



Glass Alliance of Northern California  
www.glancinfo.org

## A GLANCE AT GLASS June 2011

### Message from the President

The contemporary studio glass movement is approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> year. Over 100 museums nationally, and many more galleries and educational institutions, have committed to either exhibitions or programs showcasing some aspect of the last 50 years in glass.

From June 18-30, 1962, Harvey Littleton, then a professor of ceramics at University of Wisconsin, held a historic glass blowing workshop at the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo Ohio. This workshop is now considered the birth of the studio glass movement. Littleton then went on to create the first university glass department, at the University of Wisconsin.

His early students included Dale Chihuly, Marvin Lipofsky and Fritz Dreisbach, all of whom have played seminal roles in the development and awareness of studio glass. Many of Littleton's students became the initial pioneers in the possibilities of studio glass and went on to start their own programs at various institutions. Since then the studio glass movement has developed exponentially, now including blown, hotworked, kilncast, fused, torchworked, constructed, and other techniques to create art made with glass.



*Fritz Dreisbach*

We are very pleased to start celebrating this momentous anniversary a few months early. Our inaugural Membership Event, on Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, in partnership with the Bay Area Glass Institute, will feature Fritz Dreisbach. Fritz will lecture regarding the studio glass movement and also demonstrate his wonderful glass blowing skills developed over the last 50 years, followed by a reception with a chance to speak with Fritz and meet the other members of the glass community. The event will take place at BAGI. It is free and open to the public. Please mark your calendars and bring a friend!



GLANC has a wonderful lineup of events for the fall:

- Fritz Dreisbach - Saturday, September 10
- Ethan Stern - Sunday, September 18
- Lucio Bubbaco - Sunday, October 16
- Hiroshi Yamano - Monday, November 7

All of these visiting artists are in partnership with the Bay Area Glass Institute. GLANC partially underwrites their stay, giving our members the opportunity to see/meet world class artists without leaving home. They are free to both you and your friends. Please take advantage of these wonderful opportunities!

For those of you who have wanderlust this fall, the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass is sponsoring a tour of Washington DC, and Pilchuck will have its annual auction tour. See page 6 for more information.

I hope to see you at our Membership Event with Fritz Dreisbach. It will be a great beginning to a year-long celebration commemorating the amazing rise of the studio glass movement!

*Susan Longini*

## Welcome New Members

*[Nancy Ruskin]*

A warm welcome to our new members, Eileen and Ralph Battat

The **Glass Alliance of Northern California** is a non-profit organization whose mission is to further the development and appreciation of art made from glass.

[www.GLANCinfo.org](http://www.GLANCinfo.org)   [info@glancinfo.org](mailto:info@glancinfo.org)

## GLANC visits Lachezar Boyadjiev and Penelope Comfort Starr

*[Susan Longini]*

GLANC members spent a terrific May Saturday in beautiful Marin County, north of San Francisco, visiting two artists. Our first stop was to the new home and studio of Lachezar Boyadjiev. He has converted an old lighting factory to a state of the art casting/coldworking facility. For years he designed the forms and created the plaster positives which he then transported to the Czech Republic to be cast into glass.

With this new facility he is able to complete the entire process himself, using primarily a non-lead crystal, which still retains the optical qualities but lessens the weight and environmental impact. The result is stunning sensual and joyful work in rich clear colors that allow light to define the shapes.



*Lachezar Boyadjiev*

We then visited the home/studio of Penelope Comfort Starr. Her work focuses on the discards of history. She is committed to post-consumer materials, creating castings with a mix of recycled glasses.

An award winning series depicts shreds of World War 1 letters sent to family members, using a transfer process to faithfully recreate the handwriting in the glass casting. Her current series is "industrial fossils", glass installations made by casting discarded factory parts and gears from shuttered New England factories. The resulting pieces could almost be Precambrian fossils.



*Penelope Comfort Starr*

While both artists use the casting process, each has an intensely personal vision. We were delighted that our favorite material can produce such a range of artful results.

## A Conversation with Tone Ørvik

[Susan Longini]

I had the opportunity to meet with sculptor Tone Ørvik at her Alameda home/studio, which was filled with large figurative glass sculptures. She has recently moved here from Seattle.



Tone Ørvik

**SJL: I am really pleased to be here and see your wonderful glass sculpture and your other sculpture as well, which I didn't realize you were doing. First, tell me about your background.**

TØ: I started out as a socially engaged academic, I suppose. I studied history and philosophy and religion at the University of Oslo, Norway. I worked in the European feminist movement since I was 15, and did a lot of writing about the living conditions of women in other countries. Since I was very young I was always engaged in some kind of social work. I worked with psychically handicapped orphans in London, and homeless boys in Dublin; I worked with criminal youth, and mentally ill adolescents in psychiatric care. That was what drove me ... to help someone less privileged than I was in a hands-on, direct way ... to find the answers to why they were in such need ... why there is systemic suffering and poverty, and how to change it.

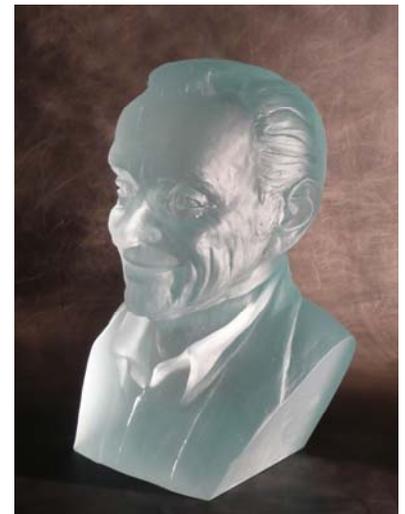
Trying to translate between my experiences of working with people in need and the theory systems I was studying was very frustrating. I came to a point of exhaustion and disillusionment by intellectual answers, especially my own! One day I picked up some paints and brushes and felt that I had entered another world, one that was not based in logic or justice, it was just open.



Then one day I got some Italian stone-carving tools on sale and bought a baby headstone in marble, and I started carving it in the kitchen with no real clue of technique. Immediately I knew that I had found what I had been looking for. The resistance in the white stone, and the meeting between it and me, and all the things that sparked in me, it was a complete mystery and I was in awe that I could be in a process and not know what would happen next. Sculpture started to take over more and more. [at left, Czardas]

I was not going to go to art school because I already had a huge student loan, and I was not looking at sculpture as a career – I was much more interested in using the process as a tool to understand myself, to remain in touch with and express what felt essential in me, and learn from the work that was created from that place.

For a while I lived in Sweden by a marble quarry. I had a studio in a barn, it was freezing cold. Some neighbors of mine were carvers. One of them came over one day with a huge truck with tons of clay, and he said, "I just had the feeling you should work with clay" and dumped 2 tons of raw clay on the barn floor. I had thought of clay as an inferior material – nothing was as pure as marble ... It was a very different process, much faster. You could turn out 3 sculptures in a night! And you didn't have to go to an icy cold studio out in the Swedish farmland!



[above, Larry Silverstein en face]

Later I moved to Washington State, and was fortunate to be an assistant to Ken Lundemo, a local sculptor and potter who was very expansive and very, very fun. We were both nuts about tools and the materials. We'd go to the Navy dump together and get these (probably radioactive) brass fittings and we'd cast bronze the old fashioned way with lots of near-disasters, and smoke up the neighborhood doing raku. I treasure having had this time to play and experiment with forms and materials.

My passion was all about people - faces and figures were what I was about. As I was showing and selling more, I finally had to admit that I needed formal training in anatomy. I went to figure drawing classes and workshops, and worked with a Russian master sculptor in Seattle, Boris Spivak. Then I started working with Eugene Daub, and was encouraged to do real portraiture. I started getting portrait commissions, and taught portraiture in clay at workshops and in my studio.



*Willow*

***SJL: I'm having a really good time, sitting here, looking at your sculptures. While we've been talking it rained and now it's sunny, and the sculptures have changed! Tell me how you transitioned into glass.***

TØ: 2004 was an important year for me; I had two students who influenced my work and my life significantly. One was Drew Bennett, who worked with his father David Bennett at Bennett Glass nearby. David said "Your work would look great in glass – go to SOFA and see what people do in glass!" So I went to SOFA Chicago with a little business card with 4 sculptures on it, and got such great response from galleries that I thought I really had to look into this glass business.

Drew and I cast the first figures, and I was floored, totally amazed, I couldn't stop looking at them in every light! The other, very talented student became my husband, Brad. His understanding and encouragement have been pivotal in my work. We became equally besotted with glass, and went together to the Czech Republic to meet Zdenek Lhotsky who said he would cast for me. David Bennett liked one of my small figures especially and put it in his house when Habatat Florida brought a collectors tour. He wanted to see if it caught Linda Boone's eye. It did and she invited me to her International Invitational a few weeks later. The first time I was there I sold 5 out of 6 works and got a commission for a portrait. I feel very privileged. It has been amazing to meet the outstanding artists and very knowledgeable collectors. Now I'm turned on by every technique in glass.

***SJL: You have work in several different scales. What are your thoughts regarding the power of a piece in relation to scale?***



TØ: If a piece is good, it will be powerful in all sizes. When it comes to glass, we seem to have an intuitive appreciation of the sheer technical difficulties of creating large pieces, and there is so much focused light in a large cast piece that it can just blow your mind. I like to work big, and it's getting bigger. To cast glass as thick as "Wind," for example, takes 41 days in the kiln. That size means that I depend on somebody else. *[above, Wind - Sun glass]*

It can take a whole year to get work back from the Czech Republic. As frustrating as that is, they do amazing work. To control the time frame better, I cast some larger pieces myself – mostly in relief. I am interested in using glass relief for architectural purposes. I just got an award to study architectural glass at Corning this summer. I'd love to do full figure portrait commissions in glass relief, for example, and show how the body has language just as much as faces. It could be mounted to a wall, or *be* a wall.

I also do work that doesn't lend itself to glass, either because it is too big, or because it demands a specific medium other than glass. In an age where some are focused on conceptual non-medium-based art, I continue to be inspired by the materials themselves and the endless possibilities of the processes. The materials are ancient; I love being connected to history in that way. At the same time I'm urged to explore how I can merge classical techniques and content with the contemporary technology of glass making, and take part in this very rapid evolution.



*Belle*

***SJL: When you are working, do you find yourself saying “This work belongs in bronze, or stone, or glass?”***

TØ: Definitely. It is fun to work with glass because it is intrinsically so attractive, yet glass can also seem remote, idealized and stylized – even unintentionally decorative. Some of my pieces are not meant to be attractive; they have a different

message, and need a denser material to be more immediately “human” and approachable.

***SJL: And that is glass’s own existential question. So many times it is dismissed because it is inherently beautiful. Tell me about the portraits I see.***

TØ: The portraits came out of anatomy studies. I found that I loved doing them. There is the challenge, and the responsibility, of getting it “right” – not just likeness, but a real feeling of that person. You have to connect. You meet very interesting people and you want to honor them, and portray the best of who they are. Casting portraits in glass captures both strength and fragility, but most of all glass adds to a sense of timelessness and essence.

***SJL: Where can we see your work?***

TØ: You can see it at Habatat Florida and Virginia, and Riley Gallery, Cleveland, and here at the studio.

## **BAGI news**

Flameworker Kathleen Elliot has joined the Board of Directors at the Bay Area Glass Institute (BAGI). Kathleen has worked with glass for fourteen years, having studied at Pilchuck Glass School with masters Laura Donefer, Shane Fero and Robert Mickelsen. She will bring this experience to her first initiative as a board member -- building up BAGI's flameworking program with Visiting Artist events, demos and lectures, and a variety of flameworking classes.

If you are interested in taking a certain type of flameworking class, studying with a certain instructor, or in teaching or presenting at BAGI, contact Kathleen directly at [kathleenelliott@comcast.net](mailto:kathleenelliott@comcast.net). New classes and artist presentations will be announced through BAGI and in the GLANC Events Calendar. Visit BAGI at [www.bagi.org](http://www.bagi.org).

## **Pilchuck Glass School Auction Tour, Oct. 12-15, 2011**

*[Yoshiko Saheki, Annual Fund Manager, Pilchuck Glass School]*

**Join us for an unparalleled four-day exploration of the contemporary art scene in the Pacific Northwest!**

**October 12-15, 2011**

This is custom-made for individuals who want to experience Pilchuck's Annual Auction **and** more! Our auction is the largest glass art auction in the world, featuring hundreds of works by established and promising glass artists. Discerning buyers, uninitiated art enthusiasts, and those who are merely curious choose to be on the **Auction Tour** as well. During your four days with us, you will view works in private collections set in spectacular homes and meet artists in their studios. Red carpet admission to Pilchuck's Annual Auction is included in the cost of the tour.

For more information and reservations, visit [http://www.pilchuck.com/events/auction\\_tour.aspx](http://www.pilchuck.com/events/auction_tour.aspx)

## **AACG's Spectacular September Trip for Glass Lovers to Washington, D.C., is not to be Missed!**

*[Barry Rice, AACG trip Chairman]*

Glass Lovers will enjoy every minute of AACG's plans for this long weekend in the Washington, D.C., area. The trip will begin early Thursday morning, September 8, 2011, and conclude early Sunday afternoon. You will need to check into the hotel on Wednesday, September 7.

The final schedule is nearly complete, and we will hit the ground running early Thursday morning, and on Sunday we will end with a home visit, and then a brunch at the Maurine Littleton Gallery. From the gallery the buses will take all the folks departing on Sunday to Reagan National airport.

In between Thursday and Sunday we will visit 11 wonderful homes; have a VIP tour of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum (plenty of glass); a VIP tour of the fabulous Kreeger Museum; a VIP tour of the Textile Museum by the director of the museum; a garden tour with a lunch stop; a special progressive dinner at three studios in one complex featuring glass artists Tim Tate and Elizabeth Mears, and ceramic artist Margaret Boozer.

The trip will include all lunches (including a catered luncheon at two of the homes); all dinners; and a brunch on Sunday. It will also include museum entrance fees and goodies and water on the buses. Our home hosts will be our guests for our gala Saturday night farewell banquet.

**The cost of the trip is \$695.00 per person.** Hotel and transportation to Washington, D.C., and to the hotel are on your own. We are estimating a \$200 charitable tax deduction included in the price.

Because most of the hosts do not want more than 40 people in their homes at one time, we are limiting the trip to 80 people. We are obliged to use two buses of 40, and flip visits between two homes. **This trip will be on a first come, first served basis. So, if you want to be on this trip, fill out the registration form and send your money.**

We will be staying at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, and a very special price of \$149.00 plus tax per night has been arranged. This price will be honored two nights before and after the trip for all of you who wish to spend an extra few nights in Washington on your own. This price is good for two people or a single person. You will make your own reservations at the Hyatt. Call the hotel at 301-657-1234 and ask for Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass room block. These rooms will be held until August 8.

Washington has a wonderful Metro system. The Hyatt is right over a Metro station. So, it is perfect for trips to central Washington and all of its historic attractions. And for all of you, who are brave of heart, one can take the Metro from Reagan Airport right to the Hyatt for \$4.50 per person, in not too much more time than a taxi.

Hope to see you in Washington,  
Barry Rice, AACG trip Chairman

For more information and reservations, visit <http://contempglass.org/events/entry/washington-d.c.-trip>

# Calendar of Events

*If you are looking for some wonderful glass events in San Francisco Bay area or afar, here is a list of events that are sure to please.*

**GLANC + BAGI: Membership Event September 10: Fritz Dreisbach reception, lecture, demo**  
BAGI Studio, SJ

## **GLANC + BAGI: Visiting Artists**

- Ethan Stern September 18
- Lucio Bubbaco October 16
- Hiroshi Yamano November 7

*Please visit these websites for information on events and exhibits.*

Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass:  
[www.contempglass.org](http://www.contempglass.org)

Bay Area Glass Institute: [www.bagi.org](http://www.bagi.org)

Bullseye Gallery: [www.bullseyegallery.com](http://www.bullseyegallery.com)

Habatat Galleries: [www.habatat.com](http://www.habatat.com)

Pilchuck Glass School: [www.pilchuck.com](http://www.pilchuck.com)

Public Glass: [www.publicglass.org](http://www.publicglass.org)

Sculpturesite Gallery: [www.sculpturesite.com](http://www.sculpturesite.com)

SOFA WEST: Santa Fe August 4-7  
[www.sofaexpo.com](http://www.sofaexpo.com)

### **GLANC Newsletter Staff:**

Editor: Susan Longini  
Formatting: Lisa Stambaugh

### **Contributors to this Issue:**

Susan Longini, Nancy Ruskin, Yoshiko Saheki,  
Barry Rice