



Tiki and Monster Shot Glasses by Eli Mazet

The Contemporary Shot Glass

THE CONTEMPORARY SHOT GLASS

by Eli Mazet

Photography by Tim Giruadier

It's hard to imagine now, but it has been almost ten years since I made my first wobbly little shot glass. This year I released my book *The Contemporary Shot Glass*. I have been inspired by my involvement in this project, which has truly taken the term "collaboration" to a whole new level.

A Perfect Offering

Like many artists, we have our regular shows and events in which we participate each year, and it's nice to have something new to offer folks. Initially that is why I made the shot glasses, since my brother Josh and I are involved each year in the Glass Craft & Bead Expo. We both teach classes for this annual event, and my mom manages our booth in the vendors show. It just made sense to make shot glasses to take to the show.

I continued to take the shot glasses to event after event since they were a big hit. We sold hundreds of them along with our sculptures, marbles, pendants, and ornaments. It was an addition to our product line that seemed to get a great response everywhere we went. We experienced such success with them that I began to wonder what kind of shot glasses other glassblowers were making.

I asked around, but I couldn't find any handcrafted shot glass makers. In fact, it was hard to even find anyone who had ever made a shot glass. When I researched this common little household item, however, I was surprised to find a rich history, lots of trivia, and a huge collector base worldwide. With the help of my brother Josh and the support of Abe Fleischman and Northstar Glassworks, I began my collaborative adventure to produce a shot glass book.



Frog and Fern Shot Glass by Eli Mazet, carved by Kati O'Meara



Cactus by Darby; Skull by Eli Mazet with Wire Wrap by Brandi Crye; Striped Shot Glass by Kevin Bumble; Red Patterned Shot Glass by Harold Cooney; and Dichro Finish Face by Joshua Mazet



Fuming and lined shot glass by John Bridges



Bob Special by Bob Snodgrass and Eli Mazet

Drawing Artists into the Mix

As we began the process of collecting material for the book, we encouraged, prodded, and begged other glassblowers to create their version of a shot glass. There were no restrictions on what they should make. It was a slow start, but eventually the little glasses started coming in—and they were *amazing*! Each one was so unique, with artists developing shot glasses that showcased their own special skills. We were astonished at these shot glasses that represented not just their creative imaginations and abilities, but a whole new era of glass color, techniques, and added elements as well. The new shot glasses were truly little works of art.

There were shot glasses in all shapes and sizes with dichroic glass, millefiori, implosions, floating opals, fuming, and black light reflective glass. A couple of the shot glasses, like the one by Natey Biskind, even doubled as a shot glass or a pipe. We call those the “loaded shots.” Many pieces themselves were collaborations such as the one submitted by Wil Menzies and Chip Steeler, the bright orange glass “shot gun shell casing” by Wil that is finished by Chip Steeler adding an electroformed base representing the brass. Another intricate collaboration came in from Gabe Halliday and Ryan Fitt. The glass is precisely and deeply carved to give the mask design and details a highly textured effect.

Over forty artists from across the country—men and women of all skill levels—sent in their special shot glasses. This talented group of glass artists included the likes of Bob Snodgrass, Road Dog, Lace Face, SALT, and Darby Holm. Finally after three years, the book was starting to come together. We convinced our good friend Tim Giruadier, a local landscape photographer, to take on the challenge of photographing the small, intricate, highly reflective little glasses. The photo sessions continued as more glasses arrived. Each one was so special that we couldn't bear to not include it, but at last we had to stop to be able to complete the project.

The Creative Process

I was so lucky to have my mom and brother to bounce ideas off of and help organize, manage, edit, and create the layout and design. It was also a fantastic finish to have Mente Alves Jr, a glassblower and artist who brought the “graffiti” look to glass, to create a graffiti-style cover for the book. I also had the opportunity to actually collaborate with other glassblowers, including Mente, to create a shot glass for the book.

There is a lot more to writing and producing a book than I ever imagined. It was not my dream, however, to create just a beautiful book. I wanted to start a movement in the glass community to bring back the handcrafted shot glass. I am happy to say I see it happening every day on Facebook, in galleries, and at events. Glassblowers are making shot glasses again, collectors are beginning to look for them, and they are beyond my dreams!



Two Faced by SALT



Purple shot glasses
by Road Dog



Carved Mask by Gabe Halliday and Ryan Fitt

People have asked if I see another shot glass book in the future. I think as glassblowers continue to create these imaginative glasses, there is definitely the possibility of a sequel someday. There is one idea that I would enjoy collaborating on, and it is definitely already being talked about—a “Drinking Flame Off,” where glassblowers would make vessels for drinking including shot glasses, wine glasses, and beer steins! I am imagining it as a fun event that might even include some craft distilleries.

I never could have produced the book by myself, but I feel that I have made my mark in the glass industry. Every day I continue to be inspired by the amazing work of others. I have a beautiful book that documents the movement to bring back the handcrafted shot glass, and as my friend Paul Stankard reminded me, I now own—along with Northstar Glassworks—the finest, largest collection of handcrafted shot glasses ever assembled!

Eli Mazet's book, The Contemporary Shot Glass, is available through GlassCraft, or contact mazetstudios@gmail.com for more information.

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