

THE 2009 SONORAN GLASS ART ACADEMY

by Anthony Laguna
Photography by William Baker

FLAME OFF!

The 2009 Sonoran Glass Art Academy's (SGAA) Annual Flame Off was held February 7 in Tucson, Arizona, at Barrio Brewing Company. The Flame Off brings glass artists together to compete against each other and the clock to create amazing glass art. This year's event included three categories. There were six single competitors in each of the marble and wearable categories and six, two-person teams in vessel/goblet.

Firsthand Glass Art Excitement

The event packed the venue with a crowd eager to see some fire, and no wonder. It's not every day that average people get to see glass art being made right in front of them. Each competitor was allowed two hours to complete his or her piece, and all of the art made was donated to SGAA. The work was auctioned during a live auction that started while the artists were working and went on to a silent auction the next day at the Best Bead Show where the pieces were judged.

The contestants in marble were Josh Hamra, Anthony Laguna, Josh Mazet, Akihiro Ohkama, Max Roberts, and Filip Vogelpohl. In the wearable category, we had Veda Bickley, Rashan Jones, Jeremy Guerrero, Ryo Ono, Andy Ray, and Jameson Siudut. The two-person teams included Micah Blatt/John Mims, Keith Bryan/Yoshio Omura, Eusheen Goines/Natey Biskind, Seth Hawkins/Todd Perry, Laurie Nessel/Eli Aller, and Jeff Rogers/Phil Bickley.



And the Winner Is . . .

There were three winners in each category as decided by the judges. The participating artists decided on a popular vote as well. Akihiro Ohkama took first place in marbles with a fireworks implosion marble. Second was Josh Mazet with a marble that included fumed skulls, a spider web, and a spider. In the wearable category, Jeremy Guerrero won first place with a three-finger ring, and Veda Bickley took second with a fairy sitting on an orchid stem.

Eusheen and Natey placed first in vessel/goblet with a piece that actually fit into all three categories. However, they were only judged in the one. Keith and Yoshio were awarded second place with a goblet that included a Pegasus sculpture. There was also a dichroic category that crossed between wearable, marbles, and vessel/goblet. Josh Hamra won this category with his six-sided dichroic rainbow marble, and Filip came in second, making an impressive five-inch dichroic vortex marble.



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Continuing to Grow

It's no wonder that the 2009 SGAA Flame Off was such a success given the great surge in the number of lampworkers in the last few years. The excitement from both the crowd and the competitors creates an energy that anyone would want to be a part of. It goes without saying that these events have helped popularize the "how" behind our art form, encouraged the emergence of new artists, and continued to bring innovation to our medium. I would like to thank Sonoran Glass Art Academy for holding this event and a special thanks to Eli Aller, Wil Menzies, Karl Taylor, and the Barrio Brewing Staff. For more pictures and information on the 2009 SGAA Flame Off, visit the Flame Off website.



www.sonoranglass.org/events/flameoff.htm