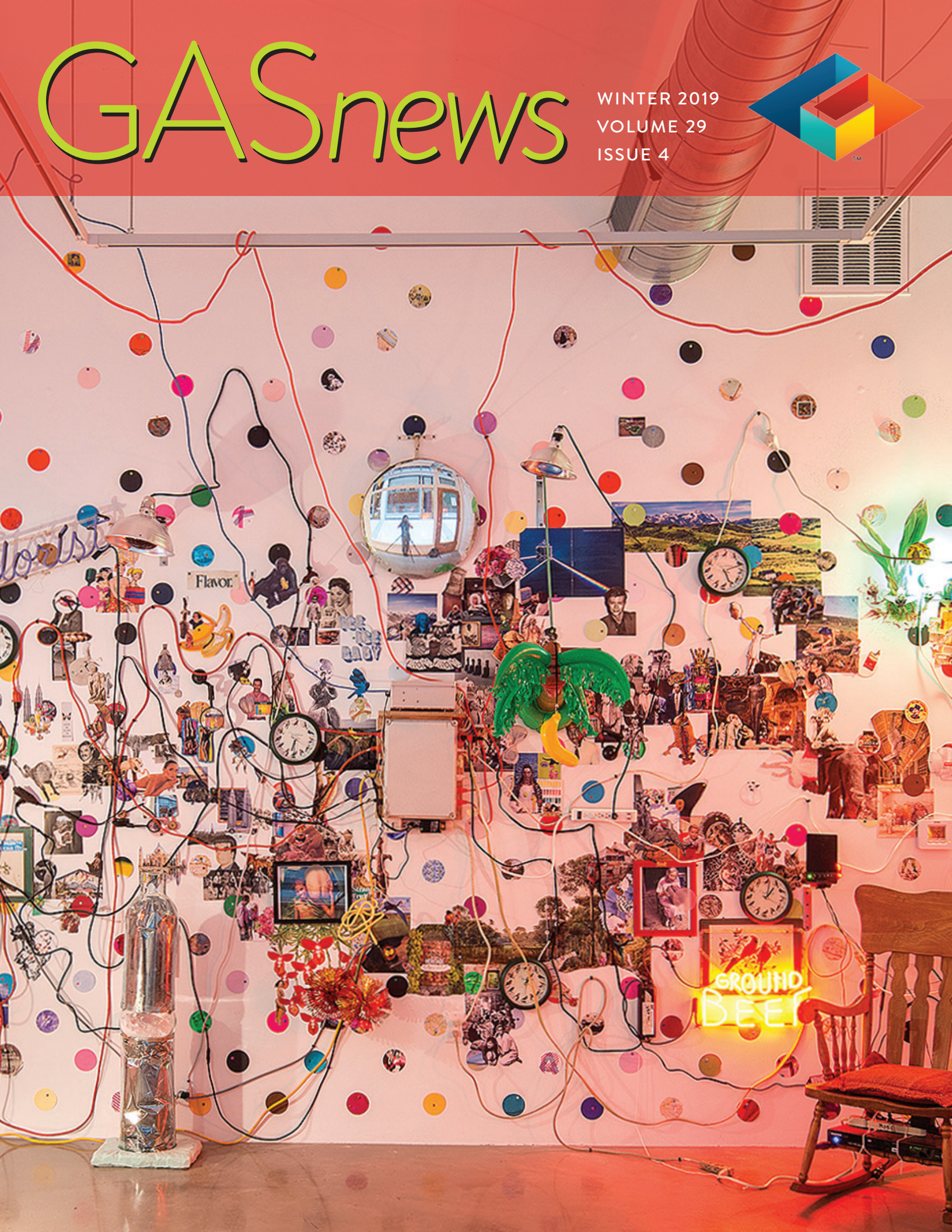
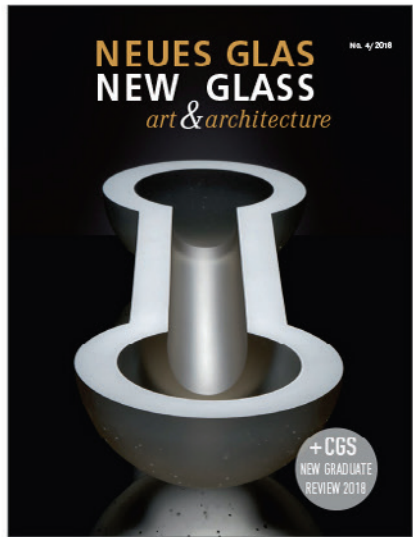


# GA Snews

WINTER 2019  
VOLUME 29  
ISSUE 4







new: also available as ePaper



4 issues a year GERMAN/ENGLISH 

subscribe easily online:  
[www.neuesglas-newglass.com](http://www.neuesglas-newglass.com)  
[info@neuesglas-newglass.com](mailto:info@neuesglas-newglass.com)

# INSIDE

- 3 Letter from the President
- 3 Letter from the Editor
- 4 Guerilla Visual Tactics: *StreetKraft* Features Glass at the Intersection of the Gallery and the Street
- 8 Interview with Ben Wright
- 11 Political Repression and Glass Design in Czechoslovakia: Czech Drawings in the Rakow Library
- 13 Subverting the Sanctimonious: Performance Groups in Glass
- 16 GAS Resource Links

**Cover:** Ben Wright, *Vivisection I* (detail), 2017. A four-dimensional interactive collage of image, objects, electronics and biological organisms that together represent a chaotic slice of the artist's brain. Photo: Ben Wright

# GASnews

**GASnews is published four times per year as a benefit to members.**

Contributing Writers:

Michael Hernandez, Beth Hysten, Jamie Marie Rose, and David Schnuckel

Editor: Michael Hernandez

Graphic Design: Ted Cotrotsos\*

**Staff**

Brandi Clark, *Interim Executive Director*  
 Kristen W. Ferguson, *Operations & Program Manager*  
 Tess McShane, *Communications Manager*  
 Helen Cowart, *Office and Membership Manager*  
 Cathy Noble-Jackson, *Part-time Bookkeeper*

\*part time/contract

**Glass Art Society Board of Directors 2018-2019**

*President:* Natali Rodrigues  
*Vice President:* Tracy Kirchmann  
*Vice President:* Jessica Julius  
*Treasurer:* John Kiley  
*Secretary:* Kelly Conway

Matt Durrant  
 Glen Hardymon  
 Mike Hernandez  
 Nadania Idriss  
 Jeff Lindsay  
 Heather McElwee  
 Lynn Read  
 Debra Ruzinsky  
 Masahiro Nick Sasaki  
 Jan Smith  
 Demetra Theofanous  
 David Willis  
 Caitlin Vitalo (*Student Representative*)



2208 NW Market St., #200, Seattle, WA 98107 USA

Phone: 206.382.1305 Fax: 206.382.2630 E-mail: [info@glassart.org](mailto:info@glassart.org) Web: [www.glassart.org](http://www.glassart.org)

©2018 The Glass Art Society, a non-profit organization. All rights reserved. Publication of articles in this newsletter prohibited without permission from the Glass Art Society Inc. The Glass Art Society reserves the right to deny applications for Tech Display, advertising participation, GAS membership or conference participation to anyone for any reason.



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Fellow GAS Members,

As we plan for our upcoming conference, *Charting a Course: Visions in Glass*, in St. Petersburg, Florida, March 28-30, we've all been thinking about the opportunities

and challenges that working with glass provides. It forces us to come up with solutions every time we work with it. The North American Studio Glass movement comes from a tradition of play, experimentation and overturning of tradition. Endemic to this is a revolutionary or subversive approach to making and thinking. The articles in this edition provoke us think about "subversion" and the role it plays in glass.

Glass is a material that has allowed the artist/maker to break from convention. Artists have been redefining the boundaries of a material through performance, experimentation, and framing the material through both a contextual and conceptual lens. The material has become a vehicle for political action, emotion, and a wild spirit of possibility. We continue to add and enlarge the definition and opportunities this material, our process, and our practice brings to context, culture and history. By looking beyond the boundary of what's possible and probable – the possibilities are endless.

To think that only those members of our community who work within the parameters of contemporary practice are the subversive ones, is to forget the act of being a production maker is even more so. Objects made in historic tradition carry with them the need for care, for consideration, and the ability to engage the user in a way that activates the body. When drinking out of a beautifully made glass, you cannot help but think of the weight of it in your hand, how it feels against your lips, the taste of what it holds, and where and by whom it was made. This is a radical act against convenience and the easily consumed. It is a slowing down of time and a performative act where the user is brought into a moment of being present. It engages all of our senses rather than just the intellect.

I hope that we will see many of you in sunny St. Petersburg to continue these conversations and so much more!

Natali Rodrigues  
President, Board of Directors



## EDITOR'S LETTER

The duty of the artist is to be subversive. From the craftsperson's reinterpretation of a process to the upending of established notions of

a material through performance, glass has been on a ride over the last half century. Artists have used the material as a container, not of wine and specimen, but as a vessel for emotion and an emblazoned surface for political rhetoric, and still, the possibilities continue to morph. As we define and redefine the contributions of a material... a process... a practice to our culture and history, it's hard not to look beyond shore and examine how we are consumed.

The act of making, and even appreciating in a real sense something unique, handmade, and considerate has become subversive in our society. We fight the insistence for convenience and the easily consumed. In a renaissance of visually intravenous things and experiences, attention is a commodity. Our virtual existence through apps like Instagram and Pinterest have given us a great appreciation for the visual, both as a mode of self-expression and identity, and as connoisseurs of taste. While the web is relied on heavily for virtually consuming objects, experiences, and tactility, it's hard to know the impact this has on the consumption of the handmade, the utilitarian, and the experiential.

In this Winter issue of *GASnews*, writers look at some approaches to how traditions are upended, material and making redefined, and established definitions of art and craft challenged. David Schnuckel unpacks the recent exhibition *StreetKraft* where systems of making, exhibiting, and craft are contorted, Jamie Marie Rose examines subversion in the development performance art from our field from past to present, and an interview with Ben Wright puts flies in the ointment of our sanctimonious predisposition with a precious material.

Michael Hernandez  
*GASnews* Editor

# GUERRILLA VISUAL TACTICS: *STREETKRAFT* FEATURES GLASS AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE GALLERY AND THE STREET

by David Schnuckel



Image of *StreetKraft*'s installation at Habatat Galleries in Royal Oak, Michigan during its run from August 18 to September 15, 2018. Photo: Dan Fox, Lumina Studios

Of all the ways in which the word (*kraft*) has been scorned as only involving kitsch, misunderstood as only relating to the cheap and the mercantile, and has limited notions of hand-based practice only to the quiet, pious, and pastoral comes an exhibition that noticeably turns all those misconceptions on their head.

Just outside of the artist utopia that Detroit is resurging to be, is the neighboring community of Royal Oak, home to Habatat Galleries. It is here that *StreetKraft* was hosted from August 18 - September 15 this past Fall and curated by Kim Harty, artist, writer, and Assistant Professor of Glass at the College for Creative Studies.

"When I was invited to curate a show at Habatat, I wanted to do something that would fit the time and place of the gallery," mentions Harty. "Detroit has been bubbling with street art throughout the city, and in museums like the DIA and the Cranbrook Art Museum. I also wanted to assemble a

show that was very visual, that had a strong sense of imagery, form, and color to bring the viewer into."

In an effort to bridge Harty's observations of a dialogue that could happen between Habatat and the street art scene of Detroit, *StreetKraft* was an exhibition highlighting instances of glass thinking from around the world that dwells in the conceptual underbelly of the street: the renegade vernacular of its visual language, its symbology (both real and imagined), its literal tones and its figurative textures.

Although initially seen by Harty as an opportunity to create connections between separate creative forces within her region, *StreetKraft* expands the conversation by inviting artists from a little bit of everywhere... including Detroit, but well beyond it, too. With seventeen artists from various corners of the United States, Poland, Australia and Japan represented in the show, "the street" reveals a diversity

of impetus within the work as widespread as the international standing of its participants.

Regardless of place, each artist is spoken to - and speaking through - "the street" to explore ideas that evaluate, assess, predict and push a spectrum of issues related to contemporary culture.

"I've also noticed a counter-cultural thread in glass that isn't often acknowledged as a trend or theme," Harty mentions. "Certainly, pipe culture is part of that, but there are many artists working in other genres that have subversive or political content to their work. I wanted to assemble a critical mass of artists to acknowledge the work that is being done and contextualize it together."

The range of glass vernacular in *StreetKraft* is as varied as what the individual works are speaking to. Glass processes like blowing, neon, flat glass imaging, kiln forming, and flameworking engage





SWOON, *Construction Worker*, silkscreen, acrylic gouache on paper, wood and glass, 24" x 24". Courtesy of Kim Harty

a few ties in conceptual approach: Leo Tecosky, representative of a shared body of work in the show, visually reinterpreting street markings, signage and other guerilla modes of linguistical coding; Emily McBride, representative of a shared body of work in the show, engaging the generally overlooked emblems of low-class iconography, mass production and other fixed tokens within the daily grind; Estaban Salazar, representative of a shared body of work in the show, visualizing – even prophesying – concern through city-scaped lens of a perhaps not-so-fictitious, future dilemma involving ecological and societal collapse; Caledonia Curry (aka SWOON), representative of a shared body of work in the show, accentuating a romantic angle to the street in finding and amplifying the extraordinary potential of elements hidden in plain sight within an urban scene.



Leo Tecosky (aka TECO), (L to R) *Yellow Star*, *S Period*, *8 Fold All Over*, (Front) *"2 Tone"*, blown, sculpted glass, 2017-2018. Photo: Kim Harty

The convergence of “the street” and glass practice in *StreetKraft* does reveal itself to be a curious intersection to cross... full of interesting ironies between the two platforms of creative inquiry and activity. Various forms of street art, tagging, and graffiti being unsanctioned gestures and, therefore, motivated by a sense of immediacy in one’s materials and process. Quickness is key, not only in what is done and how, but boldly in what and how the work visually articulates itself once done and discovered. Glass, on the other hand, is full of rules; not legally enforced, but rules governed by elements of time and temperature in order for anything to survive even its own making. Unlike the street’s immediate modes of visual communication, glass is – even at its quickest mode of processing – time intensive. And expensive. And fragile. Part of what makes *StreetKraft* such an interesting premise is that it resides in duality; a creative field that demands such sensitivity, consideration and protocol





Emily McBride, *so much apparent nothing*, 2016, glass, wax, paper, Vaseline, objects: 15" x 15" x 28", each print approximately: 9' x 9'. Courtesy of Kim Hartly

that glass does, mingling with a creative field that's primarily built on aggressive resilience, the gut and subversion.

And then the sass. The shamelessness and brazen disposition of "the street" crossing over into the sanctified character of how glass is approached, handled and produced for exhibition is interesting, too. The exhibition title invites further upheaval; not only integrating one of the dirtiest words in contemporary glass parlance, but subverting how the term "craft" is both understood by its believers and misperceived by its dissenters... simultaneously.

*StreetKraft* bypasses the notion of (k)raft as but an aesthetically rooted approach to making, and demonstrates it existing best instead as a method of thinking by way of doing. Especially in terms of creative activity. Especially more so in terms of street-savvy, insurrectionally motivated matters of making.

It is here that *StreetKraft* claims (k)raft as a verb... not a made thing per se, but the idea of *taking action*. And if it has to be regarded as a noun, (k)raft as belief system of "fuck you" to the pomp and circumstance of glass, glass making, glass culture and maybe even the context of the blue-chip gallery context. You will not find things like finesse for the sake of finesse here, nor will you find high-end commodities that'll go with the couch. Instead, *StreetKraft* illuminates the philosophical roots of (k)raft under a highly contemporary lens of proficiently wielded sacrilege: making with intentions off the beaten path of the "exquisite art object" and, instead, on the hunt for empowerment... to artist and public alike.

The conceptual integration of (k)raft within the notion of "the street" provides an interesting angle to a conversation we thought we've talked to death already. To help illustrate, I imagine a twenty-

something Basquiat, prior to becoming famous; an adept - yet still unknown - graffiti artist. I imagine him in action in the dead of night. I imagine the agility with which he accesses forbidden public surfaces to enhance. Each step towards his empty canvas a moment to finalize his plans to illegally modify it with his vision. And to modify it brilliantly. I imagine the dexterity with which this proficient, yet to be recognized street artist commands the movements of his can of bargain-bin spray paint. The quick wit of his message, the thoughtfulness of its placement and the timing of its social sting once discovered by an unsuspecting public at first daylight. In this fictitious moment - of me attempting to identify with someone I've never known by way of an art form I've never done in a moment that may never have happened - I begin to find parallels of similarity between the two very dissimilar worlds that glass and "the street" are. The engagement of meaningful creative activity, of bodily performance as one chases their vision down, of making creative decisions in real time, in real space and in doing so with real impact internally and externally: this is where the power of (k)raft within *StreetKraft* resides.

On the surface, *StreetKraft* has much to convey. In this post-millennial, post-recession, and post-#yeswecan political and cultural era, *StreetKraft* hosts glass-based thinking and making as a call to action. When present, the rough-and-tumble contributions to the show elicit a sense of urgency. But the slick and savvy contributions are red flags in and of themselves, representing the calm before an ambiguously predicted storm. The relationship between a show like this being hosted at a venue like Habatat Galleries is worthy of a longer conversation of its own.

"I think [*StreetKraft*] demonstrates that there is a place for somewhat radical (at least in the glass context) work in





Esteban Salazar, *The Eternal Return #2*, 2017, blown glass, ready-mades, 30" x 30" x 73". Photo: Kim Harty

commercial galleries," says Harty. "This show is unlike anything Habatat has done before, yet it actually fits seamlessly into their space."

Even so, *StreetKraft* doesn't give a shit about formalities. Pipes exist here, as do sculptural objects, as do image-based works, spatial arrangements, sound-inducing kinetic works, the rough, the tight, things on the wall, things on the floor, things in your face. The correspondence between what is so alluring about "the street" creatively and what is so intriguing philosophically about traditional notions of (k)raft is just so poetically ripe.

For starters, I'm drawn to the exhibition's abstracted comparison of street art in relation to (k)raft's historical associations with function; the hand and its gestures

as a vehicle with which to "produce" a circumstance of "usefulness" in relation to broader areas of critical conversation. But I'm also drawn to elements of conceptual wordplay between the two seemingly different worlds: the impetus of street-inspired art to rise from objection in relation to (k)raft's historical associations with the *object* and *object making*...

The immediate connotations of *StreetKraft* are interesting indeed. But its undercurrents are just so, so rich.

For information and images of *StreetKraft*, visit the exhibition catalog [here](#).

*David Schnuckel is an artist and educator, currently Assistant Professor within the GLASS Program of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York.*



## Bullseye Kiln-Glass Education Online

Learn techniques for applying graphic imagery onto art glass, including powder printing and screen-printed enamels. Video lessons by Bullseye Glass instructors. Skip the trip to a class and learn in your own studio.

[bullseyeglass.com/bkeo](http://bullseyeglass.com/bkeo)



## Record-Breaking Speed: [glassquarterly.com](http://glassquarterly.com)



## Magazine of Record: [glassquarterly.com/subscribe](http://glassquarterly.com/subscribe)



SUBSCRIBE: \$36/year 718.625.3685 ext222  
[subscribe@glassquarterly.com](mailto:subscribe@glassquarterly.com)

ADVERTISE: 917.558.0434 [donzanone@earthlink.net](mailto:donzanone@earthlink.net)



## GASNEWS INTERVIEW: BEN WRIGHT



*The Curious Tale Of The Love Nut: An Anthropomorphic Love Story For The Anthropocene (2018). Still image from a live performance at the Chrysler Museum of Art. Photo: Echard Wheeler*

**GASnews:** *Over the past decade, your projects in your various roles as artist, educator, and curator lean toward, or sit directly upon, a subversive approach to ideas and making in the scope of glass art. What is your creative approach in these various roles?*

**Ben Wright:** Well, you gotta subvert... you gotta get under the filter, avoid the obvious, search out the generative friction in presenting really different work in close association. This applies to my artwork, curatorial work, and definitely my work as an educator.

There are these obvious associations with glass: fragility, transparency, malleability etc. They've been mined heavily by previous generations and I am always pushing my students to dive under that and connect to their own personal experience and world view. To be clear, I find the expressive potential of glass, especially in combination with the ever-increasing,

accessible toolbox of materials and media, to be almost unlimited. This is precisely why it is so critical to steer clear of the obvious both in the modes of making and in the concepts expressed.

This might piss people off, but I find work that solely endeavors to express ideas or explore materiality to be quite boring. I feel that without a personal and/or universal emotional engagement there is no doorway for an audience or participant to enter this artwork. I believe that by digging deep and exposing one's personal, vulnerable sub layers, an empathetic connection is made that empowers the audience to create their own thoughts in regards to the artwork. Sometimes this is jarringly literal, other times quite abstracted. But, if the artist does this important work it seems to permeate the work.

In my own installation work, I try to sneak under the art viewing filters by jamming people's sensors, literally feeding them

with too much information to follow a single narrative, and guiding the public towards making their own connections and ideas about the subject matter at hand. I find some other often discounted tools such as humor, cliché, and sexual innuendo, while tricky to employ, also allow participants to break from their academic consumption and enter a livelier, more generative engagement with the artwork.

**GAS:** *Who are some of the provocateurs, past and present, within the glass and art communities that you credit with pushing the material in unorthodox directions?*

**BW:** There is a direct genetic lineage of mischief makers within the glass community. Personally, the de la's (Einar and Jamex de la Torre) were a huge impact on freeing up my process, and I owe them greatly for that. They in turn were heavily influenced by Therman (Statom) at his wildest. Mark Zirpel, and his general





*Gnome is Burning* (2013), A collaborative sculpture, performance and video project with Ian Burns. Photo: Ian Burns

disregard for rules both aesthetically and as applied to life, was also a huge influence and at an impressionable age. To be honest, most of the artists I look at would not be considered glass artists but within that community there are plenty of folks pushing the material in both conceptual and technical directions

Jocelyn Prince and her army of weirdo material minions come to mind in terms of straight material manipulation. Jess Julius is an artist who seems particularly adept at attaching process and repetition to concept with great effect. Matt Szosz is a great example of someone who I feel is working glass in ways that simply haven't been done before. This is an exceptionally difficult task if you think about the long history of material manipulation.

The Butter Eaters crew and the B-Team brought the idea of performance more into the picture and set about freaking people out in a really healthy way, both somewhat as a reaction to the very commercial glass scenes that had developed on either coast. I mean this list is long and there have been

these characters from the very beginning of the studio glass movement...To even want to make things with your hands these days is a pretty subversive concept...

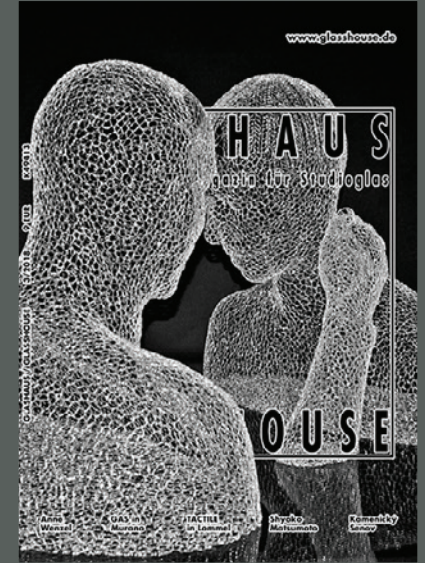
**GAS:** *The widespread access to and use of glass as an artists' medium has a fairly short history. How has this shaped the trajectory of glass in art?*

**BW:** Studio glass basically has the same time arc as a lot of the "new media". The late sixties were when video cameras were landing in the hands of artists, and Paul Demarinis and all the other wonderful geeks at Atari started to apply computing to art. If you put that in context of the timeline from the Toledo workshops to today, I think in some ways the glass movement has followed some similar trajectories.

In all the new media you find an initial period of fascination just with the material itself... letting it do its thing. Witness the globby blobs of early American studio glass and compare them with early experimental video or the first attempts at creating

# GLASHAUS

The International Magazine of Studio Glass



German/English, 4 issues p.a. 49 Euros  
 Dr. Wolfgang Schmolders  
 Glashaus-Verlag, Stadtgarten 4  
 D-47798 Krefeld (Germany)  
 Email: glashaus-verlag@t-online.de  
 Web: <http://studioglas.jimdo.com>

# GLASS MFA



BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EST. 1918

MFA Alumna  
Allyssa Burch

[www.bsu.edu/art](http://www.bsu.edu/art)





Detail of *The Wettest Place* (2018), A dynamic sculptural system that shifts randomly and unexpectedly from the glaring heat of neon red to cool washing blues setting an atmosphere for the participant to digest a surreal four-dimensional collage of image and form. Photo: Ben Wright



*Live Below Your Means* (2018), An example of Wright's collaged paper works. Photo: Ben Wright

digital and responsive artworks.

At least in America, the Studio Glass movement got quickly hijacked by the injection of Italian skill which has parallels with the increasing professionalism of video art and an infatuation with novel forms of interactivity. Let me not be mistaken, it should not be understated that this contribution of skill led us out of the wilderness, but it also led to a fascination and infatuation with the perfect objects and decorative aesthetics that defined and limited the field for a while.

Now I see a whole species of creators that use whatever materials are at hand and in service of conceptual aims. Skill will always have a home, it's really hard to make anything without it. As the baseline of skills and material knowledge in all these media continues to expand, it seems like more and more tools are available to us all the time. Pretty exciting time to be an artist! At the same time, one can't be an expert at everything. This is an opportunity that

I believe has led to an increased amount of both collaboration and outsourcing of artistic labor, which greatly benefits those that have invested in deep material knowledge. Furthermore, as we get more distantly removed from handmade objects having a place in our daily lives, I believe that finely crafted objects will become increasingly fetishized and properly valued in their own right.

**GAS:** *What are you currently working on in your own art practice?*

**BW:** I'm about to get on a plane to Poland. I am mounting an exhibition at BWA SiC gallery in Wroclaw that is examining the concept of invasive species. With this, I'm interested in how we define the other, and what it means to be artist as invasive species and to operate in a foreign culture and do your best to thrive and replicate. The concept of invasive species is of course created and applied by humans, with the

phenomenal almost exclusively the result of the movement of humans about the globe. I am interested in a much less judgmental examination of why we operate the way we do, the instinct or concept of a pristine past, the urge to fix that which we have broken, and how this is all applied to the systems we are affecting in previously unimagined ways.

The hope is that this show will then operate as an invasive species and move around a bit to some other countries before it comes home to roost. As with all my work, it's meant to be a psychoactive journey into human nature – because really who is the invasive species around here? Subversion comes from Anglo-French *subvertir*, meaning, to turn under. It seems the most subversive thing humans can do is look under the hood and examine our true motivations as we catapult into an unknown anthropocene.

Follow Ben Wright on Instagram @snuffywrong



# POLITICAL REPRESSION & GLASS DESIGN IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA: CZECH DESIGN DRAWINGS IN THE RAKOW LIBRARY

by Beth Hylan



Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, *The Kiss*, about 1958-1960.  
Courtesy of The Corning Museum of Glass

Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová's powerful glass sculptures are familiar to many. Less well known are the delicate drawings for vases and bowls that Libenský created in the Socialist Realist style in the late 1940s. His scenes of everyday life in Soviet-dominated Czechoslovakia were typical of this style, dictated by the government, that glorified the benefits of Communism.

Libenský's idealized drawing of two women hanging laundry exemplifies the Socialist artistic style, as do his drawings of boys and girls playing and scenes of rural life. However, other concurrent drawings for engraved and transparent enameled bowls explore forbidden religious themes, inspired by his studies of Renaissance stained glass windows. These drawings were exercises for his students to decorate at the Specialized School for Glassmaking at Nový Bor.

Libenský and fellow Czech designers and artists working under Communist rule were prohibited from using Western-style modern art themes and techniques, but because their work was exported to Western countries, glass designers and other decorative arts designers had somewhat greater freedom than painters and sculptors. They were allowed to experiment with abstract painting as long as it was applied to decorative arts. Designers could draw on the long tradition of glass-making in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia as well as Czech Cubism and other avant-garde painting and sculpture prior to World War II.

Libenský, like other artists in that period, strove to balance politics with being true to his art. As Jiří Šetlík explained: "While appearing to express loyalty, they defended their art, which was quite distant from the official doctrine. Despite their show of respect, however,

Libenský and Brychtová did not escape censure altogether. Ultimately, Libenský was deprived of his professorship at the Academy [of Applied Arts in 1987] and he was replaced by a party supporter." In 1989 when the Communist party lost its absolute rule in Czechoslovakia, Libenský became the first president of The Glass Association in Prague where he advised the community on Czech glass education.

When Libenský and Brychtová began working together in 1954, they experimented with mold melted cast glass, as seen in "The Kiss" (ca. 1958-60). Their design for "Cube in a Sphere" (1980) illustrates their increasingly abstract sculptural forms that explore light and space – the forms they are best known for today.

Other Czech glass designers were equally innovative and subversive, transforming abstract designs and

## The Gathering XXVII The Fire Within



2019  
Commemorative  
Bead  
Joy Munshower

April 2-7, 2019  
Las Vegas, NV

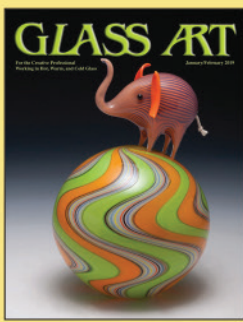
# ISGB

International Society Of Glass Beadmakers

[isgb.org](http://isgb.org) & [isgbgathering.org](http://isgbgathering.org)



**Glass Art** provides an outstanding resource for the creative professional working in hot, warm, and cold glass.



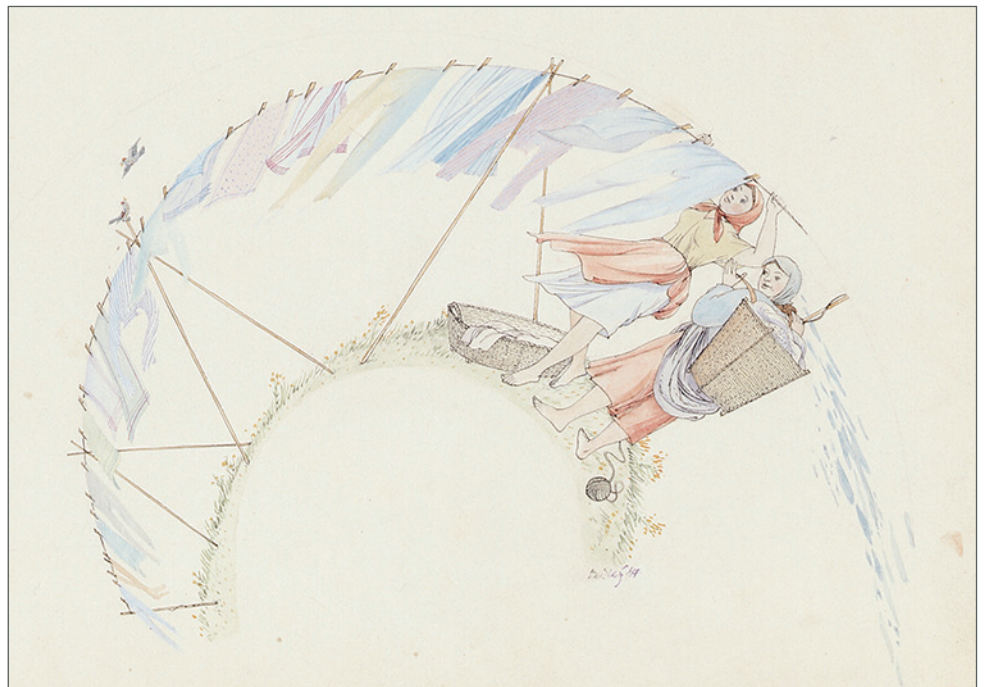
Featuring interviews and discussions with world-renowned glass artists and respected experts

**Hear Claire Kelly**  
now on  
**Talking Out Your Glass.**

Claire Kelly's colorful toy-like animals remind us of the connection between humanity and animals and how the smallest ecological decisions affect our environment.



Begin your free subscription to this and many other podcasts on iTunes or Stitcher by visiting the "Talking Out Your Glass" link on the *Glass Art* website.  
502.222.5631  
[www.GlassArtMagazine.com](http://www.GlassArtMagazine.com)



Above: Stanislav Libenský, *Clothes Hanging*: SF 326, 1947, Steinberg Foundation collection, CMGL 79730. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library of The Corning Museum of Glass.



Left: Stanislav Libenský, *Cube in a sphere*: SF 933, 1980, Steinberg Foundation collection, CMGL 79733. Courtesy of the Rakow Research Library of The Corning Museum of Glass.

paintings into functional, sculptural and architectural glass objects. By the 1960s, their innovative work was winning awards at World's Fairs and astounding visitors worldwide, including members of the nascent studio glass movement.

This overview vastly simplifies the complex dynamics that brought about the extraordinary advances of Czech glass. For more information, see Suzanne Frantz and Jiří Šetlík's articles in *Stanislav Libenský, Jaroslava Brychtova: a 40-Year Collaboration in Glass* (Suzanne Frantz,

1994) and Tina Oldknow's article "Painting and Sculpture in Glass: Czech Design Drawings from the 1940s and 1960s in The Corning Museum of Glass" in *Czech glass 1945-1980: design in an age of adversity* (ed. Helmut Ricke, 2005).

Explore 1,500+ Czech design drawings for glass from this period (The Steinberg Foundation Collection) online [here](#).

*Beth Hylan is a Reference and Instruction Librarian at Rakow Research Library of the Corning Museum of Glass.*



# SUBVERTING THE SANCTIMONIOUS: PERFORMANCE GROUPS IN GLASS

by Jamie Marie Rose

To look at the evolution of glass art, 'subversion' could be used to describe the development of many facets of artistic approach in the field. I would argue that the most subversive work in the world of glass has come out of the performative groups. Artists who come together not out of necessity for the creation of an object, but because it is the act of engagement and interaction that activate the artwork. These are the time-based, site-specific, and participatory work where the attendance of an audience is vital.

Some of the pioneering performance groups, such as the B-team, founded by Zesty Meyers, Jeff Zimmerman, Thor Bueno, Evan Snyderman, and the Butter Eaters (founded by Jen Elek and Brian Pike), were explosive to the traditional hierarchy and sanctity of the glass studio – often literally. The B-team was known for their performances in which glass was shattered, consequently demonstrating the dangerous nature of a material at a time where there was a certain degree of conformity within the glass world. The Butter Eaters, meanwhile, were among the first to utilize food preparation as a performative element in their practice.

More recent collectives have pushed the envelope further. The Burnt Asphalt Family is one of the most subversive groups which continues to perform to this day. Founded by Erica Rosenfeld, Jessica Jane Julius, Sam Geer, and Skitch Manion, the Burnt Asphalt Family was not titled as such when they first performed. The four met at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center in 2007 as Fellows. One critical part of that residency is that a public hot glass demo is required at the conclusion of the residency. Feeling the pressure to produce an enjoyable show for their audience, the four artists decided to focus more on the act of performing than the work they would be making for the event.



Skitch Manion ladling molten glass through a chandelier at a performance at UrbanGlass in 2009. Photo: Charles Echert.



Erica Rosenfeld next to the 'Pork Terrarium' at UrbanGlass in 2013. Photo: Matthew Cylinder.





The show beginning at Cirque De Verre's performance at Goggle Works in 2009.  
Photo courtesy of the Cirque De Verre collective archive.



A plethora of performers in ephemeral costumes at Goggle Works in 2009.  
Photo courtesy of the Cirque De Verre collective archive.

"We did the demo dressed as 1950s housewives, working with glass and food," said Erica Rosenfeld. "It was organic in that it started as a way to come together and unwind at the end of the day. Initially, it was meant to be fun."

The Burnt Asphalt Family evolved rapidly in the coming years, despite initial

criticism that it was a 'waste of food, time, and glass'. Emma Salamon and Deborah Czeresko joined the collective after the founders completed their Wheaton Residency and since then, the group has grown to include more than 30 members which consist of artists, fabricators, designers, chefs, teachers and students.

The work too has progressed, transitioning into a hybrid of performance, installation art, a dinner party and a happening. The glass has arguably become secondary to the performance.

"We consider the glass made during performances as ephemeral sculpture," Rosenfeld said. "The finished piece happens the moment the audience interacts with us through eating our food." Consumption marking the completion of the piece further reiterates the nature of performance work – if you want to experience it, you must be present.

I was fortunate enough to attend one of The Burnt Asphalt Family's performances in 2013, where the group performed at UrbanGlass in their newly renovated shop in Brooklyn. The piece was both thrilling and chaotic – food was cooked in a spectacle of hot glass, fire, and a whirlwind of artists' coordination, then served throughout the performance as it was prepared. There were no barriers between those observing and those creating, making it difficult to tell at times who was a performer and who was simply a bold audience member. The atmosphere was wild in way where words fail to do the work justice – you truly had to be there.

Another performative group which emerged at nearly the same time was Cirque De Verre. Founded in 2008 by Kim Harty, Rika Hawes and Charlotte Potter, Cirque De Verre was also born out of the Wheaton residency program by a group of artists working together as Fellows. Rather than blur the line between artist and viewer by bringing in nostalgic, relatable elements, Cirque De Verre sought to highlight the sense of performance already present in the glass studio.

"When you're in the hot shop, you're performing all day, though it's not meant to be public," said Kim Harty, reflecting on the pressure they felt. "But just because something is performative doesn't mean it's entertaining."

They used the idea of the circus and superimposed it onto the space of a glass demonstration, transforming it into





Flock the Optic founders David King (MC Mmmmmumbles) Abram Deslauriers (DJABC) and Liesl Schubel (Stitch). Photo credit: Echard Wheeler.

a purposeful spectacle rather than an unintentional one. The hot shop became the stage, the viewers true spectators, and the artists tightrope walkers, traversing the line between art and entertainment. And, much like the other performative groups, the glass object was never the focus.

"I don't think we ever annealed the glass we used," Harty admitted unabashedly.

Cirque De Verre may have disbanded in 2010, but Kim Harty and Charlotte Potter have since rejoined to create another performance group. The Glass Theater, formed in 2013, continues to use the hot shop as a stage, but has lost the circus façade. The Glass Theater focuses on interdisciplinary collaboration, aiming to break down boundaries between craft, performance, and critical discourse. What really sets the Glass Theater apart from its predecessors, however, is its addition of a scholarly element. While the work itself no longer carries the sense of comedy that was present in Cirque De Verre, the performance was also accompanied by a series of essays by Kim Harty, Brittany Scott, and Jonny Farrow, elevating the academic nature of the work.

These are not the only performance groups which utilize glass, though they

are the most widely known, and therefore set the tone for the evolution of glass performance. The Glass Theater has only performed once so far, and the Burnt Asphalt Family's last performances were in 2017 – one at the Chrysler Museum of Glass and another at Wheaton, following a four-year gap from a performance at UrbanGlass in Brooklyn in 2013. And while the conceptual nature of the work is undeniably progressing, the movement is slow-going. The reasoning isn't difficult to explain. Coordinating events with so many artists, especially when a hot shop is needed, certainly poses problems.

One of the most recently established performance groups seems to be moving away from the hot shop, perhaps for this very reason. Flock the Optic was founded in 2014, and consists of members Abram Deslauriers, David King, and Liesl Schubel (otherwise known by the monikers DJABC, MC Mumbles, and Stitch). More than mere performances, Flock the Optic creates large-scale interactive installations which focus on a wide range of techniques. They do not rely on the hot shop as their stage, choosing instead to utilize glass components alongside other materials. The group operates at several levels of

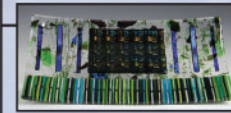
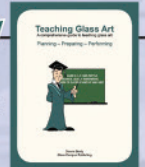
## Glass Expert Webinars™

Live Two-Hour, Interactive Web Workshops with Renowned Glass Artists  
Link to Class Recording Never Expires!



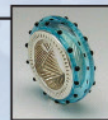
**Dennis Brady**  
*Vitrigraph*  
January 17

**Dennis Brady**—**New**  
*Teaching Glass Art*  
Lecture and Workbook  
January 24



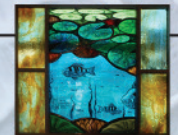
**Lisa Vogt**  
*Upscale Fusing*  
January 31

**Rick Silas**—**NEW**  
*Plant Pressing*  
February 5 and 7



**Barbara Becker Simon**  
*Making Hollow  
Flameworked Beads*  
February 19

**Scott Ouder Kirk**  
*Marketing Lecture*  
February 21



**Cathy Claycomb**  
*Sticks and Stones*  
February 26



**Richard La Londe**  
*Liquid Glass Line*  
Lecture  
February 28



**Josh Mazet**  
*Marble Making*  
March 12



**Dennis Brady**  
*Selling Your Work*  
Lecture  
March 14



**Tony Glander**  
*Screen Printing*  
March 19



**Dale Keating**  
*Fused Glass Lilies*  
March 21



*Ad Background Image  
by Margot Clark*

Visit the Glass Expert Webinars™ link under "What's New" at [www.GlassArtMagazine.com](http://www.GlassArtMagazine.com) for more details and local times.





The moment before their first performance at the Chrysler Museum in 2014. Photo: Echard Wheeler.

sophistication simultaneously – sound, video, dance, kinetic and interactive sculptures and optical devices emerge as reoccurring elements with no purposeful limitation placed on defining the group’s exploration. Flock the Optic has performed three times since their founding – once at the Chrysler Museum of Glass in 2016, once at the 2017 GAS conference’s Three Ringed Circus, and a third time at the Chesterfield Gallery for the opening reception of the 2017 Robert M. Minkoff Academic Symposium presented by UrbanGlass. They have plans to perform again in February of 2019 at the Chrysler Museum of Glass.

There are few people who have done more to champion performance in the glass studio than Charlotte Potter. Outside of her involvement with Cirque De Verre and the The Glass Theater, the work Potter has done at the Chrysler Museum of Glass is game-changing. Her performance-art series showed what glass could be to a wide-reaching audience – a fluid, ephemeral medium that is at its liveliest when it is in its molten form. An experience, not an object.

The history of performance by these artists – most predominantly associated

with the glass world – is rich, complicated, and largely unappreciated, even though it seems to be magnetic for drawing audiences into hot glass studios. Little of what can be identified as performance glass art has been addressed in a scholarly manner, and so the momentum feels more cyclical than forward-moving. The issue of slow conceptual progression may be more than logistical.

The larger question that should be addressed is whether performance is in the service of the art form or simply entertainment. The glass groups we have seen in the past tend to harbor a sense of spectacle, an inherent need to please the audience and insure that they are having a grand time. It begs an examination of what would be possible if the artists were willing to let go of this need to be entertaining. If the façade were to slip...if the audience’s expectations were set aside...if the fiery showmanship and persistent sense of wonder were not considered essential... I imagine we would see work even more aligned with the descriptor, ‘subversive’.

*Jamie Marie Rose is an artist and writer from Illinois. She is currently an MFA candidate at Alfred University.*

## GAS RESOURCE LINKS

To access the Glass Art Society’s up-to-date resources, just click on the links below.

EXHIBITIONS

CLASSES  
AND  
WORKSHOPS

JOB  
OPPORTUNITIES

FOR  
SALE

CALLS  
TO  
ARTISTS

OTHER  
OPPORTUNITIES