



Glass Alliance of Northern California
www.glancinfo.org

A GLANCE AT GLASS Fall 2010

Message from the President:

Have you noticed that more and more information is moving online? In fact, we hope you received our first Evite, to a lecture featuring Vladimira Klumpar November 9th. So to become part of the 21st century information age, GLANC is taking an exciting direction. With this issue of the newsletter, we are moving to an electronic format. This means we can have more visuals, furnish direct links to other sites, and create a separate electronic calendar that can easily be updated. For this Fall issue, you will also receive the newsletter in hardcopy. If you choose to continue to receive the newsletters in hardcopy, GLANC is happy to accommodate. Please call me at 510-552-4366 or email me at slongini@comcast.net. **Unless you notify me, you will be receiving your newsletter only electronically starting with the Winter issue.**

Another change for GLANC is our new commitment to bringing renowned artists to the SF Bay Area for lectures and partnering with other institutions to provide workshops so our regional artists can experience world-class instruction without having to leave home. The first two events are coming up quickly: Martin Janecky will give a demonstration and lecture at BAGI Sunday, October 31, 1:00-4:00. It is free to the public and GLANC is helping to underwrite the event. Valdimira Klumpar, renowned Czech artist working in cast glass, is in the US for a short while and has agreed to speak about her work Tuesday, November 9th at Steven and Allison Aldrich's home. This event is also free but spaces are limited. If you did not get your Evite and are interested in coming, please call or email me at 510-552-4366 or slongini@comcast.net

Our GLANC tour to Scottsdale is almost full, and we are thrilled that Preston Singletary is flying down from Seattle to be our private docent for

his retrospective at the Heard Museum. Our travel chair Eva Klein has done a magnificent job in creating an itinerary that will educate, thrill, and exhaust us!

If you have any suggestions for taking further advantage of our expanded online presence or our commitment to bringing in speakers, please feel free to contact me.

I hope to see you at an event soon!

Susan Longini

A warm welcome to our new members.

Erika Kohr Island
Tone Ørvik/Brad Matthews

[Nancy Ruskin]

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 info@glancinfo.org

An Interview with George and Dorothy Saxe

On July 28, 2010 with the passing of George Saxe, we lost a visionary member of the glass community. On February 15, 2006 I had the privilege of interviewing George and Dorothy for this newsletter. It was both delightful and enlightening to speak with them, and I felt the interview was worth publishing again.

Susan: George and Dorothy, thank you for consenting to this interview. It is an auspicious time, coming on the heels of the opening of the new De Young Museum with its wonderful Saxe Gallery of contemporary crafts. It's been a long journey to this point, and perhaps we can talk about that journey a bit.

How/when did you begin collecting art? You are known for your collection of art in craft media. How did you decide on this genre, and glass in particular?

D: In the late '70s we decided to find a leisure activity to do together. We had no idea what it would be, we were not historically collectors but always loved glass. We had some Steuben and Lalique, and I loved handmade things. In 1980 we saw a catalog at a friend's house from the Corning Museum New Glass. We fell in love with the pictures. George said "Maybe this is something we could do: collect glass". 6 Weeks later Oakland Museum had Americans in Glass. It was the first time we saw a body of work in glass. For 1 ½ years we collected very ambitiously. Then we had to slow down because there was nothing more to buy at that moment. At that point we branched out to metal, ceramics, wood, fiber.

S: Did you enter into collecting with a "plan" or when did a plan evolve? What was it?

G: There was only one way I wanted to it. As best we could, we would say "We are collectors" and set a goal of putting together the best collection of contemporary glass that exists. Dorothy thought it was too late, but as it turns out it was absolutely the right time, 1980. That was our plan, but we did not know how to do it. There was very little written. We looked at all the artists in the Corning Catalog. When we saw

work we liked, we would mark down where that artist lived. We got a map of the US, put pins where the artists lived. When we got a grouping of pins, we would go there and talk to the artists, look at the work, and ask questions. We also asked the questions "Who are the best 10 artists working in glass in your opinion?" When the same names would keep cropping up, we would go there and meet those artists. And it started evolving. We started going to galleries and they helped us. I got involved on the board of the AM Craft Council and on the board of Pilchuck School, which put me more in touch with everything.

S: How have your tastes evolved?

G: I don't think that they have. Of course, I liked optical glass more at the beginning.

We would go into a gallery, and I would go one way and she would go another and we'd meet in the middle and would ask each other what was our favorite piece. 99% of the time it was the same. If we could I would be my responsibility to sell her on a piece, and it might take 2 years. If I liked one piece and she liked another, it would be another point of discussion. That was something that required conversation, discussion, decision making, all those wonderful things. As it has happened, it has literally changed our lives.

S: How often/when/why/how do you collect a particular artist?

G: If we bought an artist's work, we have followed an artist. We have collected in depth. That shows the development of that artist.

D: One of the goals was to also buy the best of the best of each artist. Some of the early work did not have staying power, but we have kept some of the early pieces to show how work has changed from vessels to sculpture.

S: You have arguably one of the best private collections in the USA, or anywhere for that matter. When/how/why did you decide to share this with the world?

D: We always knew that we wanted to share the collection with anyone who was interested, that it was unfair to artists to squirrel it away for our



own pleasure. So from the beginning we have had groups come, thousands if I add it all up. And the ultimate extension of that was a Museum Show (the De Young Museum in 1999) and ultimately a museum collection. We always intended to leave the collection to a museum. We gifted 60 pieces to the Toledo Museum (1993). We've given to many museums over time. That was always part of the plan: to share and to give. A lot of people were not aware of studio glass, and as people come through, their horizons were widened. Some have started collecting. Others just have learned to appreciate.

S: At what point did you decide to work with the De Young and create a permanent collection?

G: We were always looking for a fine arts museum. We wanted a museum that would take contemporary craft and would give it the same tender loving care, attach the same importance that they give paintings and sculpture. We started interviewing museums. We found the Toledo Museum was very interested, and had around 7000 pieces of glass, but little or no contemporary glass. We had several conditions, one of which was hiring a contemporary glass curator. They ultimately fell in love with the entire craft collection. We gifted 60 pieces of glass, but they borrowed 60 works of crafts and created an exhibition that traveled around the country. So that started the whole thing.

D: We had always wanted to have the collection in a local museum. The De Young had just been through the earthquake and were not sure about the future.

G: We decided to invite all the curators that had shown our collection, select what they wanted, prioritize, and then we would divide the collection. They all came and did that. Before we went ahead with that I called up Harry Parker, director of the De Young and told him what we were doing. I said "Harry, you have one last chance. Are you interested?" He had never seen the collection. He came with the chief curator and the curator of American art and when they came, it blew his mind. We said, "We really want this collection in San Francisco." He said "Write it up!" The rest is history.

Was this a matter of you educating the curators or were they already wanting to expand the range of art in the museum?

D: Our first exhibition at the Oakland Museum in 1986, the curator was Ken Trap. His background was ceramics, he knew nothing about glass. But he became very knowledgeable about glass through our collection. By process of curating our exhibitions, the curators became educated.

S: In The Art of Craft, 1999, the book stated you promised nearly 600 works. Is this a gift over years? Will the Saxe Gallery be a continually rotating gallery of works?

D: Some of the things were outright gifts. Basically this is a promised gift, but we will give to the museum over time. They don't have the space for the entire collection. The displayed work will rotate over time. It will be a constantly evolving display.

G: The only pieces they can take are pieces that will be shown at some point. Other pieces will go to smaller museums, smaller towns around the country. We want to give to places that really need pieces.

S: This is a departure for the De Young in terms of media in permanent collections. The Saxe Gallery has a very distinct and different feel about it. Is this permanent exhibit expanding the definition of fine art?

G: We are told people are spending more time in that gallery than in any other gallery in the museum. They ask questions. They want to know more than is on the informational cards. That interest has put a whole emphasis on

different art forms. We also have work in 5 other galleries within the museum, including in the contemporary art gallery and the textile gallery. It is not confined in the Saxe gallery. It is spread around the museum. Now THAT is a breakthrough. That was our goal, and we achieved it.

S: Are you continuing to collect personally?

G: Yes, but not to the same extent. I want to collect only those things that I feel lifts the whole collection up by acquiring the piece, like the Kiki Smith piece we bought (installed at the Saxe Gallery in the De Young).

S: How will the Museum continue to update its collection?

D: If in our lifetime, the museum wants to deaccession something, they must consult with us. After that they must use the proceeds to buy work in the same medium. Clay breeds clay. They can buy anything they want as long as it relates to the material. We did not want to tie their hands in the future.

G: We set up an Endowment fund for acquisitions.

S: What are your thoughts on the future direction of glass art?

D: Artists working in glass have gotten a lot more sophisticated: more figurative work, more cast glass, so there is more sculpture. I think some of it is pretty darned exciting. I think they're just using the material to make art like other artists use material to make art. That's why museums have become more interested in showing glass. The work has gotten very advanced.

G: But there's more. The exhibition we had at the de Young in 1990, 11000 square feet, 225 pieces in that exhibition. People referred to our "glass collection" even though it had glass is compelling.

S: Your philanthropy and involvement in the glass community extends beyond the museum gift. Can you speak to that a little?

G: We've gifted to 15 Museums, Pilchuck, CCA, the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco. We are on many boards and

committees. We are just involved. And it's been a treat, a pleasure. It's been a life changing experience for us. The real reward is the people we met. Our best friends now are collectors, artists, curators, dealers all over the country.

D: We've gotten much more out of this than we've given. Truly.

S: Your involvement has been a pleasure for all of us. Thank you for sharing!

[Susan Longini]

Erika Kohr Island Pilchuck Scholarship Winner



The Clearing Winds

This past August I was given the opportunity by the Glass Alliance of Northern California to attend a class at Pilchuck Glass School. This was made possible by a generous scholarship program provided by its members. The course focus was lampworking with an emphasis on the use of soft glass (furnace glass), and was taught by Kari Russel-Pool.

Throughout my career as a glass artist I have worked with furnace glass and have primarily made blown sculpture. A year ago I set up a

lampworking studio at my home with the desire to make detailed elements that would be incorporated into sculptures in the hot shop. I found success, but also limitations due to gaps in knowledge. Having never watched a lampworker before, I approached the torch with the same mindset as though I was working with a furnace and a glory hole (reheating chamber). I realized that I could waste time reinventing this process, or I could find a skilled lampworker who could teach the differences in approach specific to tabletop lampworking.

There were many illuminating moments during my class at Pilchuck as I learned techniques to work or stabilize the glass in ways that could only be done behind the torch. We also learned to build larger structures using techniques that would be impossible in the hot shop. I am grateful that I did not spend a second year believing that it was a lack of skill that was holding me back, but rather a lack of knowledge.

Additionally, I appreciated the experience of being immersed in a community of artists and problem solvers for 2 ½ weeks. As artists we often are cloistered away in our private studios. My time at Pilchuck Glass School was an opportunity to learn and share both creative and technical information in a supportive and noncompetitive environment.

Schools such as Pilchuck are important in that they create an environment that supports both technical learning and creative thinking. Our technical skills are only half of the story when our desire is to create artwork. We learn to master our craft so that we can shift our focus from execution to simply giving our ideas a voice. When we have a strong response to artwork, we are not only responding to the physical artwork as viewed, but to the mind of the maker. This is something that artists do unintentionally as we often cannot separate ourselves from our artwork. Skills are wasted without vision, and our visions will die without the skills to actualize them. This is the balancing act of the artist.

[Erika Kohr Island]

Fire or Sunset?

Dr. Irvin Yalom is the author of a novel entitled "Lying on the Couch." In the book, Yalom's character ponders over a piece of art created by Jay Musler. It is Jay's signature piece, a red "city-scape" bowl. Yalom's character believes the bowl represents a city on fire. I was surprised by this description. I felt the bowl was reflecting a sunset. So, later in this article I'll let you know what Jay says about his infamous creation.



Jay got "turned on" to glass art during his high school years. The summer before Jay became a senior in high school, his teacher took a class by Marvin Lapofski. As a result, Jay's teacher created a studio at the high school. Jay took that class and his teacher encouraged Jay to take a summer class with Marvin at California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC). After that summer class, Jay enrolled as a full-time student at CCAC. He studied at CCAC from 1968 to 1971.

For ten years, Jay worked for other artists in the Bay Area. Then, in 1981 he had his first show at Habitat Galleries in Detroit, Michigan. This benchmark show catapulted Jay into business. He was able to purchase some much-needed equipment and to rent studio space with four other artists.

Jay started making bowls and masks in the late 1970's. The Impressionist painters gave Jay the inspiration to paint on glass. Jay continues to explore different painting techniques. Early in Jay's career, he used mostly red, brown and

orange earth tones. The referenced “city-scape” bowl is an example

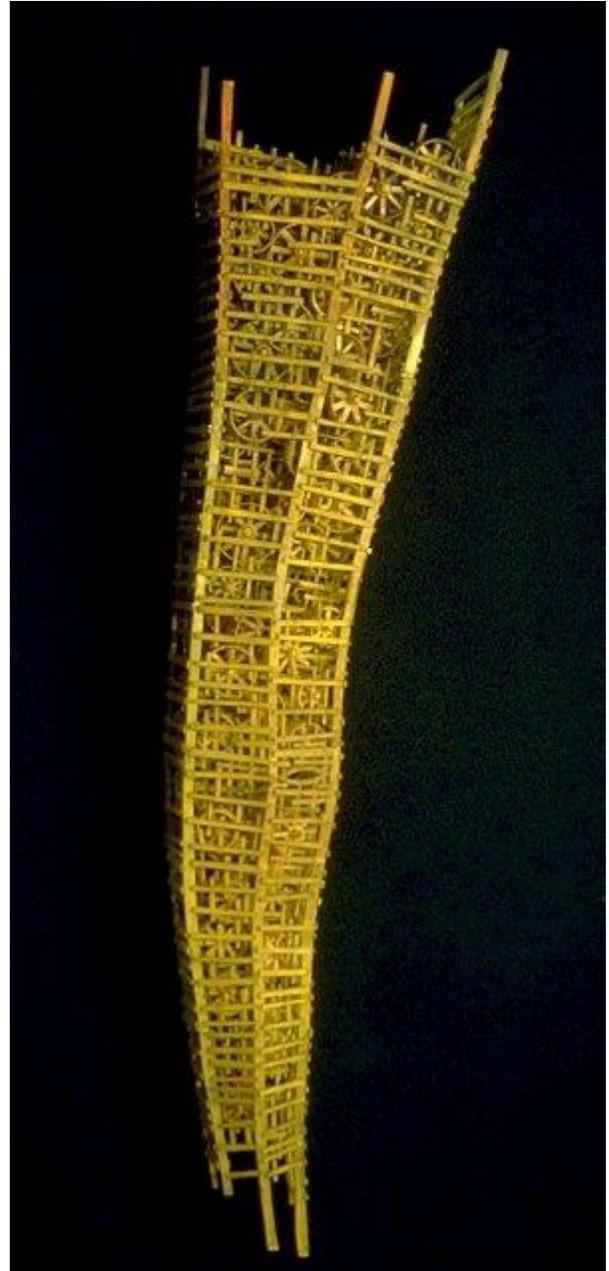
In the early 1980’s, Jay’s works became increasingly larger and more detailed. In 1983, Jay started creating boats. Some of these works were as large as six-feet long. In addition, some of the masts were as high as five feet. Jay even worked on the inside surfaces of the boats. These boats were shown at the Dorothy Weiss Gallery.



Jay’s detailed wall panels came onto the scene in the 90’s. Jay created elaborate lamp-work parts and applied the parts to sandblasted large sheets of painted glass. Metal frames were added for stability. These panels gave him more opportunities to paint. By the late 90’s Jay started using a greater variety of colors. Many of his goblets and panels radiate with yellow, green and red tones.



Recently, creating art has been more difficult for Jay. Jay says that since his heart attack last year, he has forgotten many things. He had to practically start all over again. Gradually, his memory came back and he is now very excited to work on his art every day. He feels that he has regained his past skills and is now expanding his expressiveness by applying more colors and more created items to his work. He feels that he is finally evolving again. Jay describes his current work as another breakout.



As for the notorious bowl, all Jay would say is that when he lived in San Francisco in the 70's, he went to a lot of musical events. Most of the music of that time was about anger, fear and annihilation. This was the era of the Viet Nam War. Perhaps the work represents the destruction of a city and perhaps not. It is up to you to interpret the work.

BAGI'S 15th annual Great Glass Pumpkin Patch

The 15th annual Great Glass Pumpkin Patch held at the Palo Alto Art Center was again a huge success. The event, always held on the first weekend in October, was held on October 2nd and 3rd with the exhibition during the week preceding , which included live torchworking demonstrations. A huge variety of pumpkins were available, from artists from the Bay Area and as far north as Ashland, Oregon, including pumpkin teapots, which sold out the first day. 5160 pumpkins were sold, with the proceeds benefiting two non-profits, BAGI and the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation. Mark your calendars for next year's pumpkin patch, which will be held again the first weekend in October, but will be held at Rinconada Park, which is across the street from the Art Center, during the center's renovation.

[Mark Murai]

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Susan Longini, Mark Murai, Shirley Roberts

Calendar of Events

BAGI Events

Bay Area Glass Institute
401 E. Taylor, Suite 115
San Jose, CA 95112
Info: studio@bagi.org

Sunday, October 31, 2010, 1:00-4:00 pm

Czech artist Martin Janecky

lecture and demo
Co-sponsored by GLANC

November 14

Michael Janis lecture

(As always, a Patron luncheon will be held before the lecture.)

Winter Wonderland, dates to be announced

December 18

Make an Ornament

January 20–23

Jenny Pohlman and Sabrina Knowles class

Sunday, January 23 demo

February 5, 2011

Make a Heart event for Valentine's Day

Sunday, May 8, 2011

Make a Flower for Mother's Day

Sunday, June 19, 2011

Make a Paperweight for Father's Day

Kids Classes will continue all year long.

Kids Summer Camp, dates to be announced

Cabrillo College Events

November 5- December 10th
Reception Thursday, Nov. 4th 4:30-6PM. Artist's Talk
@6 PM in the gallery

Cabrillo Gallery

**Fragile Strength, recent works by Cassandra
Straubing and Charlene Reinhart**

6500 Soquel Dr, Aptos, CA 95003-3198

For more information: contact- Cassandra Straubing
(408) 924-4685

or ksondraw@hotmail.com or Cabrillo Gallery at
www.cabrillo.edu/services/artgallery

GLANC Events

October 21-24, 2010

GLANC Goes to SCOTTSDALE

There are 2 spaces left for this amazing tour

Info: slongini@comcast.net

Tuesday, November 9, 2010, 7:30 pm

Renown Czech artist Vladimira Klumpar

lecture at the home of Steven and Allison Aldrich

Please email slongini@comcast.net for details

Public Glass Events

October 30, 2010, 6:00-10:00 pm

Hot Glass, Cold Beer

Demo by Helen Lee, live music

1750 Armstrong, SF

Info: www.publicglass.org

SJSU Events

October 26-28

Teresa Hanson, BFA Exhibition

Reception Tuesday, October 26 6:00-7:00 pm

November 1-4

Adon Valenziano MFA, Advancement to Candidacy Exhibition

Reception November 2, 6:00-7:30 pm

November 9-11

Adriel Tong, BFA Exhibition

Reception Tuesday, November 9, 6:00-7:00 pm

November 22 – 24

Morgan Chivers, BFA Exhibition

Reception Tuesday, November 23, 6:00-7:00

Tuesday, November 30

Mark Zirpel, Artist Lecture

5:00-6:00 pm Art Building, room 133

November 29- December 2

Monday 10am-8pm

Tuesday and Wednesday 8:00am – 8:00pm

Thursday 8:00am – 4:00pm

Glass and Ceramics Guild Annual Holiday sale and fundraiser

December 6-9

Annual Glass Student Exhibition and fundraiser

Herbert Saunders Gallery, IS building (next to the Hot
Shop).

Reception Tuesday, December 6, 5:30-7:00 pm

For more information about any of the above events:

contact- Cassandra Straubing (408) 924-4685 or
ksondraw@hotmail.com