

JACOB PFEIFER

Glass Artist



Artist Statement

I fell in love with glass during a family vacation to Bermuda where I spent hours observing and asking questions at an open air, ocean front, hot shop, at the Royal Navy Dock Yard. I was fascinated with the thick, free flowing gather of hot glass, the blowing, molding and the adding of color. I could see the technical challenges, but also the range of possibilities in using glass as an art medium. I was 14. During my four years of high school, I began learning to blow glass and create glass art pieces; I have never looked back. It is my passion.

I am a young, aspiring, American artist; among the next generation of craftsmen working with their hands; carrying forward glass making traditions that are thousands of years old. I use contemporary styles, and traditional Italian, Swedish techniques that reflect a personal glass art style of my own expression and design. In 2010 I graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology, receiving a Bachelor's of Fine Arts, School of American Crafts – Glass Program, and have completed a 2 year Artist in Residence at Flame Run in Louisville. My training includes having worked in studios at Penland (NC), Urban Glass (NY), Glassworks (KY), Flame Run (KY), Corning (NY), Goggle Works (PA), and in New Jersey, at Belle Meade Hot Glass and Vandermark Merritt Studio. I have had the honor to study with three of the Venetian Glass Masters, Lino Tagliapietra, Davide Salvatore, and Vittorio Constantini when they visited the US. I have also been fortunate to study and work with many other outstanding glass artists, Kenny Pieper, Luke Jacomb, Ben Edols, Doug Merritt, James Vella and, of course, my RIT professors, Michael Rogers and Robin Cass.

People ask me what inspires me. I am a curious person which often leads to my artistic inspiration. The formula for my work is personal. I am focused; each piece receives my enthusiasm, perseverance for excellence, and dedication to uncompromising quality. My vision for each piece encompasses an understanding of the properties and movement of glass and application of color.

I have learned that people want to understand what they see in a piece of art. The themes and patterns of my work are varied. Some pieces have no message; they are simple, colorful, playful, or functional. Others are serious, and complex. I want to engage people to look at the work over and over, and find something new and beautiful each time. In the end, I trust each piece promotes an understanding and appreciation of glass art. Whenever I part with a piece of my glass, I feel a piece of my life goes with it. Each piece is part of my journey.

Background story

In 1993, at age 5, I was diagnosed with a rare childhood cancer; a malignant rhabdomyosarcoma; stage III, inoperable tumor, sitting behind my left eye and penetrating my brain. My parents were told that I had a 5 percent three-year survival. I was in the hospital for 18 months, at least once a month and often for weeks at a time.

The treatment plan was aggressive; I was given a lifetime dose of radiation to my head, and 3 different types of chemotherapy. I was so ill my doctors sent me on a "Make-a-Wish" trip with my brothers and sister. During this nightmare for my parents and me, they made funeral arrangements on at least two occasions. I have many memories of this difficult time. The experience forced an early understanding of life and death, the true meaning of friendship, commitment and determination. For example, before I was age 10, I had attended many funerals of other children with cancer with whom I became friends, as we had spent weeks in the hospital together.

Because of the initial severity of my disease, and the rare case that survives; I was 15 before I was considered a cure. I continue to experience side effects of the treatment; but, with the support of my family, the brilliance of my medical team, and the intervention of a higher power, I am alive. I've learned that life is short; it is important to treasure each day; to spend your days doing what you love.

There are two analogies related to my experience. The first is related to the Greek mythical bird, the Phoenix. The Phoenix is a fire spirit, a beautiful bird, that at the end of its life-cycle burns fiercely; but, from the fire and ashes, it is reborn, and rises again. I feel I have emerged from the fire, and I am living the life I love; and as chance would have it, I now find myself working with fire. From the fire, emerges beautiful things – first, my life, and second, the art that I am able to create.

A second analogy is the cancer treatment process itself. From the beginning it is an all-or-nothing journey. When starting the treatment, most choose to see it through to the end, whatever that may be. There is no taking a break and starting again later. Blowing glass is similar to that. Once I take that first gather of molten glass from the furnace, I am committed. There is no putting the piece away to finish it tomorrow. I must work the piece through to the end, even if the outcome is not what I desired. During that process, the piece undergoes many changes and, at times, due to many reasons, can almost be lost. Like the result of my cancer treatment, fortunately, most of the pieces result in something beautiful.

Education

Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York
School of American Crafts
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Glass and Glass Sculpture
Graduated: May 2010

Work Experience

July 2018 to present

Hot Glass Alley, LLC
Charlotte, NC
Owner & Artist

September 2012 – July 2018

Goggle Works
Reading, PA
Glass Artist

September 2012 – December 2012

Vandermark Merritt Glass Studio, Somerville, NJ
Artist, provided lessons, assisted in shop

June 2010 – August 2012

Flame Run Hot Glass Studio and Gallery, Louisville, KY
Resident Artist
Gallery artist, assistant gaffer, demonstrations, provided lessons;
assisted in shop and gallery, and equipment maintenance

May 2010

Kent State University – Visiting Artist Workshop (2 weeks)
Technical Assistant to Professor Robin Cass

Fall 2006 – May 2010

RIT School of American Crafts Hot Shop
Teaching Assistant to RIT graduate students and RIT Professor
Robin Cass

Summers 2006 – 2010

Flame Run Hot Glass Studio and Gallery, Louisville, KY
Internship: Assistant gaffer, equipment maintenance, stocking,
demonstrations, assisted in shop and
gallery

Summers 2003 - 2006

Belle Meade Hot Glass, Belle Meade, NJ
Employee and Apprentice: Worked in production, polishing, sand
blasting, building wooden molds, metal craft, booth set-up and
display, sales and shipping, some glassblowing.

Additional Training/Workshops

Duncan McClellan Hot Glass

School Project Residency Scholarship
Artist in Residence May, 2015
St. Petersburg, FL

The Studio at the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY

Lino Tagliapietra, Guest Instructor, Murano, Italy
Luke Jacomb, Guest Instructor, Auckland, NZ
Pamina Taylor and Eddie Bernard, Resident Artists
Vittorio Costantini, Guest Instructor, Murano, Italy
Davide Salvatore, Guest Instructor, Murano, Italy (murrine)

Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC

James Vella, New Orleans, LA
Kenny Pieper, Burnsville, NC (goblets)

Vandermark Merritt Glass Studio, Somerville, NJ

Doug Merritt

Flame Run Hot Glass Studio and Gallery, Louisville, KY

Ben Edols, Australia (asymmetrical blown forms)
Brook White

Belle Meade Hot Glass, Belle Meade, NJ

Bob Kuster, Kyle Bekkerus

Glassworks Foundation, Louisville, KY

Brook White

Commissions

Revolve Residential

NoDa Beacon
Permanent Installation 2023
Charlotte, NC

PBS Charlotte

Annual Fundraiser 2023
Five piece glass art set
Charlotte, NC

Charlotte Ballet

Awards 2022
Charlotte, NC

PBS Charlotte

Annual Fundraiser 2022
Five piece glass art set
Charlotte, NC

Charlotte, NC Chamber of Commerce
Economic Growth Recognition Awards
Economic Development Champion
2016, 2017, 2018
Charlotte, NC

Major General Charles Frank Bolden, Jr.
12th Administrator, NASA
Presented to Major Bolden, RIT 2015
Commencement Speaker
Rochester, NY

Dr. Joseph J. McGowan
President
Bellarmine University
Louisville, KY

Bill Nye "The Science Guy"
Rochester Institute of Technology, President Destler,
commissioned a Veronese Vase / Reticello.
Presented to Bill Nye, RIT 2011
Commencement Speaker
Rochester, NY

Dr. William Destler
President
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY

Kathleen and Peter Palmer
Gallery Owner and Collectors
Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery, Bernardsville, NJ

Pat and John Kamperschroer
Private Collectors
East Wenatchee, WA

Exhibitions

January, 2023 – March, 2023

“ColorWave”

One Man Exhibit

Cain Center for the Arts

Cornelius, NC

August 2022

“Interminglings”

Group Exhibition

Mooreville Arts Gallery

Mooreville, NC

June, 2016 – August, 2016

“Techniques and Traditions”

One Man Exhibit

Studio 7 Gallery

Bernardsville, NJ

June 2015

Duncan McClellan Glass School Project Residency Scholarship

Artist in Residence Exhibition

“Engraalmo”

St. Petersburg, FL

June 2014

Guest Artist

Hot Sand Glassblowing Studio on the Jersey Shore

Asbury Park, New Jersey

November 2013

Guest Artist

Bucks County Community College

Department of the Arts

Glass Arts

3D Arts: Sculpture & Glassblowing studios

Newtown, PA

September 2012- Present

Goggle Works Gallery

Reading, PA

October 2013

“Art on Fire Encore”

Hot Glass Demonstration

With: Nicolas Emeric, Miles Van Rennselaer, Cody Nicely and

Doug Merritt

Sponsored By Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery

Hosted By Vandermark Merritt

New Jersey

April 2013
"Art on Fire"
Hot Glass Demonstration
With: Nicolas Emeric, Miles Van Rensselaer and Doug Merritt
Sponsored By Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Hosted By Vandermark Merritt
New Jersey

April - October 2013
"Art on FIRE"
Glass Exhibit
Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Bernardsville, NJ

September - October 2012
"Colorific"
Art Upstairs Gallery
Mayo Performing Arts Center
Morristown, New Jersey

June 2012
"Celebrating 50 Years of Studio Glass in America"
Hot Glass Demonstration
Rahman Anderson, Cody Nicely, Miles Van Rensselaer and Doug Merritt
Sponsored By Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Hosted By Vandermark Merritt
New Jersey

May 2011
"Fire & Ice"
Hot Glass Demonstration
With: Barry Entner, Cody Nicely, Miles Van Rensselaer and Doug Merritt
Sponsored By Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Hosted By Vandermark Merritt
New Jersey

October 2010
"Passion for Glass"
Hot Glass Demonstration
With: Cody Nicely, Todd Koenig, Miles Van Rensselaer and Doug Merritt
Sponsored By Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Hosted By Vandermark Merritt
New Jersey

May 2010, 2012 & 2014
"Mansion in May"
Designer Show House
Morristown, NJ

November 2006 - Present
"Hot Glass"
Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery
Permanent Exhibit (Home Gallery)
Featured Artist 2007, 2009, 2012, 2013, 2016, 2017
Bernardsville, NJ

October 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011
Mountain Art Show (Juried),
St. John on the Mountain
Bernardsville, NJ

October 2009
"Under The Sea"
Flame Run
Louisville, Kentucky

September 2007
"Life's a Beach"
Mayo Performing Arts Center
Morristown, New Jersey

September 2005
"Hot Glass"
Bernardsville, Public Library
Bernardsville, NJ

Awards

September, 2019
Judges Choice 3D
55th Annual Festival in the Park
Charlotte, NC

September, 2018
Honorable Mention
54th Annual Festival in the Park
Charlotte, NC

October 2016
Rising Stars Recognition
30 Exceptional Craftspeople under the Age of 30
American Craft Week

September 2013
Emerging Artist Merit Award for 2014
Buyer's Market of American Crafts
The Rosen Group, Inc.

October 2011
Honorable Mention
Mountain Art Show, St. John on the Mountain (Juried)

June 2010
RIT Dean's Gallery - Honors Exhibit
"Perseverance"
October 2006, 2007
Award of Excellence
Mountain Art Show, St. John on the Mountain (Juried)

Press

2023
PBS Charlotte
WTVIPBSCLT
January 2023

2022
WBTW
November 1, 2022

2022
PBS Charlotte
WTVIPBSCLT
September 2023

2022
WCNC Charlotte
April 8, 2022

2021
PBS Charlotte
WTVIPBSCLT
May 18, 2021 & Sep 25, 2021

2019
PBS Charlotte
Carolina Impact
Season Six, Episode 14
Hot Glass Alley
Russ Huntsinger

2018
WBTW 3 Morning Break
The Art of Glass Blowing
December 6
Chris Larson

2018

CharlotteFive.com

Charlotte's First Hot-Glass-Blowing-Studio is Offering Date Nights, Lessons, Demonstrations and More

October 4

Jillian Mueller

2018

Charlotte on the Cheap

Hot Glass Alley, Charlotte's First Glass Blowing Studio

September

Jody Mace

2018

The Buzz

Season 7, Episode 11

Cassidy Burns

2016

30 Rising Stars

Handmade Business Magazine

October, 2016 pp 26-35

2016

"Techniques and Traditions" Video

You Tube

Ed English, Videographer

July 18, 2016

2015

"Illness no barrier for glass artist"

Tampa Bay Times, Tampa FL

Lauren Hensley, Times Correspondent

June 25, 2015

2013

"Bernardsville Journey into Glassware and Paintings"

MyCentralJersey.com

Ralph Bellantoni Special to NJ Press Media

April 16, 2013

2007

"Future is bright for young glass artist"

Recorder Community Newspapers; Out and About, Bernardsville, NJ

November 29, 2007, p 8

2005

"Bernards High teen is a real 'glass' act"

The Bernardsville News, Bernardsville, NJ

December 22, 2005, p1 and 8