

Glass Shards

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL AMERICAN GLASS CLUB

www.glassclub.org

Founded 1933

A Non-Profit Organization

Winter 2023

Museum of Glass Features New Exhibit and Community Partnership

A Two-Way Mirror

On view until October 2024 is an exhibition of contemporary Black artists who have used glass to create work that deconstructs social, cultural, gender, and racial identity concerns. The artists range in background from African American, to British, to Puerto Rican. Each artist uses glass to reflect thoughts and bodies that have historically been fraught with exploitation. Due to its reflectivity and translucence, glass is an apt medium to interrogate identity constructs such as the theory of double consciousness presented by W.E.B. Dubois in his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

The exhibition explores the historical representation of Black people through the medium of glass, ranging from work that borrows the abstraction



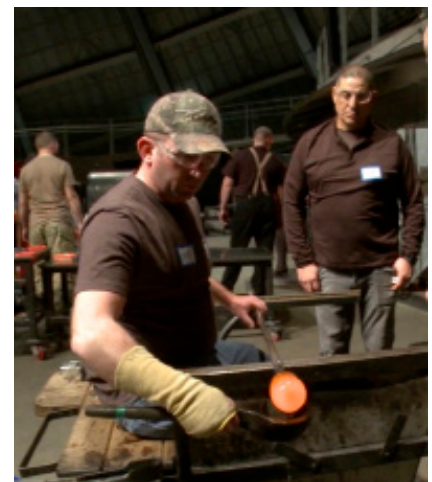
Adebisi VII. Layo Bright, 2020.

of African art by exploiting the sophistication of its planar shifts to the production of traditional glass fetish objects like blackamoor pieces. The perception of self is always warring with that of the outside. Glass art has been predominantly devoid of access for historically marginalized people. This was in large part due to the cost of production, racial oppression, and the class division between artist and artisan. This exhibition cannot rectify this but does explore the inequity of this history and offer works by artists of African descent that tell their own stories.

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Hot Shop Heroes

One of Museum of Glass's landmark community programs, *Hot Shop Heroes*™ is celebrating its 10th year. When Tacoma native and world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly rented the museum for soldiers and their families on President's Day in 2013, Lieutenant General Robert Brown of Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) hoped this connection between the military and MOG would grow. Later that year, MOG partnered with the Soldier Recovery Unit (SRU) at JBLM to create a program that would not only teach soldiers glassblowing skills, but also serve as a form of art therapy



for those returning from combat. *Hot Shop Heroes* was born.

The program offers participants an opportunity to take up to two eight-week courses in basic glassblowing. Previous participants have identified the social and emotional benefits of *Hot Shop Heroes*, recognizing that through the team environment, they have become open to the joy in creating art, coping with anxiety, and interacting with others in a healthy manner.

MUSEUM OF GLASS
1801 Dock St.
Tacoma, WA 98402
(253) 284-4750
www.museumofglass.org

In Memory

The NAGC lost two longtime active members and glass lovers recently:

James Blee Lessig Jr.

James Blee Lessig Jr., 89 years old, of Brookville, MD, passed away peacefully on September 25, 2023, with his family at his side. Jim was born to James and Vera Althouse Lessig in West Reading, PA. He graduated from Penn State University, where he met his first wife Barbara McIlrath Lessig. Jim went on to earn his MBA from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Jim and Barbara were married for 52 years and raised four children: Jim Lessig (Cindy), Amy



James B. Lessig Jr.

Seganish (Roger), Nancy Fisher (Shlomo), and Sandy Pumphrey (Bobby) and seven grandchildren and one great grandchild—all of whom he loved with his whole being. He was preceded in death by wife, Barbara, and brother, John.

He is survived by his current wife Elisabeth Hewlett Lessig. For almost 13 years, Jim and Betsy shared a tender and lasting love, enjoying their

antiques—especially glass, traveling both abroad and between homes in both Cape Cod and Pleasant Valley located in Brookeville, MD. Jim was very knowledgeable and took an interest in specialty art glass and co-managed the Cape Cod Glass Show with wife Betsy for several years. Jim also had a booth at The MEWS at Brewster Antiques on the Cape and was a member and treasurer of the Cape Cod Glass Club.

Throughout his years, Jim provided well for his family and had a rewarding career in logistics, management, and consulting—working for companies throughout the Northeast US and mostly within the Maryland/DC area. He was also an avid tennis player, equestrian, double-reed instrument enthusiast, and musician. He led the Bell Choir at church for many years and additionally served many terms as elder for St. Matthew Presbyterian Church. Jim had a strong Christian faith and was always a dedicated disciple of Christ in serving others. Jim also had a sharp wit and tremendous sense of humor. He loved life, his family, and his many, many friends fully.

* * * *

John Stephen Kohut

John Stephen Kohut, age 82, of Elkland, PA, passed away at his home on Sunday, October 15, 2023. John was born in Corning, NY, and graduated from the University of Cincinnati. He built his career as a Software Engineering Manager with Control Data Corporation, where he was highly regarded by all he worked for and with.

Upon retirement, John became an avid cut glass collector. Well-known

and respected in that community, John became an active member of the Eastern Lakes Chapter of the National American Cut Glass Association, Chairman of the Catalog Committee for ACGA, and the owner of Brilliant Mitre Antiques. He served as a longtime docent at The Corning Museum of Glass and an advocate for the Museum's mission. John served multiple terms as Treasurer of the National American Glass Club. His financial



John S. Kohut.

acumen, his organizational skills, and his unfailing wry sense of humor proved invaluable to the Club. John is remembered for his intelligence, his generosity, his devotion to family and friends, and his kind and thoughtful manner. John's attention to detail kept the Club on track and on schedule, his valued guidance always came with a laugh and a welcome friendly conversation. He will be deeply missed by his loved ones, the members of the NAGC and the AGCA, and especially by the NAGC Board where he so ably served.

President's Letter

Friends,

I hope everyone has had a restful and joyful holiday and you are looking forward to all the New Year has to offer. As we look ahead to 2024, I have heard from many of you who are looking for the NAGC to regain its place in the glass world and begin to offer some of the programs the Club organized before the pandemic. Many on the Board are in agreement but we need the support and energy of the Chapters and the individual members to make that possible.

There is a small group that includes Past-President Mary Mills and Board Member Jay Rogers investigating both a mini-Seminar for 2024 and a full Seminar for 2025. We are also looking at new website design that would hopefully allow us to handle address changes and membership renewals online, as well as share information and recruit members. Currently about 80% of the Club's annual operating expenses are used to print and mail *Glass Shards* and the *Glass Club Bulletin*. These costs make it difficult to plan meaningful programs. We need

your support and the dues revenue to deliver the excellent original content of the *Bulletin* and to have a website that can share out more information.

If you haven't renewed for the 2023-24 year, please send your check to our Treasurer Linda Reed *immediately* using the form below. The Club has flourished for 90 years because of its members, we need your energy to be sustainable and grow.

Yours in glass,
Anne Madarasz
President, NAGC



NATIONAL AMERICAN GLASS CLUB 2023-2024 Annual Membership Dues for Non-Chapter Members

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

E-MAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

- Full-Time Student FREE
- Individual \$35
- Institution \$60
- Household \$40 (Limit of 2)
- Contributing \$50
- Donor \$100
- Life ○ \$400 (Individual)
- \$500 (Household)
- Additional Donation \$ _____

Please tell us how the NAGC could better serve you.
Thanks!

**Please send your check, payable to The National American Glass Club
(or NAGC), to Linda Reed, P.O. Box 66, Andes, NY 13731**

New Exhibit Offers Striking Story

Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight is on view through April 28, 2024, at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. This exhibition is organized by Museum of Glass and Preston Singletary and will be presented by The Chickasaw Nation. The multi-sensory experience combines glass, video, and audio to tell the story of Raven, a creator figure in Northwest Coast Native American culture, who was the giver of the stars, moon, and sun. Raven takes visitors on a transformative journey through darkness into light. In addition to Singletary's striking glass pieces, the exhibition features storytelling paired with original music, coastal Pacific Northwest soundscapes, and video.

Singletary's work fuses time-honored glassblowing traditions with Pacific Northwest Indigenous art to

honor his ancestral Tlingit heritage, a tribe in southern Alaska. Tlingit culture and oral tradition have a rich history of pairing objects with foundational stories and histories of tribal families. By drawing upon this method of visual storytelling, Singletary's art creates a theatrical atmosphere in which each object follows and enhances the narrative.

OKCMOA is collaborating with First Americans Museum (<https://famok.org>). Visit the website for programming details.

OKLAHOMA CITY MUSEUM
OF ART
415 Couch Dr.
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
(405) 278-8237
www.okcmoa.com



Naas Shaak Aankáawu (Nobleman at the Head of the Nass River). Preston Singletary, 2018.

Installation at the Imagine Museum

1000 Prayers for Compassion is a site-specific installation created by Trish Duggan, a prominent American artist and founder of the Imagine Museum. In this installation, Duggan has cast 1,000 glass Quan Yin heads hoping to conjure a communal effort to embrace others, show compassion, and radiate love. Duggan thoughtfully uses Quan Yin, the ancient Chinese Goddess of Mercy, love, and compassion to embody these same themes in her work.

IMAGINE MUSEUM
1901 Central Ave.
St. Petersburg, FL 33713
(727) 300-1700
www.imagemuseum.com



Glass Calendar

(Confirmation of dates and schedules advised. More information is available on our Web page at www.glassclub.org)

Through March 2024

THE CORNING MUSEUM
OF GLASS

Disclosure: The Whiteness of Glass
One Museum Way
Corning, NY 14830
(800) 732-6845
www.cmog.org

Disclosure: The Whiteness of Glass celebrates joy, interdependence, and collective action while examining systemic racism, exclusion, and inequity in the field of contemporary glass art. The product of research and social practice, the exhibition invites viewers to reflect on the issues it highlights.

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Through April 2024

MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM
*Spineless: A Glass Menagerie
of Blaschka Marine Invertebrates*
75 Greenmanville Ave.
Mystic, CT 06355
(860) 572-0711
<https://mysticseaport.org>



Sea Anemone (*Phymactis florida*).

Spineless explores some of the inspiring ways that people have tried to record the ocean's mesmerizing marine

invertebrates. The main theme of the exhibition features the intriguing story of father and son glassmakers Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka of Dresden, Germany. In the 1850s, the elder Blaschka became fascinated by invertebrates he observed while at sea. Inspired to produce glass models that would capture their forms, anatomical details, and colors, he and his son went on to create a unique mail-order catalog business. They successfully sold and distributed these often extraordinarily fragile pieces to museums and universities around the world for teaching and display purposes. Over 40 of these exquisite models from the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University and other institutions will be displayed.

Some of the species the Blaschkas created in glass live today in waters local to the museum, and some have since become introduced species around the world, including in Mystic. Those models are singled out and put into context through the work of Dr. James T. Carlton, Director Emeritus of the Williams College–Mystic Seaport Coastal and Ocean Studies Program.

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Through May 4, 2024

CAFESJIAN ART TRUST
*Fooling the Eye: Optics
of Vasarely and Kuhn*
4600 Churchill St.
Shoreview, MN 55126
(612) 359-8991
<https://cafesjianarttrust.org>



Folkokta. Victor Vasarely, 1975.



Flame Kissed. Jon Kuhn, 2005.

This exhibit explores the use of optics and perception through the artwork of Victor Vasarely and Jon Kuhn. Through the use of shading and linear elements, these ingenious works play with the illusion of movement and the relationship of color and light.

Paul Stankard Retrospective at the Morris Museum

From Flame to Flower: The Art of Paul J. Stankard is a retrospective of one of the most prominent glass artists. Paul Stankard has worked with glass since 1961 and has dedicated over 50 years to perfecting his technique and signature botanical glass sculptures. In his experimentation and thirst for new and exciting forms, Stankard revolutionized the paper-weight industry and influenced countless glass artists. The exhibition includes more than 75 stunning glass objects that will be on view until February 4, 2024.

This exhibition is a comprehensive overview of Stankard's artistic journey and his significant contributions to the world of glass art. From his early works to his most recent masterpieces, the retrospective will highlight the evolution of his style that blends mysticism with magical realism and

the development of his signature flameworking techniques. On view in the museum's historic Twin Oaks mansion, the exhibition is presented in an intimate gallery setting that allows visitors to appreciate his glass work's captivating beauty and intricacy. Each of Stankard's works offers a unique view based on the visitor's vantage point, encouraging visitors to see the many facets of each object.

From Flame to Flower combines a vast catalog of glass art from his earliest work in 1971 and draws from several collections, including Stankard's private one. The exhibition will guide visitors through his intricate process with photos, audio recordings of the artist, and related ephemera. It will elaborate on the flameworking process, also known as lampworking, a bench craft technique of forming objects from rods of glass that, when



The Fecundity of Walt Whitman's Garden.
Paul Stankard, 2021.

heated in a flame, become soft and can be shaped.

MORRIS MUSEUM
an affiliate of the
Smithsonian Museum
6 Normandy Heights Rd.
Morristown, NJ 07960
(973) 971-3700
www.morrismuseum.org

MARCH 1, 2024
DEADLINE
NEXT ISSUE'S

www.glassclub.org
Visit NAGC Web page:

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ATTENTION READERS!
The next deadline for the *Glass Shards* will be
March 1, 2024
Submit news to Alice Saville, *Glass Shards* Editor, at
planetalsaville@gmail.com

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The National American
Glass Club
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