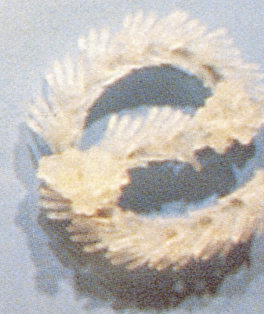


**Preview:
Warm is Hot**

by April Kingsley



ambitious "hot" glass demands teamwork. Ultimately there is a big difference between old-fashioned hot glass blown in a factory by a team of professionals to someone's designs and glass blown after Harvey Littleton's studio glass "revolution." In the latter case, a team of artist-glassblowers produces work in an artist's studio/workshop in that artist's signature style—the way it would have been made if a single person could have handled the material alone. But teamwork

is anathema for many artists. Working alone in the studio is their pleasure, and the production of an object from beginning to end with their own hands their *raison d'être*. And so the blown glass bubble burst and the counter-revolution began. Hundreds of glass artists began to explore the potential of warm, rather than molten glass, fusing, laminating, casting, or slumping it in a kiln, lampworking it over an open flame, or casting ground glass in the ancient method known as *pâte de verre*. Some 75 of the new wave of revolutionaries are being surveyed in "*¡Calido!: Contemporary Warm Glass*," the first major exhibition of warm glasswork in America, which opens at the Tucson Museum of Art on April 11, 1997 to coincide with the Glass Art Society's 27th Annual Conference being held in Tucson at that time. The exhibition is on view through June 8th.

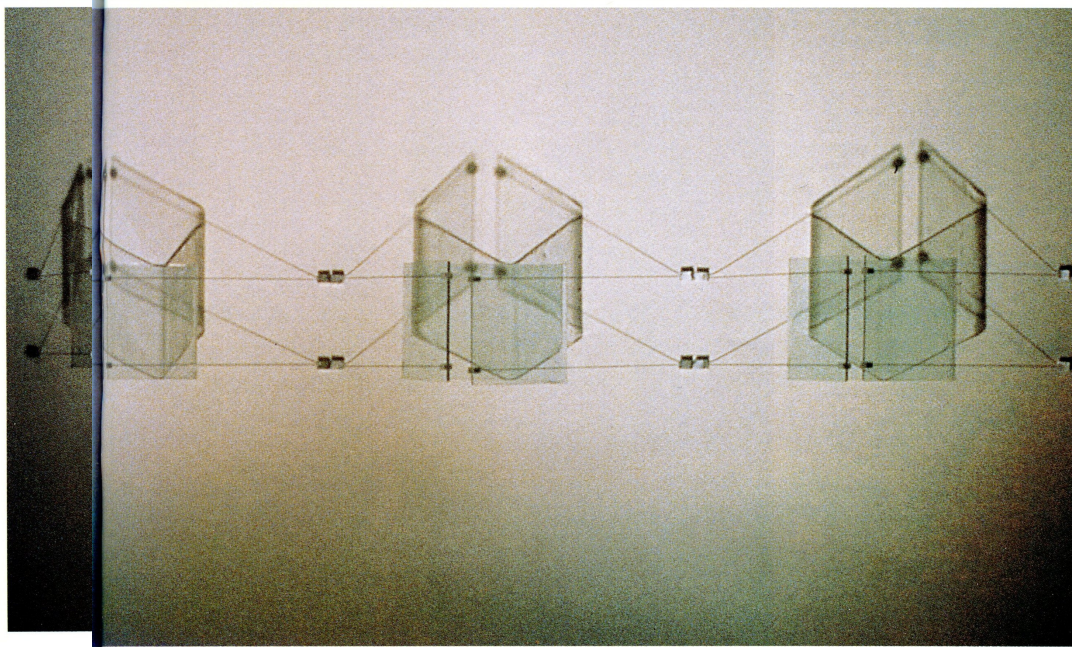
Frances and Michael Higgins attended the 1962 Toledo workshop during which Littleton jump started the Studio Glass Movement. Michael thought blowing might be the wave of the future but Frances, who had been slumping glass in her kiln since 1942, wasn't convinced, and didn't really care that she never had a turn at blowing with all the students jockeying for a place at the gloryhole. The Higginses have managed to support themselves by producing fused and slumped glass objects—everything from ashtrays to mobiles and folding screens—

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Tina Aufiero, *Love*,
1995, cast glass.

of enormous esthetic variety these many years. Now nearing their nineties, they have recently become the rage in collector's circles as a result of a flurry of magazine and newspaper profiles. In addition to the quality of their work, responsibility for this sudden attention lies with the warm glass counterrevolution, of which they are progenitors.

Maurice Heaton, Earl McCutcheon and Edris Eckhardt (who mixed her own batch and melted it in her kitchen), were among the handful of other independents also working with warm glass in the fifties and sixties. Their home/studio setups, where life and work were seamlessly joined, were models for the self-reliant craftsperson's lifestyle. Even during the next decade when hot glass dominated the scene, some hardy individualists—Mary Shaffer, Sydney Cash, Paul Marioni, Bonnie Biggs, Paul Stankard, Herbert Babcock, John Luebtow, Richard Posner, and Jack Schmidt among them—were working with warm glass. Most of these artists work large, often on commission in public spaces, and they will be represented by major works or installations in the Tucson exhibition. The curators, Joanne Stuhr, Curator of Exhibitions at the Museum, and Tom Philabaum of Philabaum Glass Studios in Tucson have a special interest in mixed-media and site-specific installations incorporating glass as a main element.

Touching on warm glassworkers down through the decades, "*¡Calido!*" includes a full range of artistic expression, from pretty and formally compelling glass to work with intended emotional resonance and conceptual rigor. Content is heavily laden in much of the most recent work, as it is in the art world as a whole. In terms of processes, nearly half of the work in the exhibition is cast glass, and three quarters of the work is slumped, fused, and *pâte de verre*. The numbers don't add up because many of the artists use more than one technique in a given piece. Because of their physical prominence, installations will take center stage, and some by less well known artists like Tina Aufiero, Karen LaMonte, and Therese Lahaie will be of special interest, but many of the less imposing pieces may be just as compelling. Poetic or enigmatic works in translucent cast glass by Daniel Clayman, Doug Anderson, Robin Grebe, Stephen Dale Edwards, Valentin Vanetik, Janusz Walentynowicz, and Judy Hill are included, as are the dark acid foreboding visions of Jay Musler. Totemic icons by Rick Beck, Mark Abildgaard, and Lucartha Kohler, magical crystal landscapes by Krep Kallenberger and Steven Weinberg, post-Pop/Surreal whackiness by Richard Marquis and Ginny Ruffner, satire by Stephen Paul Day, and an adorable world in miniature by Emily Brock will be on view along with pieces by Karla Trinkley, Toots Zinsky, Paul Stankard and other well known artists.



Beth King, *Box 4*,
1996

Judy Hill, *Untitled*,
1995, H. 14".

Mary Van Cline, Susan Plum, Mary B. White, and Susan Stinsmuehlen-Amend and others use glass in assembled works as though it were just another material that can be photosensitized, painted on, or easily worked into a collage, while still exploiting its special qualities. This attitude goes along with an overall increase in the combination of glass with other media among glass artists as they move into the larger art world. Initially responding positively to glass as a medium because of its spontaneity and pliability, and because of the hands-on way one discovers what glass can do, artists trained in sculpture or ceramics find the openness of people working in glass one of its great appeals. The willingness among glass artists to share their technical breakthroughs is truly remarkable.

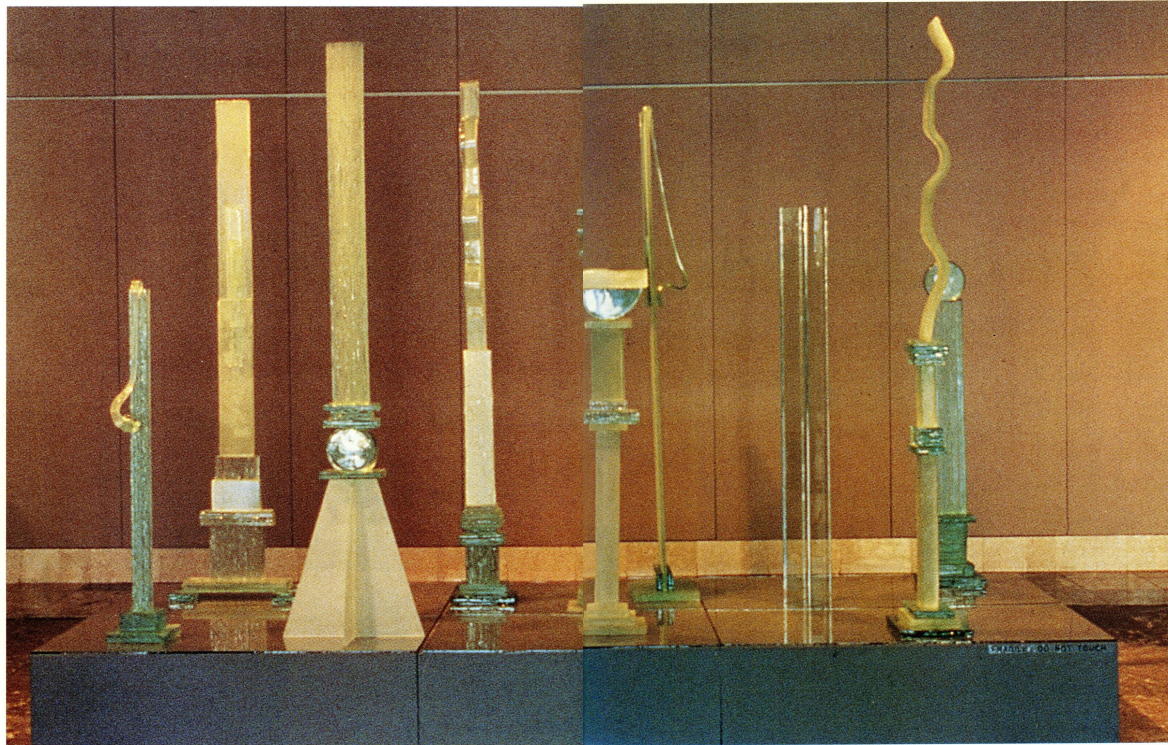
Experimentation and sharing led to enormous technical diversification in warm glass during the last 25 years. Because of this background, contemporary warm glassworkers readily moved from fashioning elementary objects to making powerful personal statements in glass. They are free to concentrate on content.

Certain themes emerge. Emerge is the operative word because very often warm glass is used in a way that makes the viewer peer through it, or, conversely, makes the image seem to be emerging up through it. Glass as water or icy covering; door, wall, or curtain; cage, trap, or coffin implies death, suspended animation or desire, the unattainable. (Blown glass, which is naturally clear and often brightly colored, can attain these more romantic effects through sandblasting or other modulating surface treatments, but the results tend to retain a certain level of superficiality.) The potency of cast or

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fused glass is centered in its density. It is not a bubble—all surface. It is solid, and yet light penetrates to the core. Mass plus light equals a sculptural material with extraordinary possibilities.

"Calido!" provides the first comprehensive look at how artists are exploiting that potential.



Lucartha Kohler,
*Harmony's Reign
of Light*, 1995,
12 x 12 x 65".

Therese Lahaie,
3 Breaths, 1996,
slumped glass,
paper, motor.

