

Emerging Artists Award

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Ring of Fire Glassworks

photography by Paul Stephan

Ring of Fire Glassworks is the combined vision of two young artists, Devin Somerville and Paul Stephan. These Wisconsin natives have been friends for over a decade, which made the decision to start a business together in 2002 much easier. Each of the two took their own path with glass previous to that, picking up techniques over time with no formal training.

The two artists decided that they could be far more successful joining forces than they could be by themselves, so a small shop and gallery space were leased and Ring of Fire Glassworks came to life. A few years have passed since then, and as all things progress, they found the old shop to be very limiting and decided to upgrade to a proper warehouse that could be the staging grounds for their newly developing careers.

After several months of hard labor, they converted an old, run down warehouse into a nice 8 person shop to work and teach out of, as well as a gallery/office, and apartments for the two to live in. The warehouse itself sits on Lake Michigan in a very industrial area yet only a few blocks from downtown Milwaukee.

This place seems a very fitting home for these artists, whose work seems to spring from some bizarre landscape that is yet strangely familiar. Flowers that bloom from an alchemical soil and faceted gems that contain patterns we have seen only in dreams are what

line the gallery shelves at Ring of Fire. The journey they have begun as artists seem to be a very hopeful one, one worthy of keeping an eye on.

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