

They Grow Good CORN in Colorado

by Aymie McKesson

Photography by Corinne Winters

In this business, we all grow and feed off of one another. Without those before us, none of us would have a job. Giving thanks goes a long way in this industry. Amidst all the drama, we all know all the bad news about everyone else, but not enough of the good. People don't give enough praise. Praise is important. It lets us know we have helped someone . . . bettered a life . . . furthered a career. And Miss Corinne Winters has done all of the above for me. If you are not familiar with the woman or the work, please allow me to nourish your brain.

Introducing . . . Corinne

Simply put, Corinne is an awesome artist. Nothing holds her in a box—not even the basic idea that glass stops moving when it is cold. She is not daunted by mixed media and handles both the abstract and the realistic with ease. In a world where most people care about having a name or being on a list, it is clear that Corinne cares about being creative, yet she is still on the lists. And like all of my favorite female artists, she is very humble.

Being women in glass, especially being pipers, we really have to go all out. We have to hustle to compete. Corinne gave me my hustle. I met her at the Second Female Flame-Off in Philly. She likes good food and good craft beers, which makes her pretty fun and easy to hang out with. Her performance at the Flame-Off was quite entertaining. As she wrapped hot glass around carbon rods—wrapping and snipping, wrapping and snipping—she covered herself in graphite. She just kept up the hustle under giant shiny gray smudges. This is the kind of girl destined to survive in this industry—not the break-a-nail type of lady, but the “get down and dirty and tear it up” kind of girl. Her interview reads like a how-to . . . How to Be a Successful Glass Artist by Corinne Winters.

How did you learn, Corinne?

I started making beads around 1998 as soon as I learned a bead that I could do. I ended up getting a job at Glasscraft later that year. That was when I started to realize the possibilities for glass art and pipes. I would borrow books and DVDs from the Glasscraft library from which I learned most of my initial skills. As time passed, I was able to ask tips from glassblowers who worked there and came in

to buy supplies. Not all of them were willing to help, but the ones who did, particularly Gigi and Homer Hoyt, were greatly appreciated!

Once I sold my first case of glass pipes to a local head shop, I began making plans to leave Glasscraft and blow glass full time. I cut to part time there in 2000 and was making pipes full time by 2001.

What do you love most about glass?

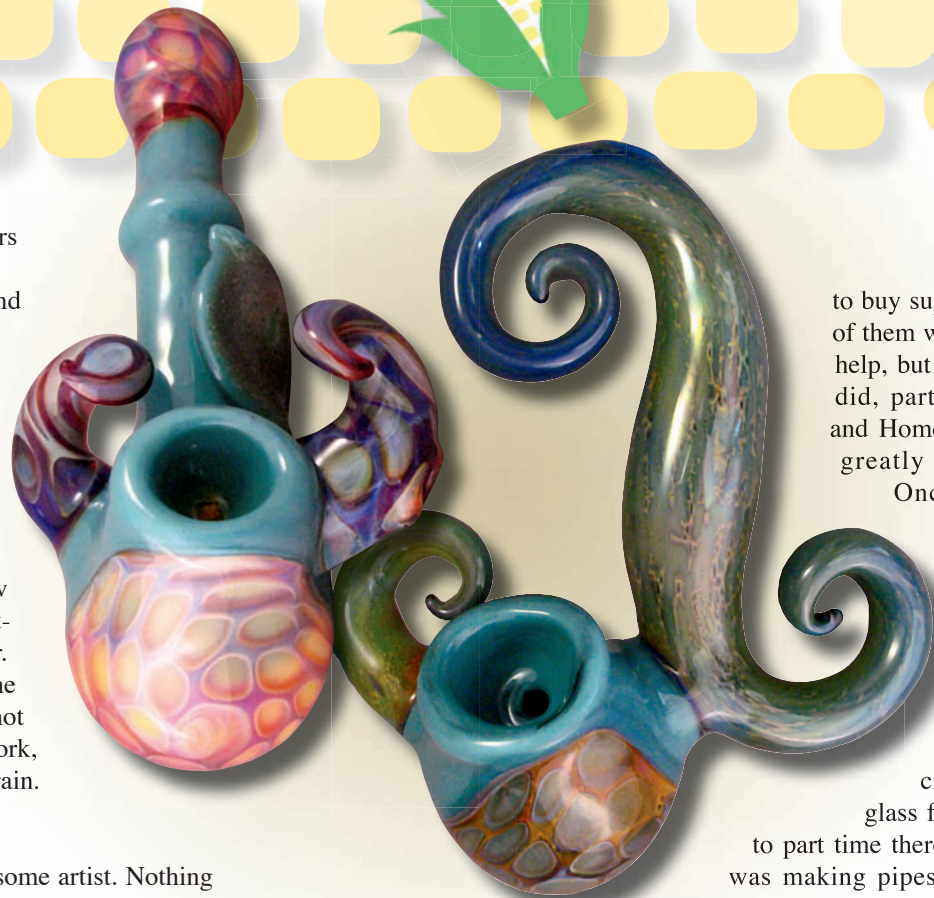
I love being able to create practically anything in glass. The multitude of options for forming glass hot or cold are practically limitless! It's always exciting to see all the advancements that people are making in glassworking—really stretching this medium to the max! Also, having done mostly metalwork with silver and gold previously, I love how much faster I can create jewelry with glass. I always hated spending countless hours polishing and buffing the metal. Glass is just smooth and shiny on its own! I still like to work with metal occasionally, but glass is so much more fun!

What do you find most challenging about working with glass?

Of course, with glass there are a ton of challenges like color combinations and cracking issues. The main challenge for me is size and complexity. I always want to add more and more things to pieces causing lots of issues with cracking, and I have dreams of making gigantic glass sculptures. This is where I find ways to incorporate other media into my work. Mixed media is my favorite way to make things I normally wouldn't be able to do with glass. Also, I just love the way glass can combine with other things. I feel it gives another dimension to the art.

How did you get into the Colorado Project? Anything you want to share about it?

After returning home from the International Hot Glass Invitational (IHGI), Sean Mueller contacted me about working on the project. Basically, we had witnessed people from different areas



country working together at IHGI and creating amazing glass. We noticed a presence in other communities that is not yet evident in Colorado. There are a ton of glass workers in Colorado, but most of us never communicate, work together, or even know about each other! The Colorado Project is an attempt to build a community among our local glass artists.

By communicating and working together, we hope to build the quality of work in our area and continue to push the limits of glass work in general. Also, we wanted to be involved with a local charity so we would all feel good about what we are contributing. We chose Learning Landscapes, a local charity that was willing to work with us in a way that would allow the participants to really see what they are working toward. The plan is to raise enough money so that when it is matched by Learning Landscapes and the Denver Public Schools it will be enough to build a playground that we will all be able to visit later and say, "I helped build that." That will be a wonderful feeling of accomplishment.

This year's event—the first of hopefully many to come—is really about getting together and having everyone meet and talk about glass. We have planned a large-scale collaboration featuring Adam Grafuis, Cary Hollenberg, and Nathan Aweida heading up the main elements with Abe Fleishman pulling color from the crucible for them to use. We will have everyone who comes get involved on a smaller scale, producing pieces that will later be added to the final installation. All who participate will have their signatures on a plaque that will be a part of the final installation and shown everywhere the piece is displayed.

I can't thank Sean enough for all his hard work putting this together and getting everyone involved. I am so grateful that he asked me to be part of this exciting adventure! Also, we have had a ton of help from all of our generous sponsors, volunteers, and artists who have worked hard and given their time and glass to make this happen.



So There You Have It

Bottom line—I adore this girl. I love her work, and I bet you will, too. I owe her a big part of my success and want everyone to know about her. She stands out. She doesn't play into the drama. She is giving and supportive.

Corinne is an asset to the glassblowing community as a whole, but I am glad that as ladies we have her in our corner. She is doing justice to the image of a female lampworker.

To see additional work by Corinne Winters visit:
www.glasspipes.org/Gal22943_Corn-cob_Piper_s_gallery.asp
www.glassartists.org/Gal22286_Winters-glass_s_Gallery.asp
 Or contact her by e-mail at cw.sweetglass@gmail.com



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