition of Venetian frameworking artists to produce decorative solid and blown glass art. Mainly working off-hand in COE 104 soft glass, she is inspired by her childhood spent on the Jersey shore. Her current bodies of work include Mama's Garden, composed of lifelike blown and solid flowers, and Childhood, vignettes celebrating the innocence of youth.*

*In 2009, Schneider opened Expressive Glass, her teaching studio in Buffalo, New York, to share her passion for glass with novice and skilled glassworkers. Since 2006, the artist has introduced more than 500 students to the magic of glass art and has studied with and hosted many of the world's most respected artists. Learn more about Vicki's work and her studio at [www.expressiveglass.com](http://www.expressiveglass.com).*



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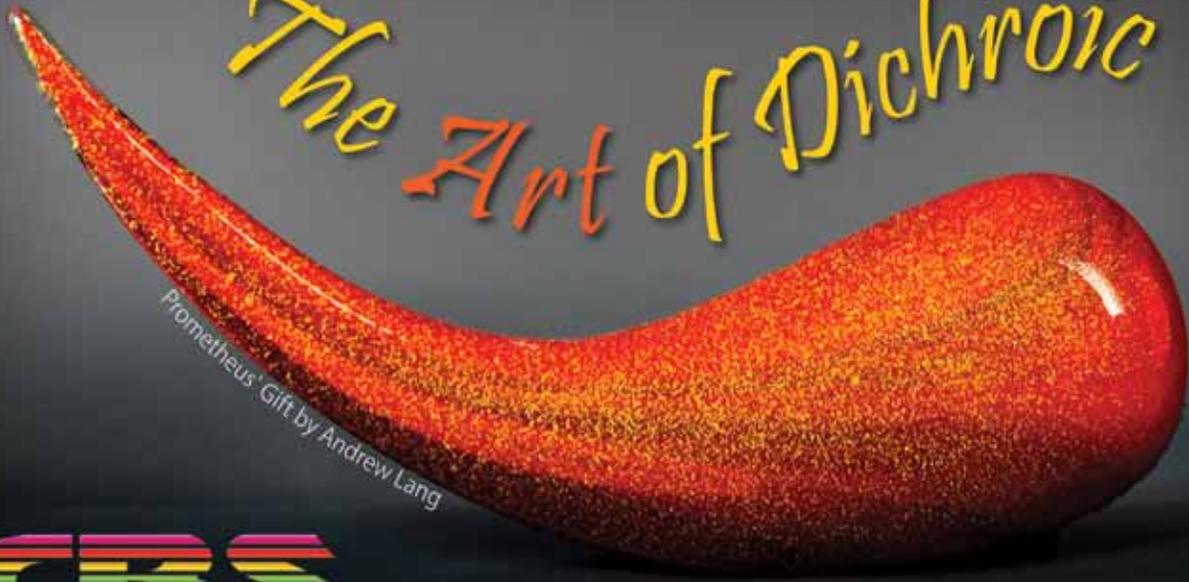
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# Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart Capturing Fairy Tales in Classic Venetian Goblet Forms

by Sara Sally LaGrand

Where does creative thought originate? It was often believed that it comes from the right side of the brain, not the left. Stimulus in the hippocampus? I don't know. Scientists engrossed in research are changing such age-old assumptions, but since I approach science in a "Bill Nye the Science Guy" kind of way, I can't answer that. What I do know is that creativity, inspiration, and the ability to bring it to fruition provide an easy kind of flow for some. It seems that way for partner artists, Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart.



## Beginning a Collaborative Adventure

After a chance meeting at a glassblowing class where Karina was the teaching assistant and Cédric a student, this creative couple waited five years before finally beginning their collaboration, which is now buzzing along at year 12. She is Canadian, and he is French—not French Canadian but really from France.

“Our aesthetics and backgrounds were really different. Even the glass we were using was different,” says Guevin.

“Finally we started making pieces that were completing each other’s work. Later we found a way to combine our forces to create a common aesthetic that is fun, interesting, and challenging for both of us.” And what a force of nature they have become.



(Left to right) Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart, Three Little Pigs, 42" x 10" x 10"; Queen of Hearts, 50" x 10" x 10". All created from flameworked borosilicate glass, 2019.

Seizing upon the format of a classic Venetian goblet, Guevin and Ginart use fairy-tale narratives to personalize their glass art. “When we started this body of work, it was a way for us to connect both of our cultures,” says Guevin. “Brainstorming on what were our favorite childhood fairy tales and stories, we realized that most of the French Canadian culture was influenced so much by our French ancestors that they were all the same. We picked our favorite author, Jean de La Fontaine, to make our first pieces.”

While the artists agree on the format and each other’s place in the process, the narrative flows from place to place and person to person, according to Cédric, “Karina is good at finding stories we both love and at figuring out how to translate it into glass. She’s the one who draws and chooses the colors, then we figure out together how to build the piece. That is how we work most of the time. However, there are no strict rules, and we find inspiration traveling the world.”

### Sharing Techniques and Inspiration

As Guevin and Ginart travel the world, they are building a body of work while they exhibit and teach. In 2020, they will offer three workshops—at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia; Glass Axis in Columbus, Ohio; and The Cerfav in France. Their travels also serve as a major inspiration, as Karina explains further. “Because our career takes us all around the world for teaching and exhibiting our work, we have found that talking to people about their culture through local fables was a very interesting way to get to know people better while learning more about them and their culture. It also puts them in a happy place.”

*Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart,  
Grimm Brothers Inspiration, created from  
flameworked borosilicate glass, 2019.*



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Local culture is the perfect springboard for a new piece or collection of pieces. Even if the stories are not universal, certainly the human condition is, and it's often the case that stories, fairy tales, and myths have similar themes and repeating plot lines. "Now we are hunting for stories and fairy-tale books every time we travel," says Guevin. "We try to learn about the local stories and fairy tales, since it's a good way to connect with people and to discover a culture or a country. It's fun and stimulating. We usually pick a few stories, read them, make a few drawings, and decide together how we can translate that into glass."

### Endless Possibilities

The artists agree that collaboration is good for both of them, says Cédric, "We work as a team, but we are both making parts separately. Karina is doing all the figurative work—animals, veggies, leaves. I focus more on the blown parts and the cane work. When that is all done, I assemble the parts together. Sometimes when the pieces are more complex, we both work on assembling the parts together."

The sum of their work takes on a magical, mystical quality. Karina says, "Cédric had a very classical, scientific glassblowing training. Because he was born and raised in France, his appreciation of historical work greatly influenced the way he approached glass. His love for precision and the technical challenges that represent Venetian goblets was very attractive to him."

"For myself, the romanticism and the narrative aspects of a Venetian goblet were very appealing. The color palette and the exuberance of the work fits my personality perfectly." She explains that the Venetian goblet was a perfect canvas for the narrative style and very romantic work and that the format offers them an infinity of possibilities. However, just because it's a goblet, that doesn't mean it will function as one.

"In our work, we completely ignore the functional aspects of the goblets. We play with the sizes and keep decorating them to the point where you would not even think they could be functional. At the same time, however, the viewers recognize the object and the stories we're illustrating in hopes that we will create a connection between the person and the piece to bring back happy childhood memories."



*(Left to right) Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart, The Golden Goose details and complete work, frameworked borosilicate glass and gold, 22" x 6" x 6", 2020.*

For the future, Karina and Cédric see endless possibilities. They are currently represented by Sandra Ainsley in Toronto, Canada, but look forward to the many invitations they are receiving to travel abroad and spread their unique vision. Be sure to visit their websites to learn more about this arty power couple. **GA**



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See Sara Sally LaGrand's bio on page 33 in this issue.

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# Amanda Simmons

## Art in Search of a Sustainable Future

by Colleen Bryan

In the perpetual discussions about the nature of art and artistry, it is easy to confuse them with the output of artistic processes. Conversation with fused glass artist Amanda Simmons reminds us that there are distinctions between art and object, between artist and producer. Nurturing those distinctions can rechannel creative instincts from consumption toward healing an exhausted planet.

When *Glass Art* interviewed Simmons early in the new year, she was intensely engaged in a residency at the Pittsburgh Glass Center. At the same time, the continent of Australia was ablaze with apocalyptic bushfires so uncharacteristically powerful as to create their own weather systems. As of this writing, the fires are responsible for killing two dozen people plus an estimated one billion animals, threatening some species with extinction. It is also responsible for burning 2,000 homes, warming the oceans, and feeding violent weather around the globe.

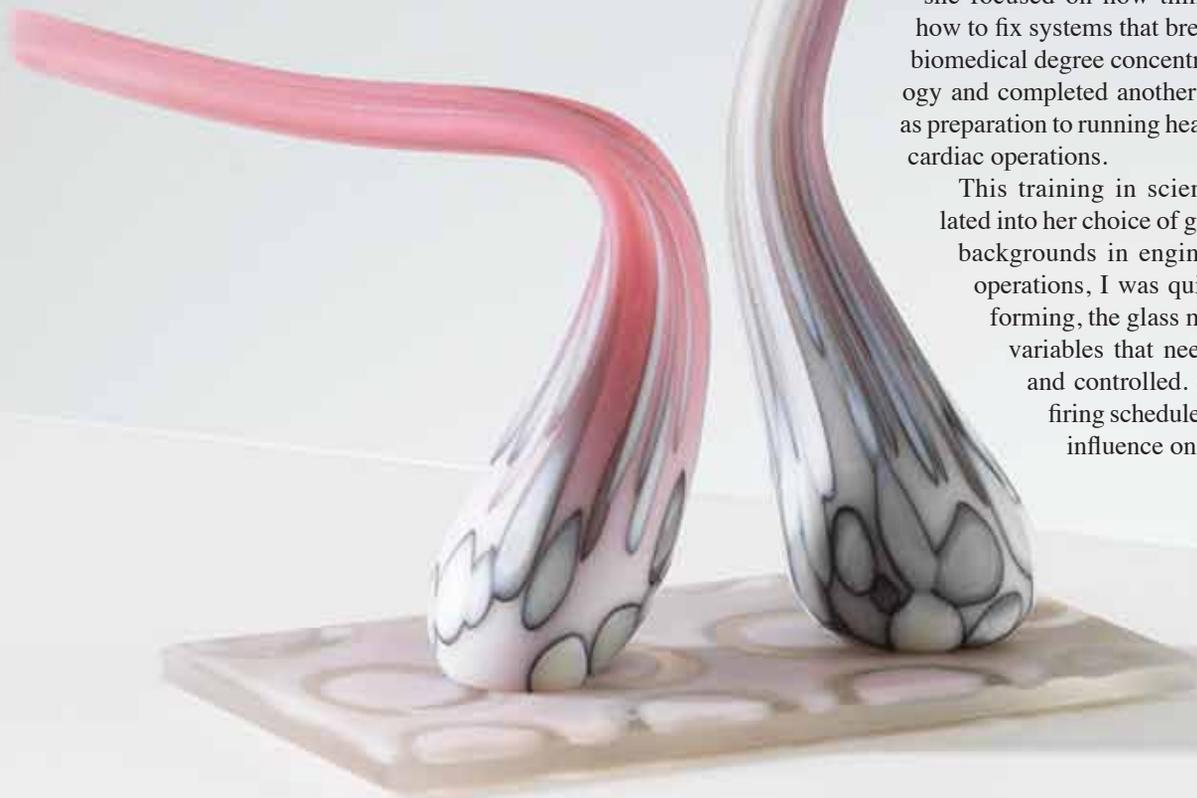
For Amanda, these two vignettes are not unrelated parallel realities juxtaposed on a personal and worldwide scale, but rather the central focus of her artistic investigation and discovery. Her art exists in the space of perceiving and weaving disparate realities together in a way that advances a narrative of healing and restoration.

Simmons was teaching in Melbourne, Australia, in September 2019 when the fire season started there two months early, giving her a personal perspective on the fires as they exploded with the onset of summer. Fully engaging her powers of observation with the urgent need to express, create, and transform, Amanda considers the descending climate catastrophe and its relationship to her beloved glassworking. In this moment, her art is not concerned with material, technique, or production. Her artistic struggle explores sustainability from inside a rapacious culture, economic system, and industry.

### Approaching Art from Science

Simmons came late to glass, finding the medium at age 30 after two previous scientific careers. As an engineer for British Telecom, she focused on how things go together and how to fix systems that break down. She took a biomedical degree concentrating on pharmacology and completed another degree in perfusion as preparation to running heart/lung machines for cardiac operations.

This training in scientific inquiry translated into her choice of glassworking. “Given backgrounds in engineering and medical operations, I was quickly caught by kiln forming, the glass method with so many variables that need to be planned for and controlled. Colors, opacity, and firing schedules all have a profound influence on the outcome.”



## A Glass Practice

Amanda has worked exclusively in glass for 18 years. Thematically, her early work focused on functionality. About nine years ago, as she explored a theme of birds, she felt the need to reduce the mass of glass used in her artwork, and powders provided a ready means. In 2006, she started a series of vessels. As Amanda described it, she quickly became obsessed with the gravity forming or kiln forming technique, better known in America as dropout, and focused her studio practice there. Currently, she is working out botanical themes in her glasswork.

Amanda's glass technique is straightforward. She starts with sheet glass, layering in two or three contrasting colors, enjoying the fluffiness of the sifting powders. "Working with powders is challenging in that colors present differently than they will look after firing. But as I tell my students, that's what samples are for." She fires, flips, and redoes the same process on the other side. Her blanks are eight or nine millimeters thick when they go in for a second 12-hour firing. She slumps the glass on a vermiculite board, using favorite molds accumulated over the decade. Then she commences the cold working process—cutting the vessel form from frame, grinding it down, and sandblasting the surfaces.

Simmons keeps to simple forms, feminine ovals rather than strong angles. Her artistic style is somewhat opposite to the defining characteristics of the material. "I use mostly opaque glass, preferring it without shininess or transparency. My work is very mark-made, with repetitive, flowing patterns. I do use lots of color, where glass has a definite advantage over other materials."

Scale is an evolving aspect of Amanda's artwork. "I've shifted from tiny handheld pieces to very large-scale. Monumental work intrigues me. Every time I've taught at Bullseye in the last few years, they've had a large architectural project going. Building powder wafers fired within sheet glass panels at very low temperatures confers depth and strength that can be used in architectural applications. I'd like to work with Bullseye to see my ideas at larger scale for a worldwide audience like that which now responds to my gallery practice."

*(Left to right) Amanda Simmons, What's Your Poison?, Bullseye Glass, slumped and sandblasted, approximately 12 cm high, 2015. Photo by Shannon Tofts; Banksia Flower, 2019. Photo by the artist.*

## Current Work

Simmons' current work includes sketches of Australian-inspired botanicals featuring their warmer colors and happy, easygoing feel. "Experiencing the difference in light and color across unfamiliar landscapes changes how you see things when you go home. It helps you focus differently on more familiar colors and forms.

"Yesterday I was going through thousands of images I took last year in Australia. While in Melbourne, I began exploring a theme of botanicals that require fire to generate and grow. One is the banksia plant, which protects its seeds within a resin-crust case that only opens to regenerate when fire releases the seeds onto fertile ground. I know there's a story in there."



The principle focus of Simmons' practice has shifted toward a greater emphasis on narrative. While her scientific training gave her quick understanding of the technical aspects of glass, Amanda struggled more with the artistic side of things. "Over the years, working in different mediums, I've researched how to bring a story together. Now I am digging deeper into narrative and context, trying to improve at the craft of storytelling. I want my work to communicate a story through the art itself without having to back it up with an artist's statement.

"In the future, I think my work will not be front and center but rather a way of communicating. I do want something visual that people can relate to. My artwork becomes an initial connection with my audience."



*Amanda Simmons, Southern Hemispheres, Bullseye Glass, slumped and sandblasted, approximately 10 cm high x 13 cm diameter, 2019.*

Simmons now has funding to work with indigenous Australians to take their artwork from painting to glass. “I have an affinity with their art making anyway and admiration for their cultural history. They are able to trace 60,000 years of history, which feeds their understanding both of how natural systems work and of how cultural narrative is constructed and expressed through art.”

By contrast, Simmons reflects, “I often feel like a global citizen—an English woman, even as I am proud to say I live in Scotland and support that as a home base. I’m lucky to travel and teach at remote places.” This results in universal, generic, open themes that anyone from anywhere can relate to. “Indigenous Australians have such a connection to their history that remains relevant in the current moment.” The artist is interested to see how her own perspective shifts as she works through the project.

### **Realizing the Need to Reinvent Her Glass Practice**

Even as she pursues her personal art, Amanda feels cast back to the start of her glass career by larger environmental and political/social pressures. Her urgent need to create encounters an equal pressure to acknowledge the resource intensity of the industry and achieve a sustainable balance.

She remembers viscerally the event that triggered this uncomfortable awareness. “In 2014 when I first showed at SOFA Chicago, I was keenly aware of gathering inspiration, talent, and resources to produce work for only the wealthiest 1 percent of the population. That recognition sent me into a depression for six months afterward.”

The experience was hardly a “road to Damascus” moment. Amanda rallied to do the SOFA show for a second year, to enter some other big shows, and even to stage her first solo show. She was entered into the juried 2019 Biennale among the best of British glassmakers. But as the artist traveled with her work, she grew painfully aware of the degree to which colonization and global resource extraction ravage and disparage the cultures, land, and people they exploit.

“Art has long had patrons,” Simmons acknowledges, “and rich people influence artistic direction. But the extreme concentration of money in the hands of so few people in our era chokes art and artists, even as it disrupts our climate and corrupts our body politic.

It drives a worldwide chasm between the extremely rich and the really poor. Unbridled capitalism has a huge disconnect with sustainability. It is sickening to observe the extremes people go to in pursuit of profit. We need to dial that back if the planet itself, much less we ourselves, are to survive.”

These niggling perceptions sparked conversations with other artists about how they cope with a reality that was coming into clearer focus for Simmons. “I pulled way back in my production and started looking for other ways of engaging my art to connect people. I want to produce a lot less work in a medium that is essentially unfriendly to the environment. This awareness had a lasting effect on me.”

If the 2014 exhibit sounded a personal alert, what Amanda witnessed during her 2019 residency in Melbourne, Australia, set off alarms. Having spent July through September traveling the continent and conducting extensive research, she was there to witness the beginning of huge megafires that started two months early and whipped themselves into firestorms. Since returning to Scotland and subsequent travel in the United States, Simmons has been unable to break her attention from the raging power of that fire, burning hotter, higher, more explosively, and more destructively than the regenerative fire that is a regular feature of the Australian landscape.

### **And Then, the Political . . .**

Wherever she goes, Simmons finds she cannot avoid the political. In places as disparate as the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, China, Russia, or the Philippines, the swing to establish and fortify autocracy is on worrisome display, undermining representative governance and sustainable environment. Natural, political, and industrial systems all are grinding toward unsurvivable ends.

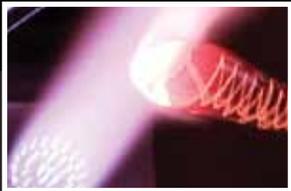
“While I was last in Melbourne, the U.K. Parliament was shut down. It is as though we don’t want our representatives to make decisions. It feels as though half of the world is trying to button up and secure their fortunes while the other half burns. I think our politicians are taking our world down in service to their own greed. I profoundly disagree with that trend wherever it operates. It defies everything I know about how systems work. The sensible among us are fighting that. I see people protesting and trying to make a difference but struggling to determine how to break through and change that.”

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## Art Signaling a Way Forward

Amidst flood and firestorms, terrified human and animal migration, exploitative industry, and concentrated consumption, Amanda does not pretend to purity or separation. She doubts that there exists a set of rules or a map to direct right action amidst such complexity.

Still, she resists the impulse to lower her gaze and concentrate her attention only on what lies immediately in front of her—the work of her own hands. She chooses not to wall herself off from the angst and uncertainty and the sheer scope of the tumult. “We cannot effect conscious, positive change without understanding both what we’re doing now and the legacy of what we’ve already done.”

Simmons brings her artist’s instincts and scientific training to the effort of perceiving, weaving threads among the various systems, communicating across the great divides. She stands to recognize and revere life as it expresses itself within the maelstrom—a clutch of new leaves sprouting up within a burnt-out forest to sound the single pure musical note, the organizing force that can be heard above the cacophony and provide direction.

Amanda addresses the systemic realities she encounters with the tools she learned as a scientist. “My identity as a scientist always informs my sensibilities as an artist. When I first came to glass, before I knew how to be an artist, I approached my work as a scientist would: Articulate and aim at what you want to achieve. Apply your method. Conclude with the final piece of work. Analyze why it did or didn’t turn out as you expected. Reflect on what you learn.” Now she applies that process to the larger change she wants to be in the world.

## Change from Within

Simmons is clear that foundational changes toward a sustainable glass industry must come from manufacturers innovating around such issues as energy and resource requirements. “I work exclusively with Bullseye Glass and have been able to see firsthand the initiatives that they put in place to make their glass and production methods as clean as possible.” But innovations that are stirring in the larger glass centers need to filter down into individual practices as well. “I don’t hear many of those conversations now. I think we’re too afraid to think deeply about environmental costs. But each of us, everyone throughout the glass industry, must change somehow in ways that are meaningful.” As a start, Simmons is shifting her practice of glass art in the following areas to help bring about these much needed changes.

- **Take sensitivity to environmental action ever deeper into her own practice.** “I am very aware that all my glass is transported from America, so I think deliberately about every piece I use, recycle everything I can, and dial back on how much I physically make. I am not a production artist.”

In lieu of a private studio practice, Simmons spends more time teaching and mentoring and uses residencies in public studios to push forward her private practice. From her perspective, the studio glass model itself is in flux.

“The process of creating a body of work in a private studio, taking it to galleries, and selling it to collectors is evaporating because it is unsustainable. At some level, it is throwing more stuff onto the flames of a heating climate.

“When I do engage in making, I’ll try to include in my pricing structure a percent of profits going to support environmental issues, almost like a carbon tax directed toward places that I think it will help. Buying a piece of glass art is a privilege. No one *needs* it. That is another way of trying to effect needed change.”

• **Recognizing the power of collective action and creating opportunities for conversations with other artists.** Whether at hot shops, artist forums, or training classes, Amanda strikes up conversations. “People think that recognizing a need doesn’t change anything essential, but that is not true. Asking questions such as whether there are cleaner ways of powering our furnaces and kilns made such alternatives viable. When I first set up my practice in Scotland, alternative fuels were too difficult for any single artist to afford, but in collectives we can. Artists are creative, and we overcome a lot of problems. Change happens when people really want it.”

• **Pursue residencies and collaborations with centers that harness the power of artist collectives to pose critical questions, create opportunities, and wield the power of artists acting together to make change.** “Big businesses and political groups have money. But artist collaboratives have people with ideas and creativity who are committed to and passionate about making change. We need to wield our power. Glass centers can provide a good hub.”

When Simmons moved from London to southern Scotland in 2005, she was keenly aware that she would be seven hours closer to Northlands Creative Glass in the extreme northeastern part of the island in Lybster. At Northlands, climate sensitivity is inextricably woven together with the pursuit of art. Simmons has done a variety of residencies and teaching there.

Pittsburgh Glass Center (PGC) has a similar ethos. As they seek to expand their facility, PGC is finding more environmentally conscious ways to power its kilns and furnaces. “I love coming to Pittsburgh and similar places that are intrinsically connected to their communities and share a commitment to art broadly and to local communities and artists as well.” While in Pittsburgh, Amanda also conducts research at the National Aviary and the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens.

For the remainder of 2020, Simmons will be at similar residency and research opportunities in different countries. “I am eager to explore what connects us and what disconnects us across land, cultures, and societies.”

• **Increase teaching commitments from six to 16 weeks a year, each class with eight people.** Upon her return from Pittsburgh, Simmons will start teaching four young artists in the Dumfries and Galloway region of Scotland where she lives. Her teaching will stress using resources conscientiously.

“Residencies give me a platform for teaching, and artists talk. I’m looking at how we can bring other ideas into the narrative as well as discussing technique. As we each start thinking and doing, ideas can circulate and permeate out to each local area. That is how change starts. This is the responsibility of artists within society. Making my own work is fine, but I want to be a conduit to start these conversations.”

As the artist approaches her 50th year, Simmons feels a personal imperative to be more vocal. “Having at long last found my voice as a female glass artist, I am eager to use that voice more widely to articulate perceptions that seem important to me. I feel an urgency to see what we as artists can do in our communities, and for me, that community is global.”

GA



Photo by Colin Hattersley,  
Courtesy of Spring Fling at Upland.

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(Left to right) Amanda Simmons, Solstice Platters, Bullseye Glass, slumped and sandblasted, approximately 54 cm diameter x 5 cm high, 2019. Exhibited at British Glass Biennale; Southern Hemisphere Duo, Bullseye Glass, slumped and sandblasted, approximately 12 cm high x 13 cm diameter, 2019.

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# Creativity



*The 18" Octopus Decanter*

## FAILURE

RECOGNIZING AN UNANTICIPATED  
RESULT AS DESIRABLE

*by Milon Townsend*

The first time I attempted to create an octopus decanter, I put it together from the components I'd prepared over the previous day or two. Needing to keep it hot, I inserted it all the way into the hot kiln and quickly closed the door—the guillotine door. I hadn't really stopped long enough to take in the fact that I had an 18-inch piece sticking out of a 13-inch-deep kiln. The loud crunching sound clearly indicated my need for a better understanding of the spatial relationships of objects with different volumes.

At the sound of the crunch, before I even turned around to look, I knew what had happened. I didn't get upset. Instead, I thought about what I needed to do to make the next one better and what I had learned on this iteration. I clearly recognized the fact that I needed either to make smaller pieces or get a larger kiln. I got the larger kiln and have been happily working in that space since.

There is a need to be unattached to your initial idea of what success means in the particular exercise. We need to feel that we have the freedom to recognize an unanticipated result as desirable, and very possibly, as better than the original intent.

### Mishaps Can Lead to Success

I spent more than a decade casting glass in the kiln and learned a lot. I made some good work, some not so good, wrote a couple of books and dozens of articles about it, taught it all around the country, and probably broke even on it when all was said and done. I'm not sorry I did it, and I'm not sorry I stopped doing it just like that.

One approach that I liked very much called reverse relief had to do with casting a negative shape in a solid chunk of glass. It turned out that it was very effective when lit with LEDs mounted on the edges and led to one of my more successful series of pieces. I made a 2-inch-thick disc about 12 inches in diameter with a figure cast inside. It looked to me that it would be more interesting if I sliced and diced it to bring it more closely to the shape of a wedge of pie, rather than the whole pie itself.

A friend with a company that does glass machining on an industrial scale has a 10-foot-tall band saw for cutting large ingots of glass. When cutting a finished, polished piece, you need to wrap it in several layers of duct tape to protect it from the shards of glass littering the platen or cutting surface of the saw. As the piece is fed slowly and automatically through the saw, cooling fluid is pumped onto the spot where the saw blade cuts the glass, preventing damage to both the diamond blade and the glasswork piece. The fluid, very similar to antifreeze, tends to dissolve the duct tape covering the glass.

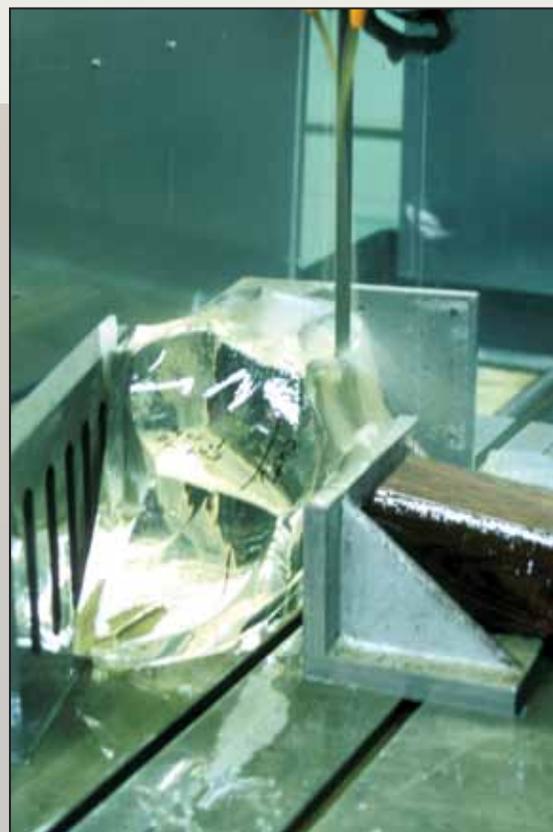
When I get the pieces back from cutting, they are encased in a slippery, gooey mass of partially digested duct tape. The layers slide back and forth on themselves as you wrestle with the heavy slab of glass to get it out of the tape to see how it turned out. Holding it over the concrete floor . . . Can you tell where this is going yet? That's right! It slipped out of my hands and dropped straight onto the concrete.

You know the very distinctive sound that glass makes when it breaks? Yep. That sound. I knew that it had broken, but I didn't even have a shred of upset, anger, frustration . . . any of that. I just wanted to get it unwrapped and see what it looked like. Examining the piece, with the back of the top broken off, I could instantly tell what needed to be done—and that it would be an improvement. We ground the broken back tip of the disc toward the front in a curve that emulated the curvature of the outside of the disc, bringing the curve from one plane into two. Much more interesting. We also got a nice optical distortion through the new curved section of the wedge. I liked it so much that I immediately did the same thing—ground it to the new shape—to the other pieces in the series that I'd been making.

## Viewing Failure from a New Perspective

The most interesting part of the entire experience was my lack of frustration or even irritation. I was able, without conscious effort, to switch from looking forward to enjoying the beautiful new thing I'd created to analyzing the process by which I'd created it. What exactly led to the problems? If I can figure that out, I can prevent them from happening again. In short, I enjoy figuring things out as much as just making pieces successfully. Does that make me a psychopath? Do I not have genuine emotional responses to difficult situations? I'm not sure about that, but I will say that it does give me the ability to continue moving forward to develop new work.

Using new techniques that I've pioneered, I know that there's no one else I can ask about the problems I'm having. I find it limiting that there is no body of knowledge to which I can refer, but liberating to know that I am the only one who can figure it out. I recognize that there's a switch I can flip, changing my perspective, eliminating the agonizing frustration that might naturally be the result of situations like this. I find great satisfaction in just figuring things out. The suspension of emotional angst is a necessary precursor to being able to objectify and consider all the angles of a situation that will lead to a solution.



*Cutting with a band saw (detail)*

*Spirit Vessel*



*Fault Line*

The *Body Language* series incorporated architecturally derived components to create environments within which my figures could exist and interact. Occasionally, something wouldn't work just the way I'd thought or would just be uninteresting, and I'd have to delaminate elements that had been joined using UV or HXTAL adhesives. A simple way to disassemble laminated pieces is to fire them in the kiln at a temp hot enough to destroy the bond of the adhesive without melting the glass.

It turned out that I had either heated or cooled a 1-inch-thick slab of optical glass too quickly, causing it to crack during the process. Aaarrggghhhhhhhh! Stuff ain't cheap. Soooo . . . I looked at the result and saw that by mounting the two pieces on their edges, facing each other and leaving a gap where the line of the fracture could perfectly mirror itself, I'd end up with an interesting space that one of my figures could occupy. This shaped space, defined by the lines of the crack running through the slab, was unique and unrepeatable. Instead of discarding the "failure," I ended up with something precious and one-of-a-kind. I appreciated it into existence, perceived it as valuable, and thus made it so. Should we choose to exercise it, we all have that special power.

GA



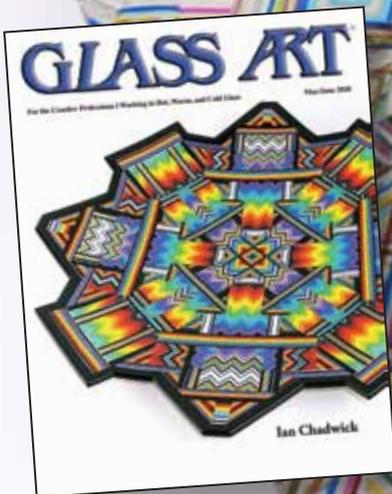
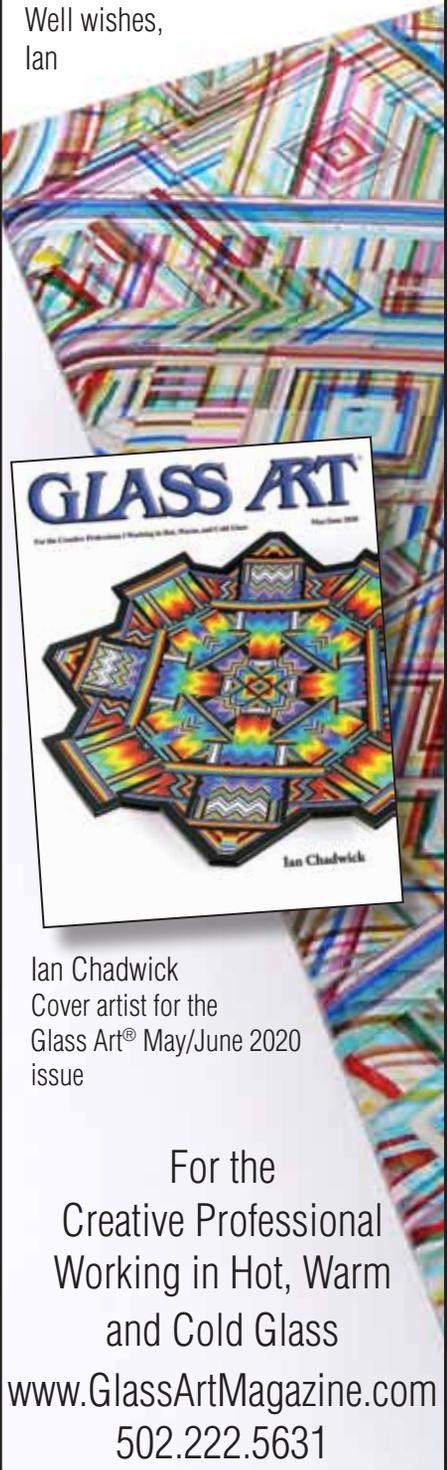
*Milton Townsend is a self-taught artist with over 45 years of experience in the field of glass artwork and education. He is known for his torch and kiln worked sculpture featuring the human form. Visit [www.intuitiveglass.com](http://www.intuitiveglass.com) or Google "Milton Townsend images" to view more of his work and go to [thebluemoonpress.com](http://thebluemoonpress.com) for his educational materials. You can also e-mail [milontownsend@gmail.com](mailto:milontownsend@gmail.com). The sequence presented here is excerpted from Milton's upcoming book on Creativity.*

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Dear Glass Art®,

I am so grateful to you all for making the whole process behind my article so enjoyable. I found your approach for doing the interview to be comfortable and cathartic. It's a rare treat to be offered a platform to share our thoughts and story, and I was beyond honored to see my work on the cover. The whole experience was a joy.

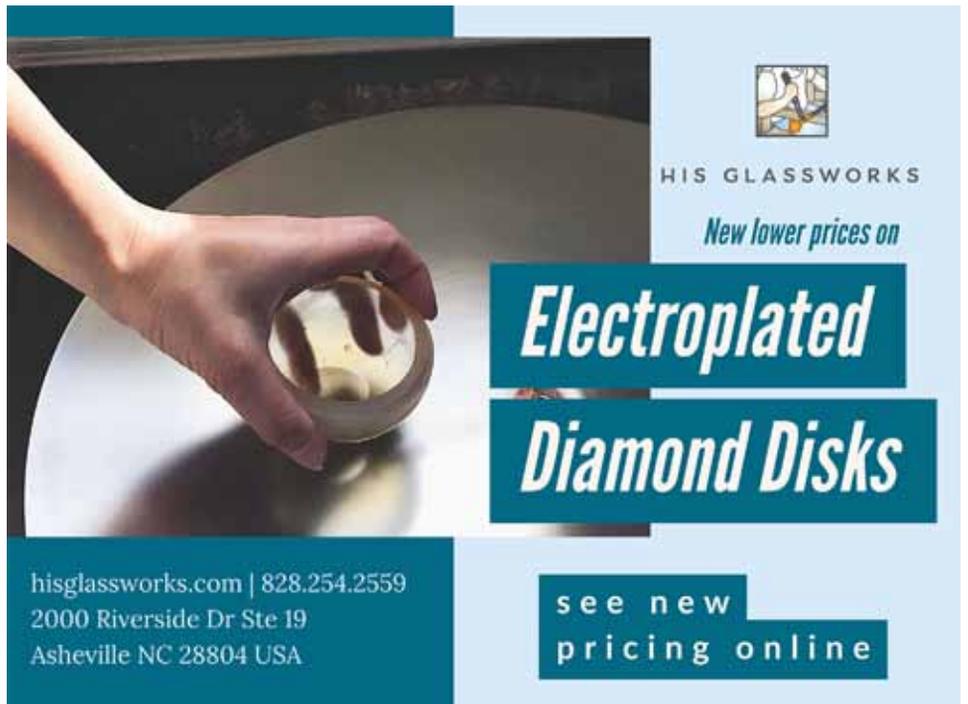
Well wishes,  
Ian



Ian Chadwick  
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*Karina Guevin and Cédric Ginart,  
Fairy Balls,*



# Eunsuh Choi

## Glass Art Evoking Images of Fragile Strength

by Sara Sally LaGrand

Photography by Elizabeth Torgerson-Lamark

The struggle of human aspiration takes many forms—dreams, ambition, improvement, something beyond the bare basics of just getting by. It's been shown that once the basic survival needs of food and shelter are met, the human spirit craves more. The work of Eunsuh Choi reflects that struggle.

The artist came to the United States from South Korea seeking a greater depth of knowledge in glass. She knew that the educational epicenter of glass was in the New York area, so she set her sites there, even though she held a masters degree in glass from her home country.

### Portraying Narratives of Success and Failure

Eunsuh is quick to tell you that she is not religious, even though she strives to create her work with a spirit. "It wouldn't be accurate to consider me as a spiritually spoken person, nor should my work be considered prophetic. However, there is an undeniable internal and contemplative aura within my work that resonates with our human desire for and pursuit of something higher and bigger."

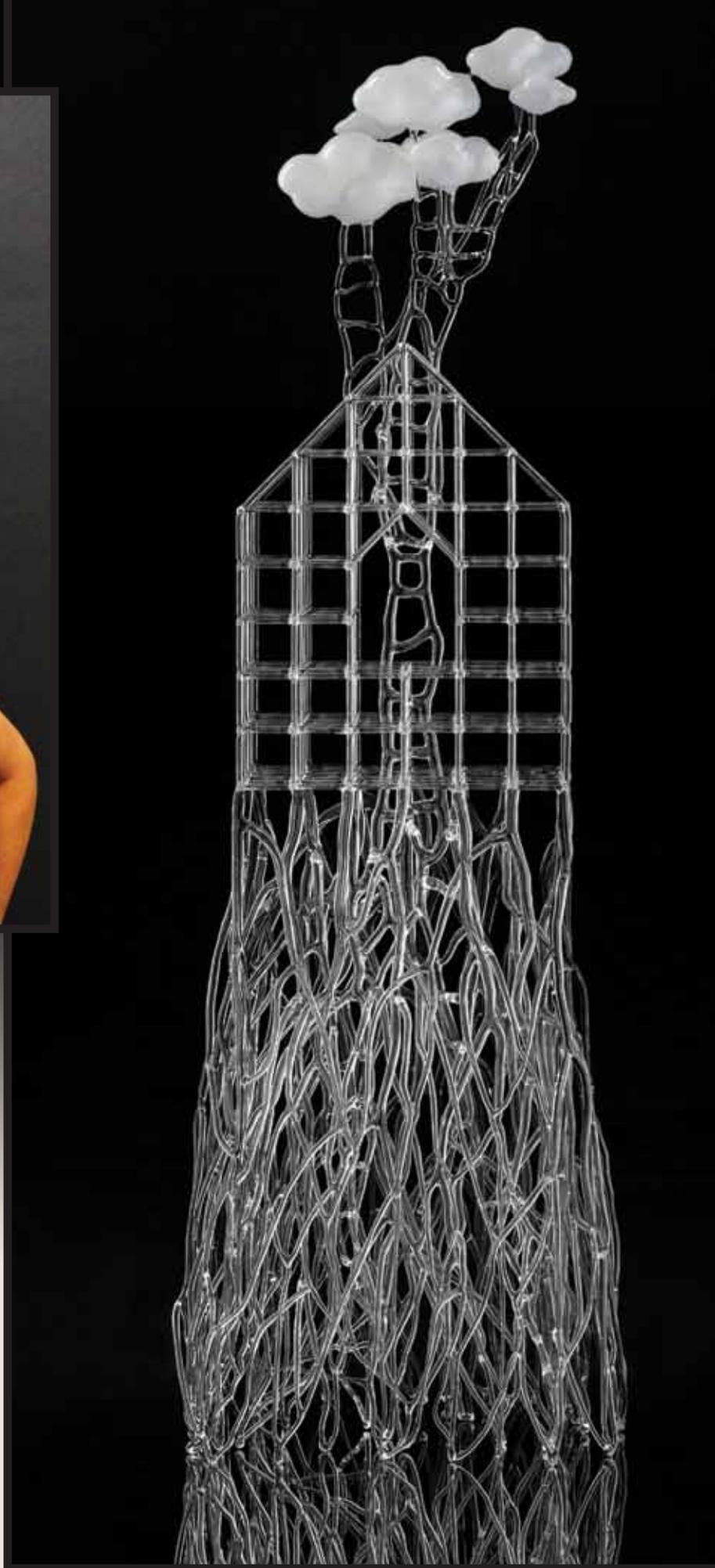
Choi utilizes a technique she has championed using 2 mm to 10 mm boro rods melted together to make strong images of ladders, stairs, and buildings utilizing a latticework structure. All of the images evoke a kind of fragile strength that illustrates her aura of pursuit.

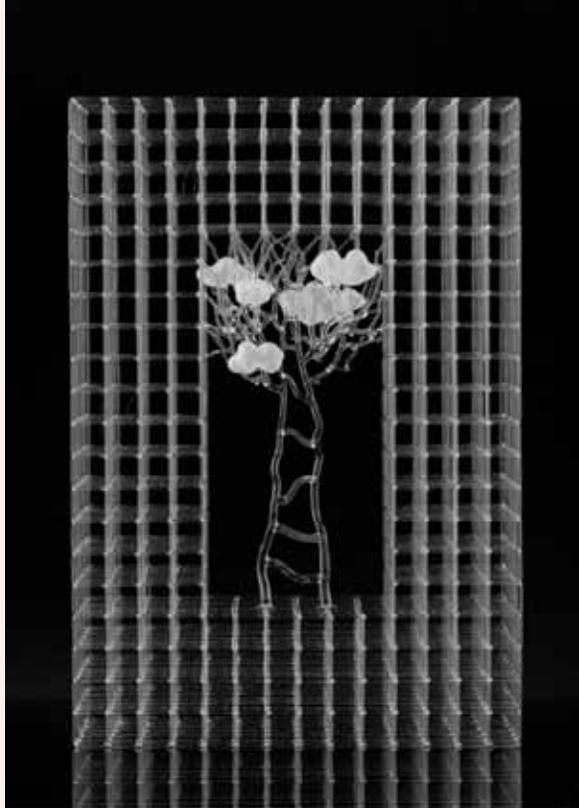


(Far left to right) Eunsuh Choi, Forbidden Rights; the artist wearing Enchantment V crown and Enchantment IV necklace; and Dreams III.

“The structures that I have created within recent work resemble objects that the viewer is familiar with in daily living. Ladders, trees, clouds, boxes, houses, and even hybrids of all five appear as recurring formal motifs. These objects are associated with all things dense and structurally sound, whereas my renditions are light and airy, almost celestial.”

Eunsuh uses these metaphors to evoke her emotional goals that she believes will resonate with the viewer. “I like to work sculpturally, utilizing form and its surrounding atmosphere to portray narratives based on the human encounter with success and failure in the pursuit of personal ambition.”



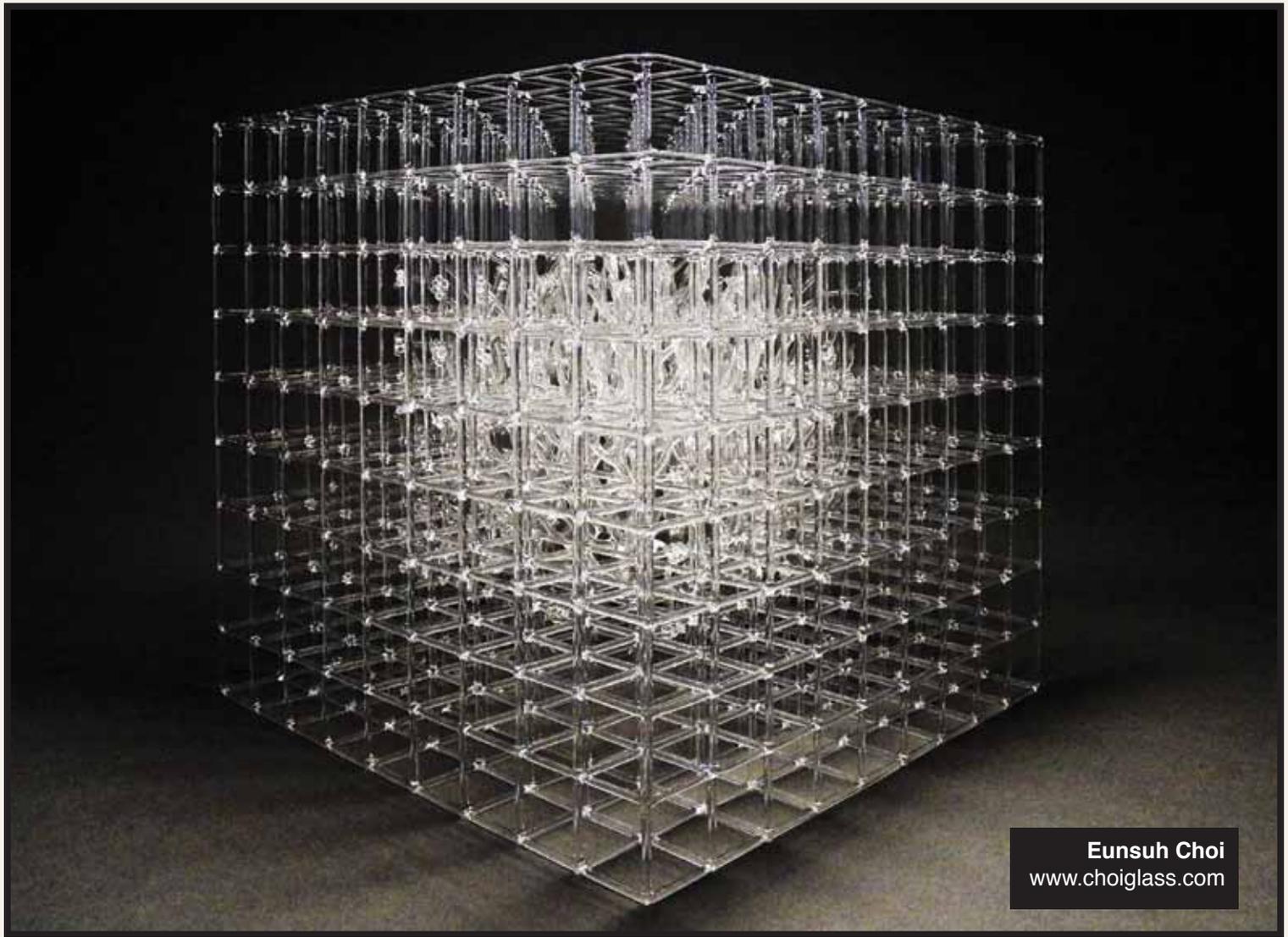


*(Clockwise from top left) Eunsuh Choi,  
The Limited Barrier II; Perfect woman IV;  
and The Convergence of Barrier V.*

### **Sharing the Pursuit of Perfection**

The artist's work is precise, because she values clean lines as well as perfectly welded joints. The casual viewer might not notice whether the joints are perfect but Eunsuh does, and it's very important to her. After completing her education in the United States, Eunsuh shared this pursuit of perfection as she taught for three years at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and for five years at the State University of New York (SUNY). Since then, she has traveled the world teaching her techniques.

Kris Ball, a recent student, explains: "Eunsuh's work is absolute perfection. She combines talent, passion, and patience to construct impossible glass structures. The perfect joints are aesthetic as well as structural. They give her light, airy work a foundation of strength that seems unable to support its own weight, but does."



**Eunsuh Choi**  
[www.choiglass.com](http://www.choiglass.com)

*Eunsuh Choi, The Cube of Barrier III.*

### Expressing Life's Journey through Glass

Choi's many shows and exhibitions have garnered her a place in the greater art world as well. She has exhibited in SOFA Chicago, Morgan Gallery's Teapot exhibition, and Pittsburgh Glass Center, as well as the Somerset Art Fair in London, England. In addition, her fellow glass artists also find her work intriguing and contemplative. Renowned glass artist Kathleen Elliott describes it this way. "Eunsuh's work is organic life resolutely finding its way out of the confines of geometric grids. I admire her technical prowess in creating these pristine structures. Not only do I find Eunsuh's work beautiful, but I also particularly appreciate the way she uses it as an expression of her life's journey as a woman and an immigrant."

Anne Gross, Director of Fine Art at Raven Gallery in Aspen, Colorado, says of Choi's work: "When visitors to the gallery first see Eunsuh's pieces, they are initially struck by the delicate nature of the work. But as they examine it more closely, the substantial elements come into focus. It's this balance of ethereal and concrete that most attracts viewers and encourages the contemplation of each person's point of view and perspective."

Choi, whose work specifically focuses on communicating the graceful flow of human emotional tendencies through the plastic medium of flameworked glass, is represented by Habatat Galleries in Michigan and Florida, Wheaton Art in New Jersey, Raven Gallery in Aspen, Colorado, Artling in Singapore, and Sklo Gallery in South Korea.



*Sara Sally LaGrand, award-winning artist and author, has had the great fortune to study glassmaking with many gifted teachers, both in America and Italy. She holds a BA in Glass Formation from Park University, Parkville, Missouri. Honors include awards from Art Westport, State of the Arts, The Bead Museum of Washington, D.C., Fine Line Gallery, Images Art Gallery, and the Kansas City Artists Coalition.*

*LaGrand has taught flameworking all over the world and has work published in many books and magazines. Her art can also be found in international public and private collections. Visit [www.sarasallylagrand.com](http://www.sarasallylagrand.com) to find out more about the artist.*

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## Mark Hufford

### Teaching and Discovery with Fused Glass Painting

by Colleen Bryan

Mark Hufford has practiced in several fine art mediums over the years, but at his core the man is a teacher. He has taught drawing, calligraphy, and ceramics, and since 2015 he has specialized in fused glass painting. “Not everybody has the ability to teach, but it is my thing. Ninety percent of the work I list for sale on my website is something I produced to teach the processes. I do what I do to teach what I do. My absolute daily joy is teaching.”

In support of teaching, he enjoys experimenting—testing materials—recommending combinations and alternate uses irrespective of branding. He helps his students take the lovely materials they bought and never opened, because they were too intimidated, and encourages them to experiment and push boundaries.

Mark tells of growing up in the heart of a very large family where it was easy to get lost in the shuffle. “I found solace and entertainment in being creative. Mom was painting with acrylics and I was getting in the way, so she gave me a pencil and paper and told me to draw. I was only four, but it set me on a lifetime of experimenting and exploring with materials and art.”

Hufford grew up in Ohio and moved to the heart of Texas in 1983. He works from a home studio about 10 minutes south of Austin. “When people started booking me to teach around the country, I began for the first time to take long drives and see its vastness and wonder as I never had before. Places like Sedona filled me with such emotion it forced me to stop and pull over to absorb it all.” The artist draws inspiration from wildlife and nature, with its endless lines and shapes and forms.

“We live on this wonderful planet, with wildlife that we hardly notice in our daily lives. Art can slow us down enough to help us recapture the connection.” His glasswork comes out as realistic studies of hair, fur, or stem direction observed in nature. He creates work that is relatable and opens doors of awareness and appreciation to other people.

#### To Glass from Traditional Fine Art

Hufford received a set of glass enamels in February 2015 and began to play. “I started with a microwave kiln, float glass, and the determination to figure out how to make on glass what I knew how to do on paper, artboard, and canvas. It required adapting the techniques I knew well so they would work on glass.”

Mark has a passion for graphite drawing with art pencils. His background with pencils and color from traditional painting were useful in translating fine art skills to fused glass painting.

Graphite is a mineral that was never meant to fire in a kiln. Typically, it just burns off leaving a white residue. “I found a way to fire a drawing at temps low enough to not burn off the graphite. I tested eight brands of art pencils and settled on the one best suited for the technique. My sense of values in grayscale and color helped me anticipate in the testing how much of the original intensity an image was going to retain as it moved through the firing process.” That sensibility is essential to rendering the painted image in a realistic, dimensional way, so now Hufford has a way to use his favorite medium, graphite, on glass.

If Hufford's artistry across several mediums was self-taught, his visceral approach builds a depth of knowledge about what specific materials can and cannot do and strong confidence in his capabilities. He particularly enjoys experimenting along the edge of current knowledge. "I do a lot of exploring and testing with materials. I take products that were never manufactured for the purpose I'm putting them to."

Mark's approach to learning has surfaced two favorite novel discoveries in the course of his work with fused glass:

- Watercolor painting on powdered frit using products manufactured for ceramics. "Once fired, it gives the impression of having been done with watercolors on paper rather than glass. It doesn't use fired glass enamels at all. Students are having a ball with it."
- Glass nouveau styles that stretch fired glass enamels and glazes beyond their intended purpose until they resemble pottery. Hufford is drawn to the art nouveau era, and the glazing on his glass pieces resembles the slip trailing process characteristic of Moorcroft pottery from the 1930s in the U.K.

### Teaching Anybody to Make Art

For the past five years, Mark has traveled the country coast to coast teaching his fusing methods. His longest trip spanned 6,000 miles over 42 days. Class sizes generally ran between eight and 16 students. Now, however, he increasingly prefers to invite fewer students into his home studio for classes and teach them in a more intimate, individual, familiar setting. "I try to set up classes with no more than four students at my home studio. We have fewer interruptions, and the direct attention is a more fulfilling learning experience. I've had students here from Sweden. Tomorrow a woman is coming from Australia, and she has registered for two classes."

Many of Mark's students come fearful of the painting and drawing process. "We hear the word *no* and criticism so often in our lives that we begin to believe we don't have it in us. I'm convinced that I can teach anybody to draw. I meet people at their level, and together we move forward. I'm a problem solver."

Mark's approach is one steady stream of encouragement: Enjoy the process. Embrace your challenge. Explore without fear. No right or wrong, just information. In the pile of failures, there might be a gem of something brand new. Take a risk and make art.

His approach has certainly been challenged. Hufford remembers a student who came to the first day of class announcing that he would never be able to teach her to draw. He laughingly rebutted, "I'm already halfway home. You're here!" Several days later the student produced the object she had brought from home to be the subject of her study—a leather baby booty from her childhood. She produced the drawing, it turned out well, and student and teacher were both delighted.

That light bulb moment, the moment that students post an image of their piece and gets hundreds of likes—these are what brings Mark joy. "Two students at least have already exceeded my abilities in glass, and I couldn't be happier."

Hufford is proud that the experience is transformative at a personal level as well. "When students leave my class, they don't look at the world the same way anymore. I focus on increasing our observation skills. That alone has value. The first step toward art is to stop and look in awe at the beauty of nature, at all the earth has provided us."

*Left to right) Mark Hufford, Ginkgo Leaf Bowl, slumped clear and ivory glass painted with Nature Color Collection enamel; Iris Trio, part of the Glass Nouveau Styles with Fired Glass Enamels series, 7-1/2" x 14".*





*Mark Hufford, Butterfly Mandala, painted with fired glass enamels on seven 11"-diameter layers of glass.*

## **Beyond Studio Classes**

To supplement his in-person classes, Hufford compiled a book entitled *The Art of Fused Glass Enamel Painting: A Guide of Applications for All Skill Levels* with the intention of providing the go-to resource for fused glass painting. The book is now in its eighth printing and has shipped to 18 countries.

The 150-page workbook describes a set of techniques for enamel painting with fused glass and sets out 50 designs that the reader can use to practice the techniques. It recommends technique-specific products. "The descriptions are quite detailed, discussing things like how to set up and use each product and which brands of enamel are food safe versus nonfood safe."

To accompany the book, Mark developed a series of seven videos wherein he demonstrates each of the techniques in his studio. "People learn differently, and many artists are visual learners who may prefer a video over reading how to do something. A lot of the questions that may come up as they read the book are answered in the videos." Mark is releasing the videos every six to eight weeks so that students have time to experiment with the techniques they are learning before moving on to the next set. Essentially, he thinks of himself as creating a course for students who can't make it to a class to learn what he knows.

In addition to the book and videos, Hufford established a private Facebook group for people who have bought the book. They post images of their assignments, and Mark gives personal feedback. Sometimes students post questions, and he troubleshoots their experiments. He periodically posts new products he has found and demonstrates their use. Sometimes he makes videos to help students over trouble spots and posts the videos back to the group. "Essentially, the Facebook group functions as a virtual class with an instructor and a community of students."

A rhythm has taken shape in how Mark stages these product releases. He develops and sells tutorials on some new technique. He airs a webinar demonstrating it, then about eight months after the webinar, he releases the video. "I now have nine videos in addition to the hard copy book." The enterprising instructor engages one of his glass students as an editor and handles the development of content, demonstrations, filming, publishing, printing, and distribution on his own.

Hufford anticipates following this model of content development and release going forward. "People are not traveling as much to studios, but teaching is my source of income. With social networking and everything being offered online, I'll move in the direction of virtual courses rather than restricting my classes to people who can travel to my home studio or whom I can travel to teach. I'm trying to keep educational options open by offering materials in a variety of formats and platforms."

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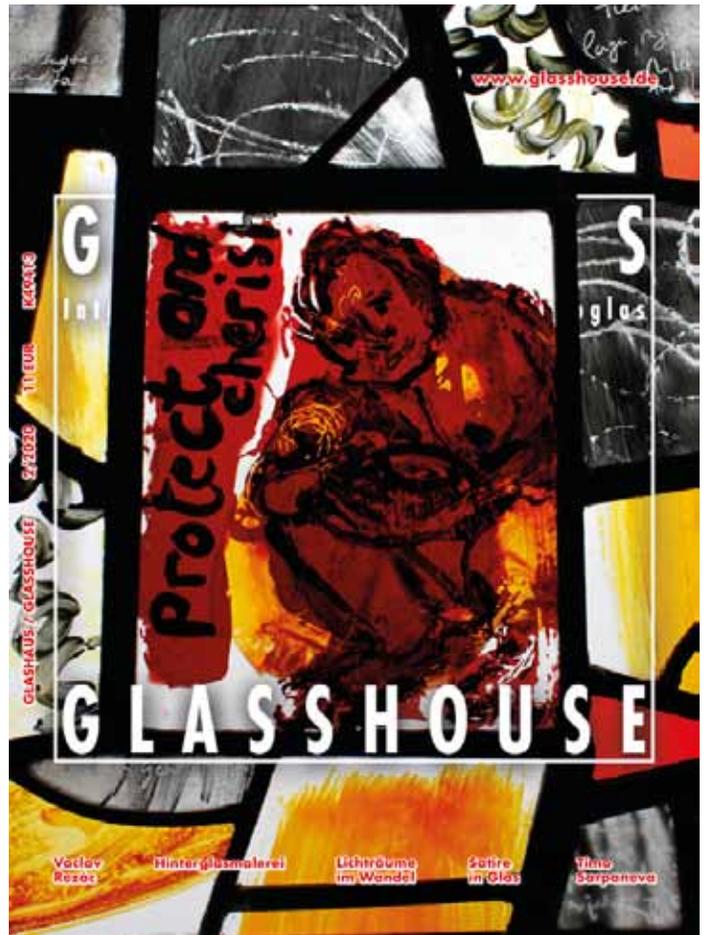


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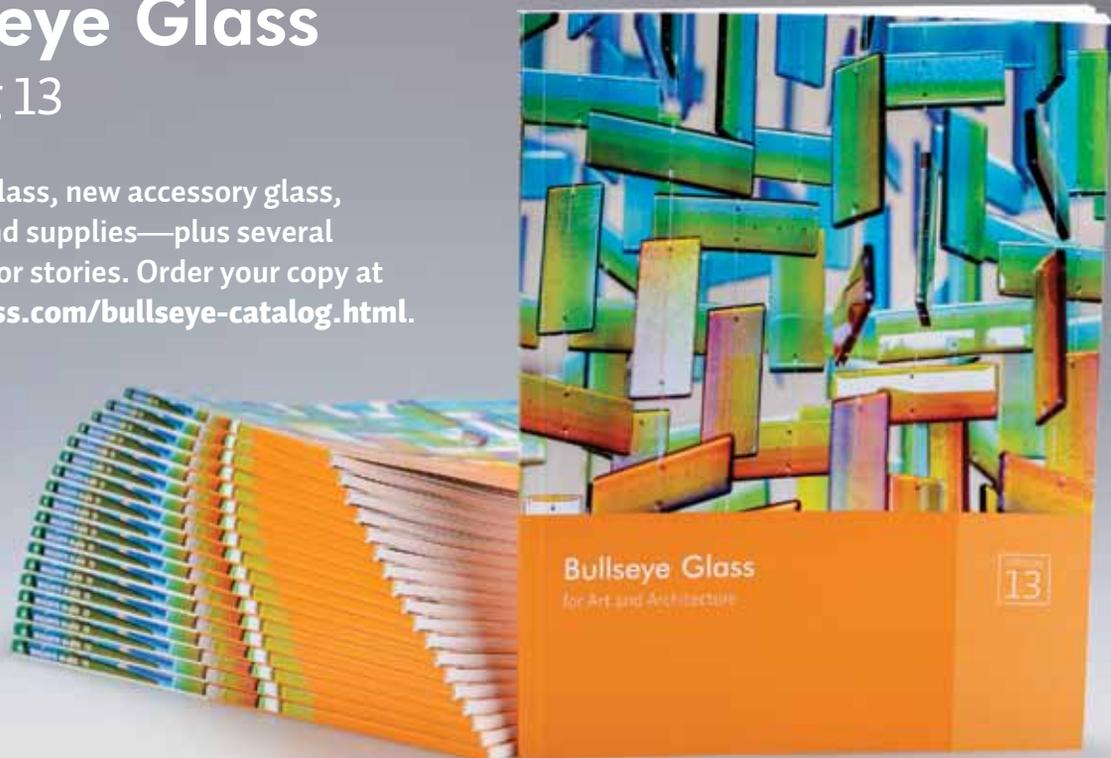
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[bullseyeglass.com/bullseye-catalog.html](http://bullseyeglass.com/bullseye-catalog.html).



## Product Discovery

In the process of his teaching and experimentation, Mark kept returning to a narrow palette of colors that he could not find on the existing market. "I found I was mixing enamels a lot to make my own custom colors, but blending powdered colors in my studio gave me variable results."

Hufford approached Margot Clark of Unique Glass Colors, which manufactures in Florida. He had met Margot in the course of teaching and attending glass conferences. The two agreed that she would put eight of Mark's custom colors into production. "They didn't add the colors to their line; they are exclusively mine. In June 2019, I released the Mark Hufford Nature Color Collection of eight enamel colors." Since Unique Glass Colors produces on a larger scale and has the chemists and equipment on-site, they are better able to achieve consistency in the color formulation.

Mark reports that the process of setting up his custom colors was a fun one. "When I traveled to Florida to teach, I spent time at Unique Glass Colors. The big challenge was sending them my formulas, having them generate test strips, and saying yay or nay. We got down to one color, Parchment, that kept coming out slightly off. The chemists were about ready to rename it Cursed Parchment. It took about four months, but finally we got all the colors right and people started ordering them." Hufford has written five tutorials that use only those eight colors.

Glass is a somewhat expensive pursuit. Hufford finds that people often invest significantly in products, then have no idea how to use them. He commonly hears, "I bought these enamels four years ago, and I haven't opened them yet. I'm just waiting for a class." "No! No! No!" he protests. "Get out there and play!" He notes that even if students are not taking his classes, every brand has its own Facebook support groups to help users get started, ask questions, and dive into a new artistic experience.

Inside his classes, Mark is proud to expose his followers to knowledge of materials across brands. "I often mix four brands of enamel all in a single piece to take advantage of one quality over another. I talk about why I like a given product for a specific function. That approach helps students get more comfortable with experimenting on their own, which is really cool."



*(Left to right) Mark Hufford, Feasting Squirrel, created with techniques used in the tutorial, "Watercolor Style Painting on Powdered Frit"; Croton Leaf Bowl, individually painted and fused leaves and clear frit on ivory glass, 10" diameter.*



## Personal Preferences

Much of Mark's work is on top of rather than inside the glass. While he typically works with two or more layers of glass, the thickest being eight layers, a lot of his current work is on a single layer with enamels and does not require a full fuse. "I find that I enjoy the aesthetic of single-layer glass, its fragility, and the way light travels through the piece. Of course, that depends on the project." As he spoke to *Glass Art*, Mark had just finished a six-layered glass tiger.

Some of his pieces are framed art, while others are functional. "I am teaching a four-piece tray set at AAE on single-layer glass. Awhile back, I made a set of glass spoons that we use for parties and throw in the dishwasher. We just don't put them through the dry cycle."

Mark's artistic style is realistic. "I push myself to the point of realism but not hyperrealism. I want people to know that this work was done by hand, to leave an element of the artist's touch left behind. I want them aware that this is a drawing, a painting, not a photograph."

For all that Hufford enjoys experimentation, his work style is anything but free-form. The complexity and realism he seeks does not develop by just jumping in. He conceptualizes fused glass projects and plots out his pieces comprehensively before executing them. Then he tests and notes his failed attempts with materials or techniques until he finds the success that he wants—the success he can teach to others. **GA**

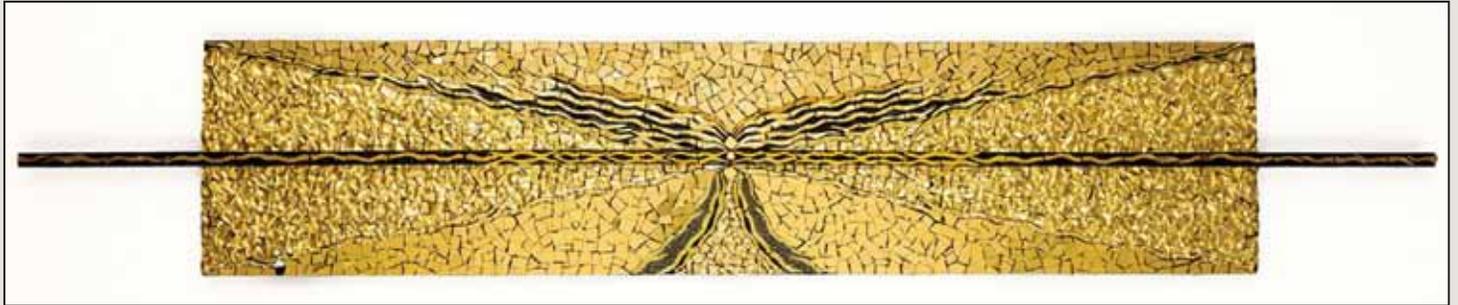


(Top) Mark Hufford, *Wading Tiger*, piece worked on six glass layers of varied thicknesses using Unique Glass Colors enamels and products, 8" square.

(Bottom) Mark working in class with students Emily Herrington Ohland (left) and Deborah Gallon (right).

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Fine Artist, Fused Glass Painter, and Art Instructor  
(512) 749-7411  
[www.facebook.com/drawingwithmark/2015](https://www.facebook.com/drawingwithmark/2015)  
[www.mshdesigns.com](http://www.mshdesigns.com)

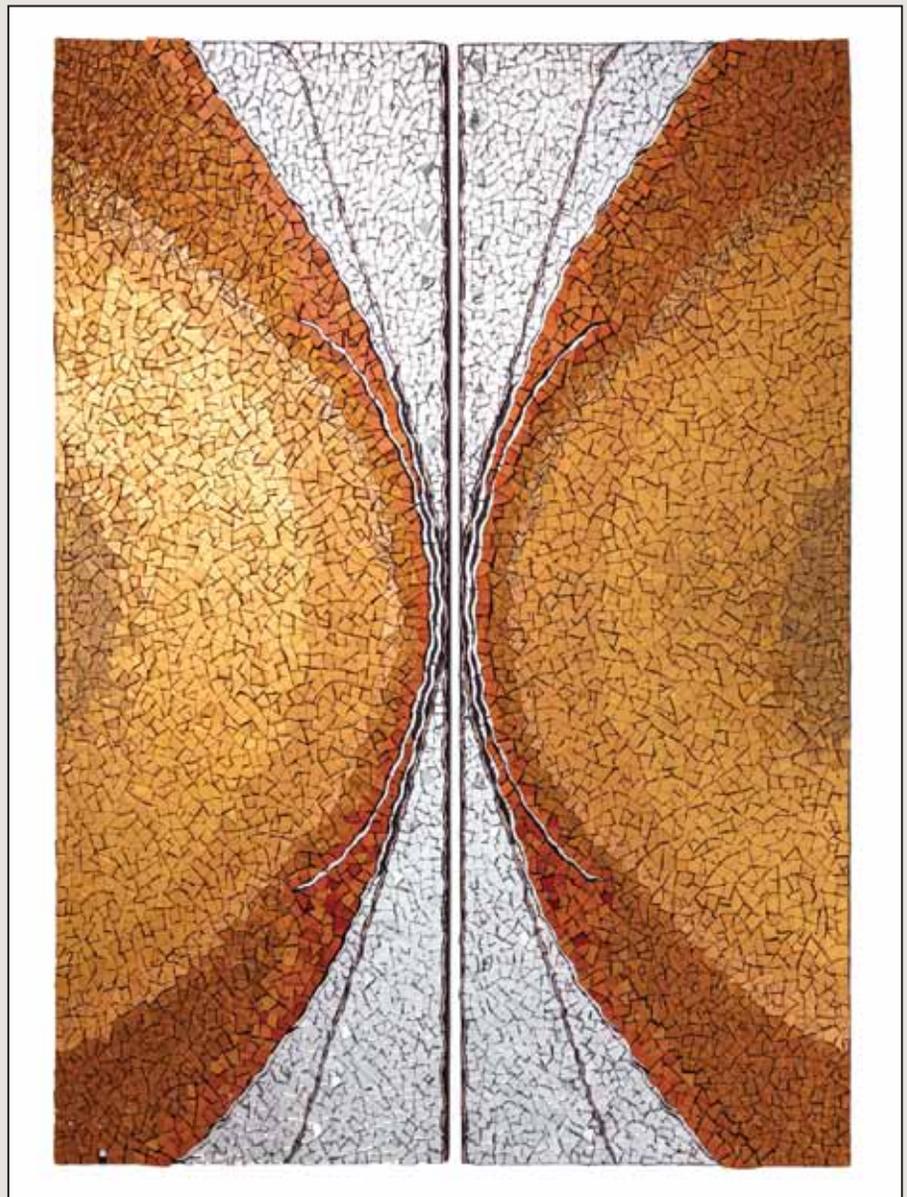
## **Journeying to Light—The Essential Nature of the Mosaic Medium Elaine M Goodwin Shines in Her Retrospective**



*Article Shared with Permission of the Society  
of American Mosaics Artists*

Elaine M Goodwin recently celebrated her 40-year career in art in Spring 2019 with a Retrospective Exhibition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery in Exeter, England. In Elaine’s early work—mostly prior to 1995—materials such as smalti, vitreous, and ceramic tesserae predominate.

As her “journey to light” progressed, the range of tesserae began to include Venetian gold leaf glass and glass smalti, Ravenna glass, Carrara marble, mirrored glass, granite, Venetian silver and gold, and iron pyrite, also known as “fool’s gold.” Here, she recalls the experience that explains her fascination with light. You can also visit [www.elainemgoodwin.co.uk](http://www.elainemgoodwin.co.uk) to learn more about the artist and her work.



*(Left to right) Elaine M Goodwin, The Kiss, 2011. Photo by M. Tomkinson. Light Coitus (diptych) 2013. Photo by M. Tomkinson. Luccichii di Venezia: Amando, 1992. Photo by the artist. Without II, 2001. Photo by Sonja van Driel.*



## *My Theme Is Light*

by Elaine M Goodwin

The essential nature of the mosaic medium was miraculously revealed to me by an encounter with ancient Byzantine mosaics. From that moment on, I found that mosaic was truly my medium—one through which I could totally express myself. When I uncovered this secret, it radically changed the way in which I worked within my already chosen medium of mosaic.

You might say it was a revelation that gave me what I searched for—a personal voice. I had already found new delight in encountering specialist mosaic glass. In particular, I was enticed by the colorful handmade mosaic material called smalti, which was uniquely manufactured in Venice. I also found gold! Mosaic gold was to be a wondrous addition to my palette, but at that time I used it, just as the Romans did, for highlighting or creating points of focus within a design.

Then in the mid 1990s, I found myself in the city of Ravenna in Italy looking at the sixth century mosaics of the Basilica of San Vitale. I was particularly drawn to two secular panels—one of the Emperor Justinian and the other of his consort, Empress Theodora. These were glowing panels, rich in figurative and textural detail using mainly smalti but with a little marble for hand and face detailing plus mother of pearl for its luster in decorative areas—and all positioned on a shimmering golden ground. As I looked, musing upon such wondrous artistry, a glowing beam of sunlight fell across the mosaic surface, immediately dissolving the portrait images into a myriad of light particles. All the figures had, in effect, dematerialized into light.

I marveled at this transforming aspect, one I had never experienced before when looking at classical mosaics. I knew with certainty that it was the light bouncing off the imagery that had been transubstantiated and had subsequently opened this new way into a greater sense of understanding. Through light, therefore, I knew that a more profound sense of knowing could be experienced.

## Manipulating Light

Byzantine maestros were able to cut and fix the mosaics to vertical walls, cupolas, and vaults in great schemes covering the interiors of the new buildings of early Christianity. The source of their understanding in relaying their sacred message lay in exploiting light by physically manipulating the special characteristics of gold and smalti.

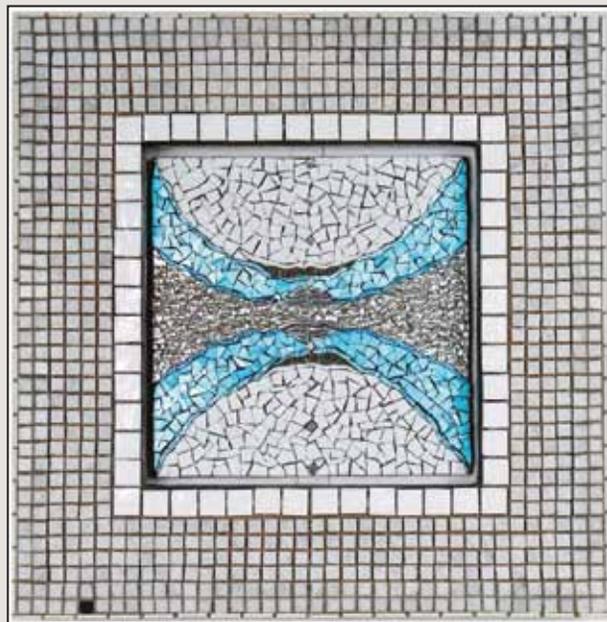
On the internal vertical and curved surfaces of the new basilicas, the tesserae could be applied at angles into the mortar to attract and repel light. This tilting of the tesserae was used with great skill and understanding to give the ultimate effect to the viewers. Mosaics, at that time, did not portray a light source within the imagery but relied, instead, on the moving light from both candles and natural daylight. By utilizing these different sources of light, mosaic artists could manipulate light so much that it could be made to transcend any imagery completely, through brilliant or even blinding light. This is what had happened to me.

## The Transcendental Mystery of Light

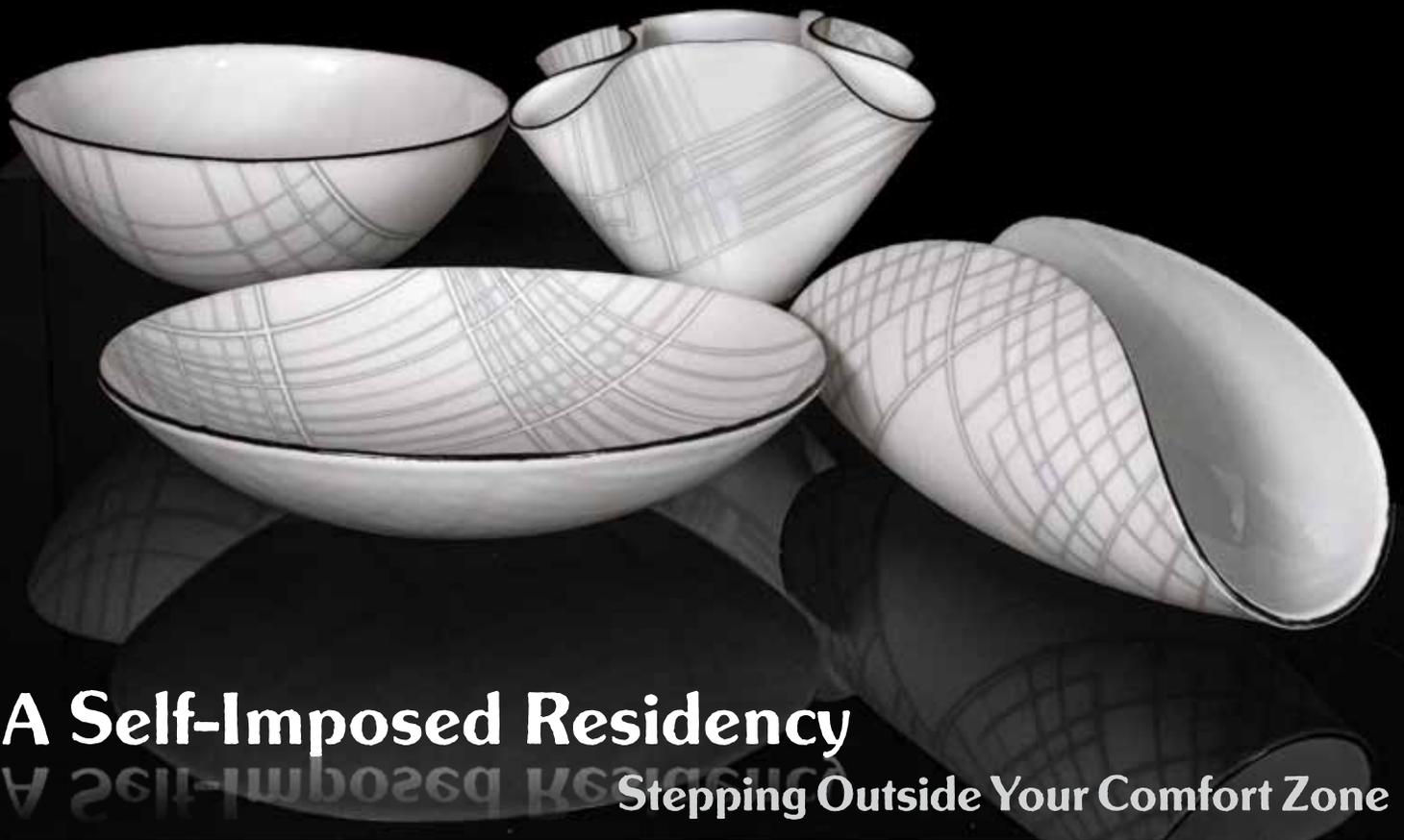
Experiencing mosaic in this way through light—especially in a sacred setting—the viewer is enveloped in a transcendental mystery. I believe the same extraordinary and wonderful effect can be realized in a secular or contemporary setting such as in an art gallery or even a personal environment.

Gold was always considered a worthy vehicle to transport Divine ideas in art. This extra element of conveying Light, which the mosaic medium proffered, could give even greater Divine expression or spiritual awareness. I knew that this way of perceiving mosaic could be utilized by me in my personal work and, at last, give me a conduit through which I could truly explore my everyday experience. My meditations on life, love, and death could now be translated into mosaic using light as an integral part of the exploration. **GA**

*The Society of American Mosaic Artists (SAMA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating, inspiring, and promoting excellence in the mosaic arts. Visit [AmericanMosaics.org](http://AmericanMosaics.org) to find out more about SAMA and how to become a member.*



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# A Self-Imposed Residency

## Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone

(Figure 1) Using chemical reactions to enhance outlines of delicate design elements

by Bob Leatherbarrow

I wrote this article during the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic and decided to share some thoughts I had while physical distancing in my studio. Hopefully life is returning to normal by now. Even if it has, my ideas are relevant to any studio practice. They begin with a story.

### New Studio, New Ideas

We moved more than 1,000 kilometers to a new home, which resulted in curtailing my studio practice for over a year while I packed one studio, relocated it, and renovated a new building into what became my dream studio. When the new studio was ready, I was struck by two questions: Can I still “do it”? and more important, “Do I still *want* to do it”? That moment represented a crisis in confidence for me, so I decided to take two months to step outside my comfort zone and work on new ideas.

Those months involved full days of thinking, testing, failing, more testing, and gradually seeing the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. A new series was born, and I felt energized and rejuvenated. That’s why now, every year, I take two months to explore during what I call my “self-imposed residency.” My process, outlined below, is a marriage of business (project management) and science (the scientific method). It consists of several phases—developing and assessing ideas, experimenting and testing, evaluating, documenting, and evaluating again.

### Developing an Artistic Statement

This first phase is to develop and assess ideas that explore your vision and values. Begin thinking several months in advance about a range of options to explore. My only rule is that it has to take me outside of my comfort zone. You can think of this as the preliminary draft of an artist statement. Consider the many possibilities, then whittle the list down while writing or sketching concepts until you can identify an idea worth committing to. This may take several iterations.

Plan what you will need to start testing and ultimately realize your objectives. Research and understand the technical foundations for the project. Consider what materials, tools, and equipment you will need. If necessary, make models using paper, cardboard, or clay, to help visualize, say, a sculptural piece. Keep refining and understanding your drawings or models until you feel ready to start the testing/experimental phase.

### Testing New Ideas

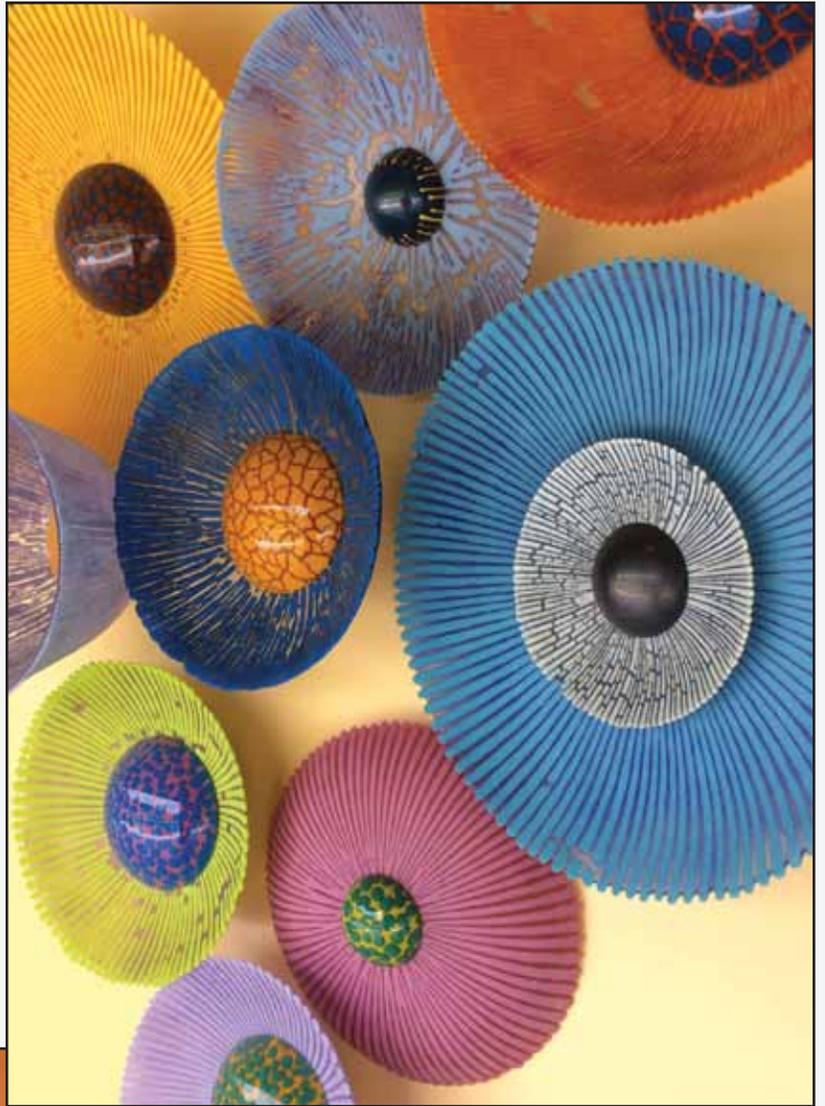
Start with an hypothesis for what to expect from the test and what critical parameters you are evaluating. Initial tests should be small scale using minimal materials and the shortest time necessary for firing the design. Do the minimum required. Don’t be afraid to fail. As long as you are learning, failure is good. If you are not failing, then you are not trying hard enough.

Evaluate the results of the test and how close they were to your expectations. Make critical observations of your test piece to help figure out what happened. An observation might be obvious, like a crack due to thermal shock, or it might be subtle, like a blurred edge that results from differing glass viscosities.

If your experiment results confirm your prediction, then your experiment is over and you can use the tested process to create predictable effects in future pieces. If your experiment results do not confirm your predictions, the next step is to carefully examine them to determine why your experiment didn't meet expectations.

### Evaluating One Variable at a Time

Use critical observations and what they imply to rethink the experiment. For example, what parameter could you change to achieve the desired result? Now redesign the experiment to test your new hypothesis. Choose the one parameter—for example, length of hold at a critical temperature—that you feel best controls the outcome and vary only that one parameter for the next experiment. If you vary more than one parameter at a time, you can't be certain which change really affected the outcome of the subsequent experiment. It may take many experiments, but with carefully controlled tests, you will either find a way to achieve success or determine that the project is not feasible.



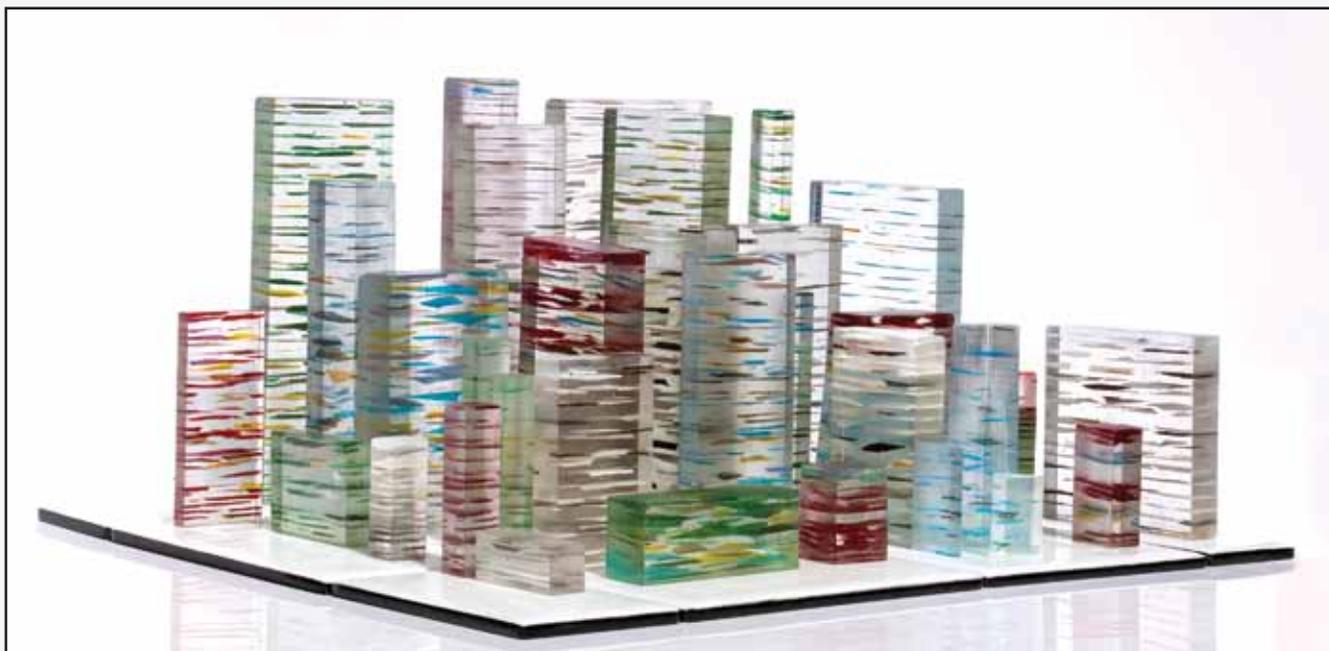
(Figure 3) Developing variations in kiln formed powder textures



(Figure 2) Translating powder wafers into linocut block printing and monoprint coloring

Be sure to document each step of the experimental process. Those notes will provide a trail of evidence that leads you to an outcome. They will also become part of your knowledge base and experience that you can apply to other projects. Taking an experimental approach is very appropriate for working with kiln formed glass, because making a piece can be separated into a series of design and construction events, each one ending in a firing in the kiln. With this sequential approach, you can isolate when specific changes occur and know what change in your test piece resulted in a specific outcome.

The final phase of this process is to assess the results and get feedback. Did the glass behave as expected? Did various tools—for example, cold working—give the desired finish? How did your gallery representatives and collectors respond to the work? You can assess the viability of your new direction by answering these questions.



(Figure 5) Using powder wafers as color fields in sculptures



(Figure 4) Finding new techniques for creating wall art

## Achieving a Better Understanding of How Glass Works

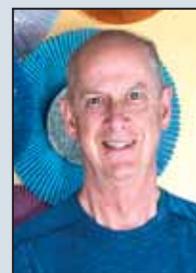
Although as artists we focus on the creative impact and artistic vision of new work, the fact remains that we also need to understand the physical and chemical properties of glass and how it responds to heating and cooling in the kiln. An advantage of taking this approach is developing an improved understanding of both the medium when making the design and how it responds to firing in your kiln. For example, understanding chemical reactions allows you to enhance outlines in delicate design elements (See Figure 1). If you learn more about programming firing schedules, you can achieve very specific shapes. You can even start physically distancing yourself from those capricious kiln gods and goddesses and maybe, with time, never rely on them again.

Every year my self-imposed residency has resulted in something interesting and exciting and has taken my work off in a new direction. These directions have included making powder wafers that translate into linocut block printing and monoprint coloring (Figure 2), variations in kiln formed powder textures (Figure 3), wall pieces (Figure 4), and the use of powder wafers as color fields in sculptures (Figure 5).

Due to the pandemic, many of us are confined to our studios. Let's turn that pent-up energy into a new series using this approach. Who knows? You may be like me and turn this into an annual event. Stay safe and stay creative.

GA

*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](http://www.leatherbarrowglass.com) to learn more about his work.*

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## Glass Talk



fallbrook art center

### Galaxy of Glass Exhibition - A Hidden Jewel in California

by Mary Perhacs

*We're very proud to hear from artists and collectors who feel we offer them well-presented, professional-level shows. This includes major fine art glass collectors, Harlan and Olivia Fischer from New York, who discovered Galaxy of Glass in 2011. Since that time they have attended the opening reception each year and contribute as show sponsors, buyers, and supporters of the glass teaching studio at our Fallbrook School of the Arts.*



Harlan & Olivia Fischer

For the past 23 years, Fallbrook Art Center has hosted an annual glass exhibition and sale, *Galaxy of Glass*. The show has grown from a weekend event to a 6-week major show in their annual lineup. Each year, the show continues to attract new artists and collectors – both established and just beginning. How did this small town nestled among avocado and citrus groves that is 40 that miles north of San Diego make such an accomplishment? According to longtime Director Mary Perhacs, the answer is very simple: “Because we thought we could. We had the artist resources and the commitment from our small community to build something unexpected in our town.”

When the Art Center, a former Rexall Pharmacy built in 1961 and acquired by the nonprofit in 1994, was created, Fallbrook already was home to many visual artists, writers, and performers. They were attracted to living and creating freely in the open

spaces with easy proximity to San Diego and Los Angeles.

The Center has developed and presents 7 other shows annually, including a renowned international show unlike any other, *World of Watercolor & Beyond* – the Signature American Int'l Watermedia Exhibition. The Center's goal is to offer a well-rounded program that benefits artists and collectors alike, and the program is sustained and growing.

*The opening reception for the Galaxy of Glass show at the Fallbrook Art Center is Saturday, September 12, 2020, from 5-7 pm. The show continues through October 25, 2020.*

#### **Call to Glass Artists-**

*Artist applications will be accepted through August 16th. Please visit our website for more details.*

*Fallbrookartcenter.org – Artist Opportunities*



Patty Gray teaching fused glass

#### **Fallbrook School of the Arts**

*The popularity of the Galaxy of Glass show led us to open a fused glass studio at our other division, Fallbrook School of the Arts in 2015. We were fortunate to convince San Diego glass artist Susan Hirsch to develop and manage the studio with the financial support of the Fischers, the County of San Diego, and other community supporters. Susan continues to offer classes and workshops along with Patty Gray, Suzanne Balestri, Krista Heron, and others. We have just expanded the program to include Stained Glass with instructor Michelle White.*

Contact Fallbrook School of the Arts if you are interested in teaching or taking a class: [fallbrookschoolofthearts.org](http://fallbrookschoolofthearts.org)

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IN THIS TOGETHER.  
 FORGING NEW  
 CONNECTIONS FOR  
 OUR COMMUNITY  
 SINCE 1903.

We connect and galvanize stained  
 glass artists and addicts across the  
 country to cultivate and advance the  
 craft's impact in contemporary art,  
 architecture, and life.

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 BE A PART OF OUR  
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# Introducing a new addition to the Cress line of Glass Kilns

## GLS2618E Clam Shell Glass Kiln



### Mark Hufford

The kiln I ordered from Cress far exceeded my expectations! Teaching in my home studio with smaller kilns just was not providing the space needed to fire students projects. This rectangle design is perfect! The shelf measuring 16 1/2" x 24 1/2" is just the perfect proportion! I highly recommend the GLS2618E for both home and retail studios. The combination of the brick base and 9" deep fiber lid allows more flexibility in my firings!

- 2.5" High temperature ceramic Fiber lid
- Firebrick floor and side walls
- 2.5" High temperature ceramic Fiber lid
- Slanted control panel for easy use and view
- Lid elements mounted in quartz tubes to help eliminate kiln dust
- Side elements for more even heat distribution
- Bartlett advanced 12-key controller with 6 programs (8 segments per program)
- Heavy duty built on stand with locking casters and bottom shelf
- Safety locking lid support
- Long-lasting solid-state relays

Model	Volts	AMPS	Temp.	Inside Dimensions	Outside dimensions	Plug type
GLS2618E	240VAC	26	1800 °F	26X17.5"X9 "	45" W x 30" D x 46"	6-30P



Cress Mfg. Co., Inc. 4736 Convair Dr. Carson City, NV 89706  
Phone (775) 884-2777 Fax (775) 884-2991 Website [www.cressmfg.com](http://www.cressmfg.com)  
Email [info@cressmfg.com](mailto:info@cressmfg.com)

# Wissmach Luminescent Glass



Craig Mitchell Smith uses  
Wissmach Luminescent Glass  
for his new *Grace* series.

“Only Wissmach Glass can  
give me the soft, graceful curves  
I love. It drapes beautifully in  
the kiln, Wissmach is the  
perfect glass for me.”

*Craig Mitchell Smith, Grace*  
Photography by Randy Blankenship



[www.WissmachGlass.com](http://www.WissmachGlass.com)