

# 2010 International Flameworking Conference

by Adam Villarreal

Kelly Gralley and Salem Community College

March 19–21, 2010, marked the tenth anniversary of the International Flameworking Conference (IFC) held at the Salem Community College located in Carneys Point, New Jersey. Drawing flameworkers from across the globe, the Conference has amassed the pinnacle of contemporary lampworking talent today including past featured artists: Robert Mickelsen (2001), Lucio Bubacco (2002), Kari Russell-Pool (2003), Cesare Toffolo (2004), Ginny Ruffner (2006), Loren Stump (2007), Carmen Lozar (2008), and Shane Fero (2009). Citing prior commitments in his home country of Japan, the featured artist from 2005, Iwao Matsushima, was not able to attend.

## Expanding Space and Glass Education

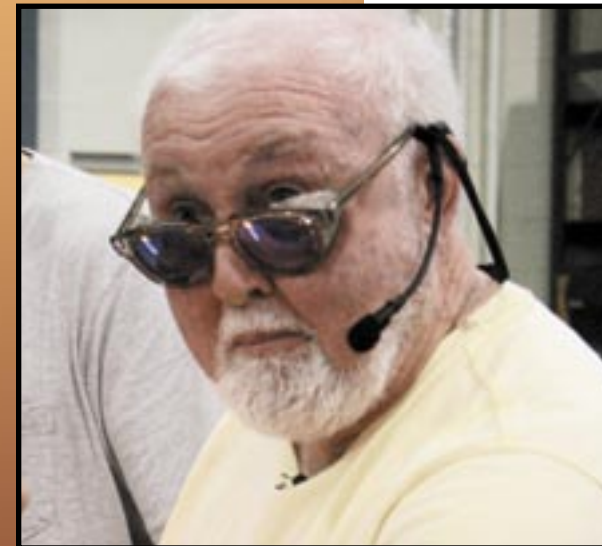
Highlighting the conference was the dedication of the Paul J. Stankard 10,000-square-foot studio and laboratory located in the Samuel H Jones education center. The multidisciplinary studio is divided into four sections—flameworking, casting, hot shop, and cold working. This facility brings to fruition the vision of Mr. Jones, who donated over half a million dollars to create a sustainable studio, which supports a gambit of glassworking technologies that are ingeniously fueled by landfill gas piped in from the surrounding area.

During the opening night reception a \$50,000 scholarship fund was donated by the Bastow Citizens Committee, a local organization devoted to glass education, including historical glasswork in the area. The donation was presented in the form of a giant check, which Peter Contini the school President, accepted on the school's behalf.

## Glass Art Legends and Great Demos

This year's IFC honoree is renowned paper-weight creator, Paul J. Stankard. An alumnus of the Salem Community College scientific glass program., Mr. Stankard began his glass career in 1961. After working in the field for ten years, he began to pursue artistic expression using glass as a medium. The rest is history. Paul gave a heartfelt speech recognizing the contributions of his son and daughters in his creative process. The speech was capped off with a documentary video that was filmed and produced by Paul's son Joseph.

Days Two and Three of the conference were filled with demos and talks. Presented in pairs, Mr. Bubacco and Mr. Stankard started the show. Lucio's hands were in constant motion, moving with a liquid grace that speaks of years of experience. In a matter of minutes he had created an angelic figure to complete a partially assembled candelabra that he had brought for the demo. Paul demonstrated the techniques that he uses to make his signature floral encasements, fielding questions from the audience along the way. Lending a lighthearted sense of humor, Emilio Santini provided translation and commentary throughout the event.



Loren Stump collaborated with Carmen Lozar to make a unique twist on one of her signature rain cloud figures. Carmen's creative force combined with Loren's expansive technical ability made for an intriguing sculpture. Loren's versatility was apparent when he departed from his typical medium of Moretti soda lime glass to borosilicate to be able to weld his piece of the collaboration to Ms. Lozar's work.

The third day of the conference started bright and early for Cesare Toffolo and Kari Russel-Pool. Kari showed her signature style of floral lattice by completing a partially finished tea pot, which she had brought from her home shop. Cesare moved with confidence, expertly loading the glass with heat in exactly the right places to achieve his elegant shapes. He assembled one of his classical Venetian goblets with a unique addition of a gold leaf encasement on the stem.

Ginny Ruffner gave a talk on her creative journey in glass, presenting slides of her work and things that inspire her. Finishing out the demos were Shane Fero and Robert Mickelsen, who worked together to create a whimsically risqué S&M-themed perfume vessel. Mr. Mickelsen used the incalmo technique to join sections of Graal together, and when Mr. Fero built a leather-clad Moretti figurine for the topper, quite a few grins were seen rippling through the audience.

## Bringing a New Generation to Glass

As the conference came to an end, it was clear what it means to bring the best together. The masters at the IFC were inspiring to watch. It is readily apparent that there are big shoes to fill for the next generation of glass artists. However, the students and other attendees of the conference were an example of how much fresh and motivated talent is rising in the community. Paul Stankard shared these thoughts: "The pursuit of a fine arts education and an exposure to internationally recognized contemporary work gives students an avenue in which to pursue and define their own artistic goals."

While the world of glass is already brimming with talent, forums such as the IFC and the Salem Community College glassworking program are integral parts of the vibrant and growing community, enhanced by artists both established and novice. A sincere thanks goes out to all of the sponsors who made this incredible event possible.

FLOW

[www.salemcc.edu/glass/conference/](http://www.salemcc.edu/glass/conference/)

© Copyright 2010 by The Flow.  
All rights reserved.