

ART ● CRAFT ● TRAVEL ● INTERIOR DESIGN

AMERICAN **Style**

SPRING 2012

2012 ART & DESIGN ISSUE

Artists' Spaces

One-of-a-Kind Makeovers
in Pittsburgh and Toronto

STUDIO ART GLASS AT 50

Students, the '70s
and Sweet Inspiration

TOP 10 FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

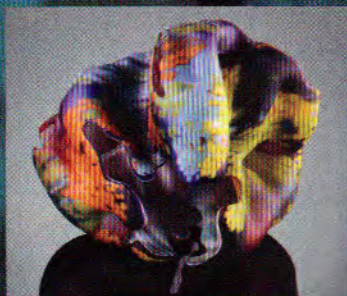
79



PLAYING WITH FIRE

As enterprising art students quickly learned, there's more than one way to manipulate glass

By Lee Lawrence



M. LEE FATHERBERG

Marvin Lipofsky (in background image, working at the glass studio of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1967) brought the glassblowing techniques he learned in Wisconsin from Harvey Littleton to California. Inset: "IGS VII 2000-02 #7" exemplifies his mastery of fluid, organic shapes and vivid color.

WERE IT POSSIBLE DURING the 1970s to have Googled a heat-sensitive map of the United States, it would no doubt have picked up the flickering glow of hot furnaces and molten glass from Maine to Oregon, Wisconsin to North Carolina, California to Washington state. It was a decade when the experimentation and the discoveries of the '60s coalesced into a discernible movement that would forever transform the fields of craft and art.

A number of forces came together to make this happen, not least of which was that many of the original studio glass pioneers scattered to teaching posts across the country. While Harvey Littleton continued to turn students on to glass at the University of Wisconsin, Kent State University hired his assistant, Henry Halem, to set up a glass program in Ohio. Meanwhile, Norm Schulman set up a furnace at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Marvin Lipofsky introduced glass at the California College of Arts and Crafts, Joel Philip Myers taught at Illinois State University, Robert Fritz started the glass studies program at San Jose State University ... and the list goes on.

BY THE EARLY '70s, A SECOND GENERATION of artists found themselves twirling blowpipes and forging a complex web of relationships. A case in point: in 1965, Harvey Littleton's student Bill Boysen set up a furnace at the Penland School of Crafts, where, in the summer of 1967, Mark Peiser showed up to try his hand at blowing glass. In 1971, Peiser, who'd stayed on as Penland's first resident glass artist, taught Richard Ritter, who in turn would instruct Richard Jolley in a summer workshop Jolley took after completing his BFA under Michael Taylor, who had studied with Littleton.

Many of the original studio glass pioneers scattered to teaching posts across the country.

Meanwhile, Lipofsky's student Richard Marquis fired up a hot shop in 1970 in Seattle, where one of his students, Steve Beasley, would go on to co-found an arts cooperative that brought the furnace and glory hole within reach of the public at large.

THEN THERE WAS DALE CHIHULY, who would be as successful at shaping public perception and growing the business of studio glass as he was at creating his own aesthetic. After studying with Littleton in Wisconsin, he got his MFA at RISD under Schulman and went to Italy on a Fulbright fellowship. He returned to RISD in 1969, this time to teach.



COURTESY OF TOLEDO BLADE

Dale Chihuly, an icon of the studio glass movement, has inspired—and instructed—many up-and-coming student glass artists who went on to become celebrated masters of glass art themselves.

And who were some of Chihuly's students over the next 11 years? Toots Zynsky, James Carpenter, Bruce Chao, Benjamin Moore, Dan Dailey, Therman Statom ... More significantly, after teaching summer workshops at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, in 1971 Chihuly headed home to Washington state, where, with the help of fellow artists, he founded the Pilchuck Glass School.

Two remarkable philanthropists, John and Anne Gould Hauberg, gave Pilchuck a 40-acre tract of a tree farm they owned and funded the school for the next 10 years. On this ramshackle campus of tents and hot shops, pioneers like Jack Schmidt and Fritz Dreisbach taught newly minted graduates like Moore, William Morris and Statom. The latter had been contemplating shifting to ceramics until he saw Dreisbach at work.



COURTESY OF PENLAND SCHOOL OF CRAFTS



COURTESY OF PILCHUK GLASS SCHOOL

Glass Scrapbook: The '70s



COURTESY OF FRITZ DREISBACH

COPYRIGHT MARVIN LIPOFSKY



COURTESY OF PILCHUK GLASS SCHOOL



COURTESY OF FRITZ DREISBACH

Snapshots from an era (clockwise from top left): a young Richard Ritter, who, after studying with Mark Peiser at Penland, became the school's resident artist from 1972-1976; the first hot shop (and some of the first work) at Pilchuck, on the grounds of a former tree farm; a handmade Glass Workshop sign pointing the way to Pilchuck; the board of the Glass Art Society (from left: Dan Dailey, Marvin Lipofsky, Jon Clark, Henry Halem, Audrey Handler, Michael Taylor and Sylvia Vigiletti) posing for posterity at the 1978 conference; two funky visuals from a decade of studio glass: the first GAS invitation, from 1971, hand drawn by Fritz Dreisbach, and a poster from the 1971 Great Glass Symposium produced by the University of California, Berkeley, and the California College of Arts and Crafts. For more images from this era of studio glass, visit www.americanstyle.com.

FOR ALL THEIR PASSION and dedication to glass, artists wouldn't have gotten far if it hadn't been for the discovery—and supply—of better-suited material to work with. Most of the activity at this stage centered around blowing and working with hot glass, and at first artists relied on the kinds of marbles that Dominick Labino had brought to the 1962 Toledo workshops. These were cheap, indeed, but they were also opaque and tough to blow.

Scouting for alternatives, artists approached glass companies for access to a precious commodity: their broken and waste glass, known as “cullet.” “It wasn't perfect glass,” Myers explains, “but it was very usable and not terribly expensive.” In 1974, they found a steady source: for 3 cents per pound, O.J. “Jiggs” Gabbert sold cullet he procured from West Virginia-based Fenton Art Glass to Halem, Myers and Dreisbach. It was the first of many orders. “Eventually,” says Myers, “everybody started to use cullet,” and much of it came through Gabbert.

The range of work made by the artists with virtually the same cullet was remarkable. This is what hit Peiser as early as 1971, when he traveled to California.

“I'm looking and thinking, ‘God, they're doing everything different,’ ” he recalled. “And I just kind of blurted out, ‘You know, we really should get together, these guys from the East and the West.’ ”

WHEN PEISER AND DREISBACH got back to Penland, they told director Bill Brown they wanted to hold a conference. “And Bill said, ‘Sure, what can we do?’ ” Just like that, the Glass Art Society (GAS) was born, and with it a series of annual conferences that continues today. “It's just unimaginable, even in the '60s,” Peiser said. “Bill was such a special man.”

Nor was Brown the only non-glass artist that helped the movement consolidate. Curators mounted occasional shows that gave artists exposure and encouragement, and publishers began disseminating books and magazines. Some, such as the *Glass Art Society Journal* and Littleton's 1971 *Glassblowing: A Search for Form*, were aimed at artists; others, such as Ray and Lee



Participants at the third annual Glass Art Society meeting in 1973, pose for a photo at the Fenton Art Glass Factory in Williamstown, W.V. GAS III and IV, as they were affectionately called, were both held at Fenton, which allowed artists generally accustomed to working solo to experiment in a big industrial setting. “Swampscape OP19,” below, was created by Mark Peiser in 1975.

“I just kind of blurted out, ‘You know, we really should get together, these guys from the East and the West.’ ”

—Mark Peiser,
co-founder of the Glass Art Society

Grover's 1975 *Contemporary Art Glass*, targeted art lovers and collectors.

IT BECAME CLEAR TO ANYONE following the scene that glass as an artistic medium was gaining traction, not just in the U.S. but internationally as well, with lively exchanges across the Atlantic

culminating in American artists spending time in Europe and influential European artists like Italian Lino Tagliapietra coming to teach at Pilchuck.

Little points of light were flaring up across the globe, but for the studio glass movement to thrive, its practitioners had to survive. At this point, teaching was their main source of income, for, as Myers points out, “There weren't many places to show our artwork.”

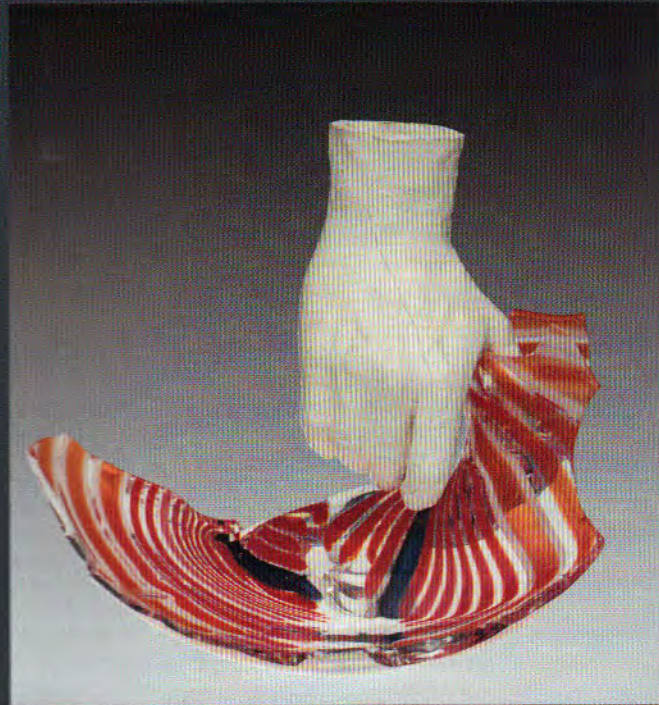


Counterclockwise from far right: a tendrillous blue "Opaline Bottle and Stopper," created by Fritz Dreisbach in 1970; "Shard Vessel," blown by William Morris, one of Dreisbach's students, in 1980; "Teapot and Cozy," one of first in an ongoing signature series of whimsical teapots created by Richard Marquis, a student of Marvin Lipofsky, in 1973; "Untitled YC-24-1985," a piece by Mark Peiser's student Richard Ritter; and "Holding Series: Frateilli Toso Shard," a collaborative work between Marvin Lipofsky and the Italian factory Fratelli Toso.



Portfolio: **The Second Generation**

As the original pioneers of the American studio glass movement dispersed, taught and founded academic programs, their students became the next generation of glass masters. A few exemplary pieces of their work can be seen here.



For all their dedication to glass, artists wouldn't have gotten far if it hadn't been for the discovery—and supply—of better-suited material to work with.

Artists sold directly, set up booths at craft shows, shopped their wares at gift stores or, especially in the Northwest, opened studios with shops attached. Save for the Haubergs in Seattle, Elmerina and Paul Parkman in Maryland, Dale and Doug Anderson in New York and Adele and Leonard Leight in Kentucky, collectors of studio glass were a rare, intrepid breed throughout most of the 1970s.

"We didn't know names, we just liked the look," says Adele Leight, recalling the couple's first glass purchase: a plate by Myers that they spotted at the Speed Art Museum craft show in 1968.



COURTESY OF PILCHUCK SCHOOL OF GLASS



COPYRIGHT MARVIN LIPPOSKY

Although the 1970s was a decade of teaching techniques and spreading ideas, it was also a time of fun and excitement. At left, Dale Chihuly, Bob Hendrickson and Jamie Carpenter take a break from construction work at Pilchuck in 1971. Zette Emmons, above, looks on with interest as Richard Marquis makes art.

IN 1971, THINGS BEGAN TO CHANGE

with the opening of Contemporary Glass Group (later renamed the Heller Gallery) in New York and Habatat Galleries in Dearborn, Mich. By the end of the decade, the Corning Museum of Glass traveling exhibition "New Glass: A Worldwide Survey" was creating a stir and prompting gallery owners like Charles Cowles in New York and Helen Drutt in Philadelphia to stand up and take notice. Glass was becoming a viable medium in the exciting world of craft. ●

COMING UP IN PART 3: *The role of collectors and galleries in making studio glass a central feature of the arts and crafts world.*

LEE LAWRENCE is a frequent contributor to *AMERICANStyle*. This is the second in a four-part series she is writing for this magazine on the history of American studio glass.

A Celebration of Glass

Excited about the 50th anniversary of the studio glass movement? Here are two ways to celebrate this significant year:

■ The **Corning Museum of Glass**, in Corning, N.Y., is the world's largest glass museum. So it's no wonder the institution is celebrating the anniversary in a big way, with two landmark exhibitions. "Founders of American Studio Glass: Harvey K. Littleton" will run through Jan. 6, 2013, and is the museum's first solo exhibition of Littleton's work, spanning the arc of his career. "Founders of American Studio Glass: Dominick Labino" showcases the pioneer and innovator's body of work with documents and materials from the Rakow Research Library's extensive archive. Visit www.cmog.org for more information.

■ The **Glass Art Society** is holding its 42nd annual conference in Toledo, Ohio, June 13-16. The conference will take place just a hop, skip and a jump from where the first glass workshops were held in 1962. The society has come a long way since the days of its hand-lettered invitations: you can sign up online, at www.glassart.org.