

Glass In Fashion

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Photos by Stephanie Doctor*



In 1998 Nathan Purcell found himself in Boulder, Colorado; creative center for glass and other art forms alike. Surrounded by the unique world of glass artists he was introduced to the techniques and skills required to become a talented artisan. Amongst many of the most talented glass artists in the country, such as the legendary Sean Sterling, Nate found himself searching for a way to combine his love of glass making with a way to popularize the art in the public eye.

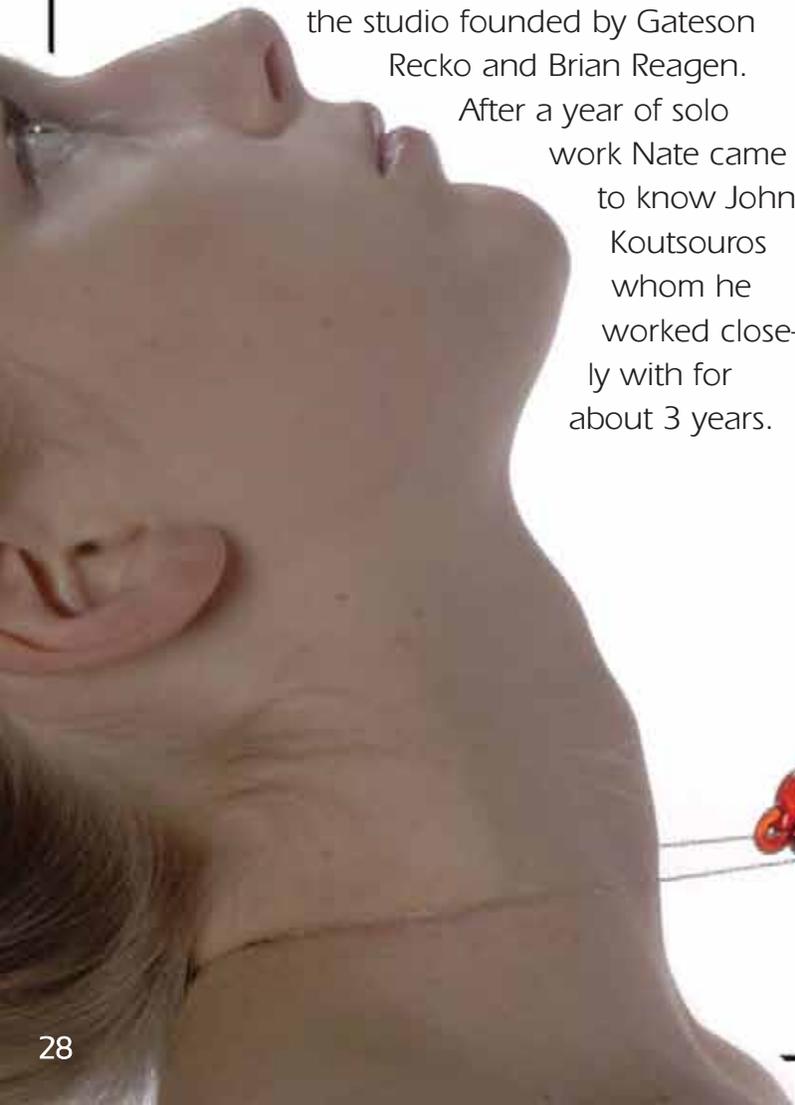
With his growing knowledge and noticeable talent Nate made the decision to move to Philadelphia in 1999, where he saw a potential for achieving his goal. Upon his arrival in the "City of Brotherly Love" Nate set out to expand his abilities and experience by making connections in the glass community. He started in South Philadelphia making glass at the studio founded by Gateson Recko and Brian Reagen.

After a year of solo work Nate came to know John Koutsouros whom he worked closely with for about 3 years.

Nate during these three years also participated in some intensive workshops with Emlio Santini and Paul Stankard at Corning Glass Studio and Salem Community College.

By this time, Nate felt confident and skilled enough to venture out and start something big. In conjunction, Nate met Ian Kerr who was looking toward new business endeavors; a friendship was born, and not long after, the two put their heads together to formulate a business concept. Nate and Ian, with the help and support of friends and colleagues, spent the next two years building a studio in West Philadelphia. Philadelphia Glassworks was born in 2003.

With the opening of Philadelphia Glassworks Nate and Ian realized that their studio was the perfect place to allow the public an opportunity to create its own glass art by offering instructional classes and workshops for beginner, intermediate and advanced glassblowers alike.





Shortly after the studio was established, Nate was approached by a fashion student from Moore College of Art to produce the glass jewelry for her senior fashion collection. Not long after, Janel Scheible and Nate were introduced. After some discussion and with Janel's background in fashion from Drexel University and her love of glass, another new creative partnership was formed.

Philadelphia Glassworks began planning a move to their new studio and gallery space. Their current location, in the up-and-coming artist community of Northern Liberties, opened in autumn of 2005. This state-of-the-art studio contains eight complete lampworking stations and a full cold working shop. In addition, the gallery space serves as a welcome place for talented artist to display and sell a multitude of work. As Philadelphia Glassworks continues to cultivate and promote glass as art in Philadelphia and the surrounding area Nate continues to expand his vision as an artist and contributor in the world of glass art.

If you are interested in displaying work in the Philadelphia Glassworks gallery please contact at 215-627-3655 or email nate@phillyglassworks.com. www.phillyglassworks.com

As the annual conference for the Glass Art Society announced that they would host a glass fashion show in New Orleans Nate and Janel began to formulate designs that would combine organic glass forms with the beauty of natural leathers, silks and wools.

This combination proved to be successful and in 2005 the Snydermans' of the Snyderman-Works Gallery in Philadelphia's art center approached Nate with a proposal to open their annual glass auction with a fashion show on behalf of the non-profit organization, Contemporary Glass of Philadelphia. Nate and Janel again teamed up to produce designs that morphed into one-of-a-kind creations. (see insets)

As Nate and Ian enjoyed their successes and recognition, their expanding ideas and vision quickly outgrew the West Philadelphia location. In the midst of several fashion and other projects,

