

# Making Fish with Personality

Written by Ofilia Cinta [www.ofiliaartglass.com](http://www.ofiliaartglass.com)

Photos by Rich Images

I absolutely love my fish. I was hesitant to make fish at first. After all "everyone" makes fish. I have managed to find my niche in the fish world. Originally somewhat realistic, somewhere, they took a sharp left turn. The more I make, the more out there they seem to go! I approach each one with a color theme. As the body and head shape establish themselves, the face tells the rest. As I am sculpting the eyes and mouth, they appear to be looking right back at me and saying, "Ok, Ofilia, what took you so long?" They become their own entities eager to get out of the hot mass and use me as their medium. I would think a cartoonist would have much the same feeling as they draw the faces of their characters. I never make the same character/fish twice. I know I have countless images to still project. That is my art.

I take pride in my use of color. I especially concentrate on the eyes of my fish. They are the windows into the soul of my fish. I use up to nine colors individually applied just in the eyes. These are not your common fish. I was once asked why my small fish was so pricey compared to a larger blown fish. I explained it was not a fish market where weight determined the price.

Hot glass has allowed me to "paint" in 2D and the end result is a 3D object. I have always struggled with two-dimensional art. I also struggled to draw animated characters. I have found that I have overcome those obstacles in lampworking. My gift has always been in making three-dimensional art. By combining the hot glass painting with figurative manipulations of the glass I have created a very satisfying result.

Lampworking is very capable of being a "self-taught" craft. Practice is beneficial for growth. It is said that copying is the greatest form of flattery. Attempting to copy is a form of teaching yourself as well. Copying for commercial reasons is not cool. Find your own style and directions (note the plural). Discovery is the key to self-gratification and fulfillment. Taking workshops from experienced and respected lampworkers has much merit in it. The first year I attended the ISGB Gathering, I took Al Janelle's "Twist and Shout" class. His emphasis on precision is so valuable. You can see it in his pieces. You develop a deeper respect for certain artists as you see the intensity and flawless approaches to their craft. I also took Pam Dugger's hollow bead class.



I have always admired Pam's fish. Her fish are so lifelike and very inspirational.

The following year I took a four-day workshop in Loren Stump's studio. WOW! Talk about intensity! There is so much information dealt to you. Seriously, his emphasis was on murrine and speed. His motto is "The longer it takes, the better it does not make." Again, the character of your instructors adds to the full impact of your lesson. It was truly information overload but it was a total gas! No pun intended.

I still feel that I am still a student of this media with a long way to go until I feel I've just begun to master it's potential. Keep an eye on my progress at [www.ofiliaartglass.com](http://www.ofiliaartglass.com).

