

Third Annual Boro Night

by P. Kelly
Photography by Brian Lew
and Chris Carlson

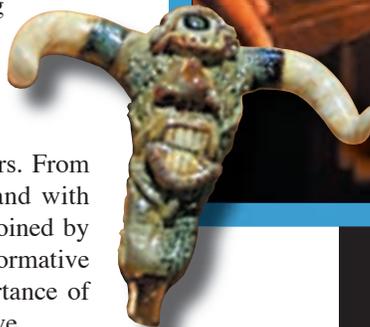
The Third Annual Night with Borosilicate was hosted by Hot Glass Color and Supply on February 29, 2008. The event honored none other than Bob Snodgrass, the only recipient of the Borosilicate Lifetime Achievement Award, which now bears his name. This artist needs little introduction, because his influence extends well beyond the borders of this great nation for helping to motivate a revolution in lampworked glass. He has inspired and educated so many. As I am sure Bob would remind everyone, "Don't wipe your hands with your sandwich."

The Gallery opened at noon on Saturday. Many exquisite pieces were on display, and local favorites came heavy with the gallery competition. There was beautiful work by everyone including MNP, Doshier, Ease, Amber Pelegrinni, Nate Dizz, Pakoh, Redbone, and Nick Ashman, just to name a few of our locals.

The demos began in the early afternoon, with Cameron Tower giving an impressive performance as he made a set of wine goblets with his legendary roller technique. Chris Carlson, winner of last year's Flame Off, also shared a step-by-step honeycomb in which he made a great connection with his audience while making some rather advanced work look like mere child's play. Later that afternoon Bob Snodgrass stepped up to a Carlisle and gave a demo along with a lecture about the history of color in borosilicate glass. He also shared the color-making techniques that have served him well even before the existence of the color companies that we have grown so fond of in recent years. I am talking about a couple of this year's sponsors. From Momka's Glass there was Gio Preeva, who was on hand with samples, many of which are brand new. We were also joined by Henry Grimmett from Glass Alchemy who gave an informative lecture about glass and safety that underlined the importance of color companies receiving artist feedback in order to thrive.

At around seven the beer and wine started flowing, and there was plenty of food and drinks to go around. This was backed up by some of our local reggae DJs and created a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere just as the Flame Off was getting under way. This has been deemed a not-so-traditional flame off and encourages people with different styles to work together, mostly in pairs. Some groups, however, contained three artists, because who could help themselves? Everyone wanted to get in on the fun.

I was so impressed by the winners this year in all of the categories that I had to talk to them myself. Here are some of the things that I learned from Cowboy, Salt, and J-Red.



Cowboy

What was your favorite part of show?"

The mingling factor. So many glassblowers and such little time to talk. Finally meeting Bob and Marie was amazing. And I can't fail to mention Henry's speech that was not only motivational but very inspirational. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the hospitality was great all around.

How did it feel?

I was blown away. I brought what I thought was my best. I made these pieces as a collaborative effort, because I think that's how this



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community will grow. Bryan Holton did the pinstripe work on the black bubbler, and the Illadelph crew put together all my sections for the tube. The tile piece was a personal project from a new series.

Are you coming back next year?

Yes. I feel like I must defend my title [laughing]. Of course I'll be back. This event has shown me a lot of love. I didn't even think it was a competition when I made what I made. I was just happy to be represented next to some great art.

Salt

Since Robert Mickelson introduced graal to this generation of kids so heavily influenced by the pipe, we have continued to see the pipe as no longer just a three-dimensional sculpture but as a three-dimensional canvas and a sculpture. What I am most impressed with is the unmistakable nod to surrealism.

First of all thank you. I am heavily influenced by the surrealists. Even as a young boy, before I understood what it all meant, I loved the work of Dahli and Escher. For me, their work is the stuff of pure imagination, and yet at the same time surrealism is very clever and thoughtful. My nod to the surreal is in my mind more of a natural combination of my own aesthetic, or what I like, combining with influence from the hip-hop culture like graffiti and music, specifically the free-style movement. I use this free style in a literal sense with my glass and infuse the graffiti feel into my work.

I think that the similarities between pipe making and graffiti culture are undeniable and, for me, highly inspirational. I think of myself as a node where these things that I love are able to come together and be molded into my expressions, desires, and concerns. In the end, my style is the fruit of my continually striving to put a message in my work and to amplify my voice as an artist and as a human. I want to do my best to represent the pipe making community that raised me and raise the voice of my generation.

J-Red

The piece you guys put together for the Flame Off—wow, man, it wasn't small. A lot of detail. So this was the third flame off you have entered?

Yes

And your partner was . . .

Kevin McCulley. I have been teaching him for the last couple of years.

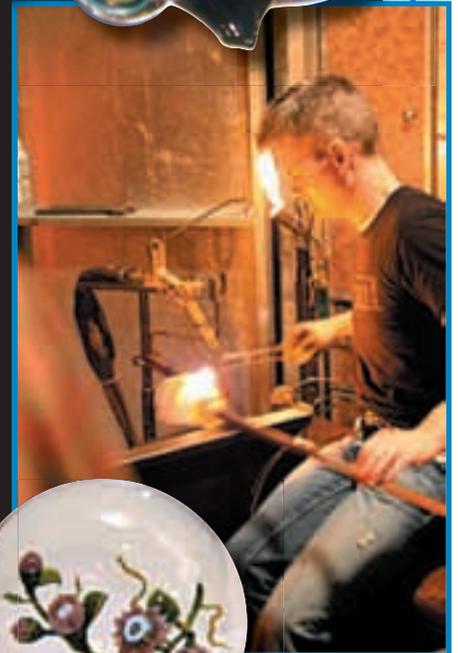
The piece you guys made was large scale compared to other entries and showed a lot of skill on the torch by both of you. You clearly deserved first place. How does it feel to take first, facing the competition you had to face?

Honored. Winning in a group of really cool glassblowers was a real honor.

What was your favorite part of the show?

Getting to hang out with all the glassblowers and watch other people work. It really gives you a sense that you are a part of something larger than yourself when you get together.

This year's celebration has been by far the most successful yet. The raffle included the best prizes we have ever had the pleasure to give away. Our support from our sponsors was much appreciated. We would like to thank all of the artists who contributed and helped make this such a great show along with everyone at Hot Glass Color and Supply and Fifth Avenue Glass. A special thanks goes to the committee for the Annual Night with Borosilicate—Cyrena, Sabina, Cameron, Nathan, and me. Congratulations also go to our winners: Cowboy with first place, Salt with second place, Chaz with a respectable third, and J-Red for winning the Flame Off. Thanks, also, to all of our sponsors: the *Flow* magazine, Bob Snodgrass, Glass Alchemy, Momka's Glass, Dichroic Alchemy, *Glass Line* magazine, Winship, Northstar, Carlisle School of Glass, Austin Thin Films, Oxygen Unlimited, and UST.



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