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Photography by Briana Boyer

On July 17 and 18, 2009, the Colorado Project, a nonprofit organization committed to building the glass community through philanthropy, held its first annual event in Denver, Colorado. Shack Man Glass Studio in conjunction with Glasscraft, Inc., hosted the two-day event. It was the brainchild of Sean Mueller—along with Corinne Winters, Chris Jetter, and Adam Grafuis—and went from concept to reality in a mere four months, which is certainly a testament to the tenacity and ability of the Colorado project team. People from all over the country came to participate and show support.



Glass Artists with a Mission

The purpose of the Colorado Project was to create a collaborative glass art installation consisting of a four-foot-by-eight-foot mask to be sold at auction to raise money for Learning Landscapes, a University of Colorado program that rebuilds playgrounds in disrepair. Composed of lampworked pieces of crucible-pulled color and a huge bead necklace and headdress, the mask was impressive to say the least. The community aspect of the event was emphasized by having nearly 150 glassblowers rotating through lampworking stations at both Shack Man Studio and Glasscraft to produce the beads for the headdress and necklace. The work for the mask itself was done by Nathan Aweida, Cary Hollenberg, and Adam Grafuis, with Abe Fleishman from Northstar pulling the color out of the crucible. During the entire event the spirit of sharing and goodwill was evident as newbies and old timers discussed techniques and traded information freely.

The funds from this particular event went to help the Doull Elementary School rebuild its playground. Not including the installation piece, more than ten thousand dollars worth of artwork—including everything from goblets, marbles, and jewelry to a smashing sculpture of handblown glass created on an all-glass GTT—was donated to the cause. The donated glass art was sold at a silent auction on August 8 at Shack Man Studios.



A Glimpse into the Future

The success of the project shows the power of philanthropy and the versatility of the borosilicate community and sets a wonderful precedent for future functions. A special thanks goes to Sean Mueller, Brian Schmitt, Susan Schmitt, Corinne Winters, Jimmy Sellars, Nathan Aweida, Cary Hollenberg, Adam Grafuis, Abe Fleishman, Dave Winship, Briana Boyer, and most importantly to the attendees who came from far and wide to make this event the great success it was.

The borosilicate lampworking movement has risen far above and beyond anyone's expectations and continues to grow and change in exciting ways. More than any other time in history, glass knowledge is not only available but shared readily. This ensures that the lampworking legacy only grows stronger as time goes by. The Colorado project gives us a glimpse of what the future can hold for the borosilicate movement, and it is a bright future, indeed.



Visit the "Articles" link at www.TheFlowMagazine.com for an expanded description of the Colorado Project.