

# GLASSCRAFT EMERGING ARTIST AWARD

## JOSHUA OPDENAKER

(Philadelphia Glass Works) and Brian Hoeffecker (Salem Community College). When Philadelphia Glass Works was created in 2003, Josh joined as the resident artist and has been with the studio ever since.

Recently his work has explored scale, pushing the boundaries of largeness, pushing the limits of himself. Josh's work is aggressively becoming larger and larger to the point he must go to a hot shop to use their larger annealers.

Influences in these larger works (red series and Rorschach vases)

are from fire, an obvious presence in his every-day life, and tribal tattoos. He tries not to become stale by only making one form of sculpture. It is important to jump from subject to subject in small groups. He goes on a journey into the depths of making art by doing several variances of one idea and forming them into a group, or series. He also works a lot with goblets, considered to him as an ultimate test of glassblowing skills. Goblets encompass both hollow and solid sculpting while dealing with form

and function. Making a goblet is a good way to refine skills across the board.

"When I am working with glass I go on an emotional rollercoaster. I blow glass with my emotions and sometimes that's not pretty; glassblowing is the source of my pain, my joy, my pride, my fears. It becomes my therapy as well as my suppressor. Some days I ask the glass to move, some days I tell it to move, and some days we move together. I feel the struggle for perfection while glass sculpting is more relevant than the finished piece."

### Medical Series:

This body of work by Joshua Opdenaker is sophisticated edge. Some of the pieces like the needle and oxygen mask provoke an aggressive sensation. Although some works are more intimidating than others, all emit a sterile and medical feel. While these items' intended use is to heal people, they present a high contrast by equally making people feel uncomfortable. This series can currently be viewed at the Philadelphia Glass Works gallery. ('One in the Chamber' shown above and 'Cure for the Common Cold' shown below.)

Joshua Opdenaker has only been lampworking glass for four years, but he has already begun to express his own style and theories. At the age of eighteen, Josh began carving stone and studying art history. This reductive-only form of sculpture infiltrated his life and dominated his thoughts. For four years Josh carved stone day and night producing an extensive body of work. At the top of his carving career, he carved a fifteen stone, six and a half foot long figure in four months. This passion for creation naturally turned over to glass where he received tips on glass blowing from Nathan Purcell

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