

FRAGILE ART

The Glass Competition

Sponsored by

GLASS
MAGAZINE

Text by

Frederick S. Abrams

Editorial Assistance

Kristin Kron
Ann Marie Lucke
Maureen Michelson

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Preface

GLASS Magazine sponsored an international slide competition during 1977 entitled, "Fragile Art." The competition was designed to explore the extent and significance of the emergence of glass as a new art medium. Certainly, glass art has centuries of history and tradition behind it, but not until the past decade has individual experimentation been so varied and widespread. By virtue of an in-depth study prompted by this competition, in which data and personal statements were solicited from the 81 finalists, we were able to gain a closer insight into this phenomenon. The results indicate there is definitely a phenomenon in the making; it includes glass in any form and it extends throughout many parts of the Western world.

The seeds for this project, which has taken nearly three years from conception to completion, were planted in a San Francisco saloon where the first plans were scribbled on a paper napkin. We compiled a list of the most unlikely and incompatible group of potential competition jurors imaginable in order to avoid stacking a panel with any group that shared a particular philosophy, ideology, or aesthetic sensibility. We chose individuals that could readily recognize a few basic characteristics in the usage of glass, regardless of aesthetic persuasion.

More than 4,000 slides were submitted by some 600 individuals and studios. The majority of entries were from the United States, a large portion originated from Canada and England, and others from France, Denmark, Iceland, Scotland, Wales, Yugoslavia, Australia and Japan.

There were seven categories for submission: decorative objects, etched and engraved glass, functional ware, lamps and lampshades, architectural and autonomous stained glass panels, sculpture and student work. A primary elimination process conducted by the magazine staff was necessary since it would have been impossible to send the overwhelming amount of entries to the ten selected jurors, located throughout the U.S. and Europe. Approximately one out of every seven entrants was represented in the slides sent to the jurors. It took only a one-third vote by the

staff for a piece to qualify as a finalist. Jurors were sent a tabulation sheet and instructions on how to rate each work on a scale of one to ten, using whatever criteria they chose, and to select one personal favorite, which would receive an automatic bonus of ten points. Artists' names were not included, so jurors based their decisions on photography of the finished work.

Considering the variables noted, and that only one word, "glass," held this body of work in common, we feel the results are remarkably successful. The strength and diversity of the winning work could not have been improved upon by a hand selection.

First place went to an architectural stained glass commission that had just been completed before the entry deadline by Canadian Kerry Kelly. Placing second was a glass sculpture by Therman Statom of New York, and third place was awarded to New Englander Thomas Patti for his scent bottle. Other winning entries included a variety of designs and concepts in stained glass, hot glass, engraved glass, etched glass, and neon sculpture.

The main body of writing of this issue was nearly completed in early 1978, and recently re-edited and updated as much as possible by myself and Kristen Kron, a Los Angeles-based painter and illustrator who assisted in writing the original manuscript. Also to be acknowledged is Ann Lucke, an art historian who resides in Portland, Oregon. Ann spent many hours researching each finalist entry in regard to historical influences and associations. Her efforts helped shed light on the links between contemporary glasswork and other media. Technical editing was completed with the assistance of Saralie Northam, Joyce Vollmer and Maureen Michelson.

By no means should this volume be construed to be a definitive catalog of contemporary artwork in glass. What is most important is that this study exposes us to a fascinating cross section of work, philosophies and approaches, and it offers inspiration for further development and application of the medium.

Frederick S. Abrams

Winners and Awards

GRAND PRIZE (\$1,000 from GLASS magazine):
 KERRY JOE KELLY of Victoria, British Columbia;
 SECOND PLACE (a \$250 merchandise certificate from E. R. Brown Glassworks):
 THERMAN STATOM of Brooklyn, New York;
 THIRD PLACE (a \$250 merchandise certificate from Bullseye Glass Co.):
 THOMAS PATTI of Savoy, Massachusetts;
 FOURTH PLACE (a \$250 merchandise certificate from Orient & Flume Cast Glass Co.):
 RICHARD POSNER of San Francisco, California;
 FIFTH PLACE (a \$200 merchandise certificate from Spectrum Glass Co.):
 PATRICIA KILPATRICK of London, England;
 SIXTH PLACE (a \$200 merchandise certificate from Nervo Distributors):
 WILLIAM CARLSON of Urbana, Illinois;
 SEVENTH PLACE (a \$200 merchandise certificate from Royal Industrial Supply, Inc.):
 KEN HILL of Olympia, Washington;
 EIGHTH PLACE (a \$200 merchandise certificate from Bullseye Glass Co.):
 SAVOY STUDIOS of Eureka, California;
 NINTH PLACE (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Northwest Art Glass):
 BILL HILLMAN of Olympia, Washington;
 TENTH PLACE (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Occidental Associates):
 CATHERINE THOMPSON of Shelton, Washington;
 ELEVENTH PLACE (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Objection):
 KIM NEWCOMB of Santa Cruz, California;
 TWELFTH PLACE (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Dianne's Crafts):
 RICHARD POSNER of San Francisco, California;
 THIRTEENTH PLACE (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Uroboros Glass):
 PETER ALDRIDGE of London, England;
 FOURTEENTH PLACE (tied) (a \$100 merchandise certificate from Canterbury Art Glass):
 PAUL DUFOUR II of Baton Rouge, Louisiana;
 FOURTEENTH PLACE (tied) (a \$50 merchandise certificate from The Light Through Yonder Window and a \$50 merchandise certificate from Houde Glass):
 RICHARD POSNER of San Francisco, California;
 FOURTEENTH PLACE (tied) (a \$100 merchandise certificate at Houde Glass from GLASS):
 DON SEVART of South Pasadena, California;
 FIFTEENTH PLACE (a \$25 merchandise certificate from Paoli Clay Co.):
 DAN FENTON of Oakland, California.

Jurors

William H. Blenko, Jr. . . . president of Blenko Glass Company, domestic manufacturer of antique sheet glass and handblown glassware in Milton, West Virginia
 Roger Darricarrere stained glass artist and designer in Los Angeles, California
 Paul Dufour director, stained glass program, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 Audrey Handler blown glass artist from Madison, Wisconsin, a member of the Board of Directors of the Glass Art Society
 Paul Marioni . . . stained and blown glass artist and instructor in Seattle, Washington
 Steve Maslach owner of Maslach Art Glass, Greenbrae, California, a commercial producer of blown glass ware and modular architectural glass
 Ludwig Schaffrath German architectural stained glass designer
 Michael Taylor director, glass blowing program, Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee
 Bert van Loo sculptor and glassblowing artist working in Amsterdam, The Netherlands
 Dick Weiss constructivist stained glass artist in Seattle, Washington

finalist jurors: Paul Marioni, Fred Abrams, Albert Lewis