

Glass Aquatic

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Ocean and glass. Oh, yeah. These two things work together like desert and stone. It seems to me that there is a great relationship between glass and anything aquatic. Clear glass sets the transparency, the perfect base to be used as a canvas of endless shape and form whether for surface or interior designs.





Influence of the Sea

People often ask why the attention on sea life in glass? Well, besides the optical and colorful psychedelic techniques of glass, the natural characteristics of the glass would cause me to reflect upon aquatic life. I mean, I wouldn't make a moose out of glass, nor a jellyfish out of wood. Different mediums bring out different creative means of expression with each one. My fascination with glass brings out the water in me. If you think about it and break down all the characteristics of glass, there are some things that are described in the same way—transparent, magnifying, solid, liquid, smooth, reflective, round, colorful, light-bending, cold, hot, and so on. This describes all things aquatic to me and thus a medium to represent.

The metals used in the colored glass play the perfect part in the coloring of aquatic life. Many of the effects seen in my glass are from pure silver and 24-karat gold heated in a flame until it vaporizes and adheres to the glass, where it then can be manipulated into desired effects. They represent the way the sun reflects off of fish scales or the bioluminescence of a jellyfish and the endless variety of colors and patterns in seashells, crabs, starfish, and coral. They're also reminiscent of the bottom fish and octopuses that take on the imagery of the sand and stones below them to blend in.

It seems as though the underworld is the biggest influence in my glass. After all, that's where all the ingredients came from. As a child I was fascinated by the jellies that were under the boat when I was out fishing in the ocean. The bioluminescence and colors seem to be found only in these few moments every year. This creature has been a staple in my artistic life. I still look for them and become entranced in their mystical existence under the boat and in the kiln the next day.

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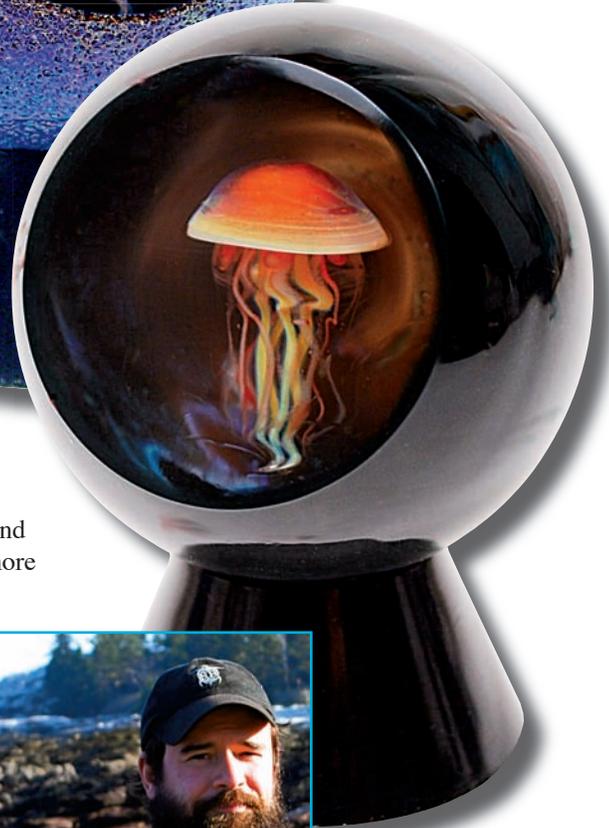
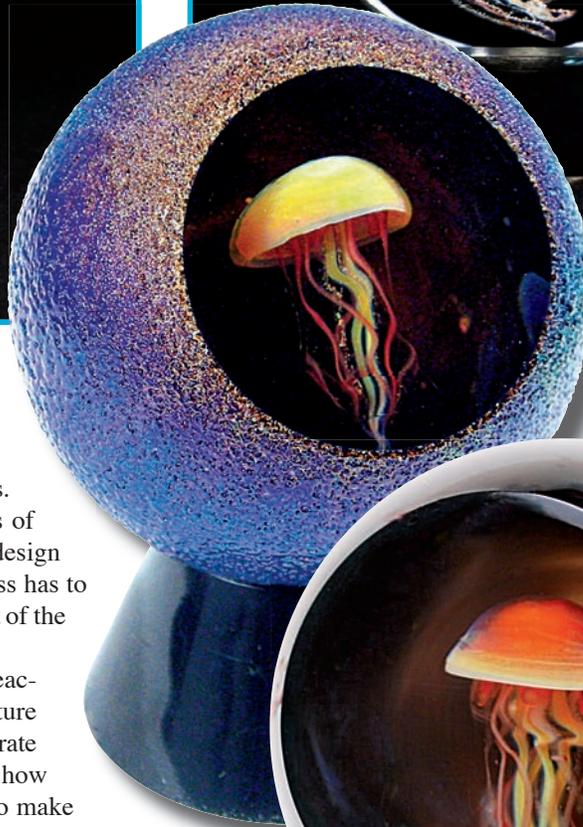
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Lure of the Jellies

The jellyfish is one of my favorite creatures to create in glass. To me, the jellyfish is the most structureless creature, with no skeleton and no sharp or sturdy mass. Its existence constantly reacts to the flow and currents of its surroundings. Taking this into consideration, the design and technique in creating an encased jellyfish from glass has to accommodate the fact that the jellyfish is inside and part of the same structure as the encasement.

The jellyfish's tentacles move and flow with every reaction. This isn't an animal pre-made and attached to sculpture or cooler than another part or a piece that lets you concentrate on a different area and not affect it. I'm not trying to say how difficult it is to make, not that it isn't. I'm just trying to make a point that thinking ahead, way ahead, is most crucial in these, since the jellyfish shows its involvement with the outside world. Any flow given to the sea around the jelly shows in the jelly.

To me, jellies are definitely the most rewarding creature to make. It seems that no matter how many I make, I am always excited to see what their form and color ends up looking like the next day. Each one is different. I do try to find more ways to incorporate the jellyfish into my glass art. "Where else can I put a jellyfish?" I am always looking for new functional objects that would work well with a jelly in it somehow.

I do have many designs already that have a jelly in it. As much as I like working with many, many other aquatic creatures, the jelly has for some reason become my staple. I have noticed more inquisitive reactions from people with this than any other object I have ever had on my table. I have collected, sold, and displayed many rare and beautiful minerals and fossils from all over the world including natural, ancient geological phenomena! But man altering glass with something inside it takes the cake. I guess that I am guilty, too, for giving so much attention to this form. Amazing stuff!