

Conference 2009

by Adam Villareal

Photography by The Corning Museum of Glass

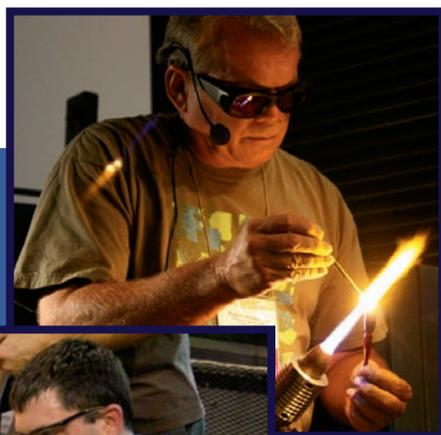
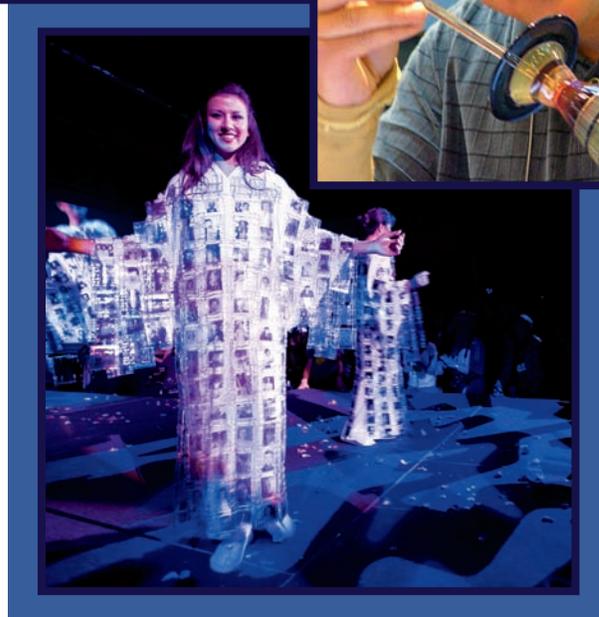
On June 11–13, 2009, the city of Corning, New York, saw a flood of artists, educators, vendors, and collectors arrive for the thirty-ninth annual Glass Art Society (GAS) conference. More than 1,400 GAS members from all corners of the globe came to network, listen to lectures, view demos, see vendors, and celebrate all that the GAS conference has to offer.

An Inspiring Theme

The theme of the 2009 conference was “Local Inspiration, Global Innovation,” a message that hits home during a time when economic challenges are putting the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the glass community to the test. Representatives from local tourism agencies, arts organizations, and businesses helped to put on some of the evening events.

Having the conference in Corning gave local merchants a chance to not only show off the community but to boost the local economy. Close to 200 volunteers helped throughout the Conference, with many people in the community even offering their homes to visiting artists and attendees.

One could spend years on the Corning campus and not take it all in. The people at this institution have accomplished so much in accumulating and protecting the knowledge of glass working for future generations. It is truly an uplifting thing to view. The old ways are fading away, and secrecy is no longer the modus operandi of the industry. Growth, innovation, and change are the new avenues of exploration. As information becomes more available and abundant, the course of action becomes clear. We must instill in the next generation the necessity of carrying on these rich traditions.



A Wealth of Artists and Information

The real substance of the conference began on the second day and continued throughout the remainder of the Conference, with demos and lectures that were well worth the registration fee many times over. There was a chance to view practically any technique performed by masters in their respective fields. Glass artists including Elio Quaria, Robert Mickelsen, Tim MacFarlane, Davide Salvatore and his son Marco, Matt Eskuche, Vittorio Costantini, Cesare Toffolo, and Gianni Toso shared their art with attendees through lectures, demonstrations, and keynote addresses. They were joined throughout the conference by many more glass luminaries who were also on hand to inspire attendees with their fascinating wealth of knowledge.

In addition to artists sharing their techniques, vendors from around the industry came to represent their companies at the Conference. The vendors’ tent itself was like a candy land for glass people. Every tool, torch, kiln, glass, or equipment you could dream of was represented. There was also a lively and fast-paced auction that proved to be a great success. The Glass Fashion Show, produced by Laura Donefer, and the Closing Night Party helped to round out a truly great experience that those who attended this year’s conference will not soon forget.

www.glassart.org



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