



These 7 Artists Are Testing the Limits of Glass-Making

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY ARIELA GITTLEN
AUG 15TH, 2017 11:52 AM

"Until recently, the scientific community couldn't agree if glass was a liquid or a solid, which is rather insane," Cybele Maylone tells me. "It speaks to the magical properties that make glass so enchanting to artists."

Maylone is the executive director of UrbanGlass, which, since its founding in 1977, has grown from the back room of a ceramics studio in SoHo into the largest public glass studio in the United States. (Other institutions such as the Corning Museum of Glass and the Swedish Glass Museum have also flourished.)

The organization's expansion speaks to the steadily growing popularity of the material among craftspeople and contemporary artists alike. There's much more to contemporary glass beyond Dale Chihuly's famous chandeliers with their Medusa-like curls. Lynda Benglis, Matthew Barney, and Robert Rauschenberg all created artwork at UrbanGlass, and more recently, interdisciplinary artists including Tauba Auerbach and Virginia Poundstone have participated in the organization's studio residency.

Since stained glass windows appeared in the first cathedrals, glass has always inspired awe. "I've never had an artist walk into our studio and not had their jaw hit the floor when they understand what's possible here," Maylone says.

Glass may be an unforgiving medium, but it's extremely versatile. It can be blown, cut, cast, flameworked, filled with neon gas, and illuminated. Artists' approaches have become increasingly multifaceted—combining glass with video, exploring 3D printing and other emerging technologies, or using it as an element in performance or social practice. Even the process of glass-making has its own dramatic and performative potential. "A move towards performance has always bubbled under the surface," Maylone says.

What follows is the work of seven artists, each exploring the myriad possibilities of glass—from casts of miniature cities to a functioning glass seismograph to durational performance—and challenging the material's limits.



Amber Cowan

B. 1981, BASED IN PHILADELPHIA

Amber Cowan, Braidsmaids Forest, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

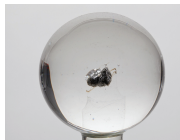
Using vintage scrap and deadstock from glass factories, Cowan shapes exuberant sculptures that sprout like coral from the table or wall. Cowan's solo exhibition "Re/Collection" is currently on view at the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Massachusetts.



Thaddeus Wolfe

B. 1979, BASED IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

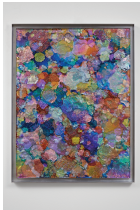
Unique Assemblage vessel in hand-blown, cut and polished glass. Designed and made by Thaddeus Wolfe, USA, 2017. Rather than working across a variety of materials, Wolfe has devoted himself to learning the craft of glass. [...] "its material properties provide me with inspiration and challenges. It seems to have endless possibilities, while also having many limitations."



Bryan McGovern Wilson

B. 1984, BASED IN NEW YORK CITY

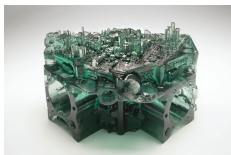
Bryan McGovern Wilson, Trinitite Reliquary, 2010-present. Courtesy of the artist. Wilson's work recalls the adage, coined by science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. His projects, which often integrate glass into performances, use the material to explore the connections between science and alchemy.



Flavie Audi

B. 1986, BASED IN LONDON

Flavie Audi, LCD4 (lithic Crystalline Deposit). Photo by Benjamin Westoby. Courtesy of the artist. The visual pleasures of glass often arise from a paradox: How can an object appear so fluid, yet be so rigid? Like Gian Lorenzo Bernini's marble flesh, it miraculously embodies its opposite. It is tender until touched. Audi's glasswork seems especially liquid.



Norwood Viviano

B. 1972, BASED IN PLAINWELL, MICHIGAN

Norwood Viviano, Recasting Detroit, 2017. Photo by Tim Thayer/Robert Hensleigh. Courtesy of the artist. Viviano's latest body of work, which explores the relationship between manufacturing and population change, is inspired by his Michigan roots. A solo show of Viviano's new work is planned to go up at the Heller Gallery, New York, in May 2018.



Åsa Jungnelius

B. 1975, BASED IN STOCKHOLM AND MÅNSAMÅLA, SWEDEN

ÅSA JUNGNELIUS, Snäcka grön. Courtesy of the artist. Jungnelius lists Walter De Maria, Louise Bourgeois, Pierre Huyghe, the feminist movement, and traditional Venetian glass techniques among her diverse influences. The Swedish artist's work is similarly capacious, ranging from petite totems of femininity to large-scale installations and public artworks.



Andy Paiko

B. 1977, BASED IN PORTLAND, OREGON

Andy Paiko, Illuminated Sculpture, 2014, Wexler Gallery. There's something undeniably steampunk about Paiko's work, which is flamboyant yet functional. His objects suggest a world in which glass plays a more utilitarian, even technological role. In 2016, Paiko was a recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award, which recognizes emerging artists and craftspeople.