

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL



‘The Nature of Glass’ explores the medium through a variety of techniques

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“Self portrait,” Frederick Hammersley, 1957, stained glass on magnesite, collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art, gift of Frederick Hammersley Foundation. (Courtesy of the New Mexico Museum of Art)

The story of glass begins in nature.

Durable and resilient, it can also be delicate and fragile.

When last year's Museum of Indian Arts & Culture "Clearly Indigenous" glass exhibition closed, New Mexico Museum of Art curators began scouring the museum's collection for additional examples of this fusion of silica and fire.

"The Nature of Glass" focuses on 28 contemporary works by such household names as Judy Chicago, Georgia O'Keeffe and Preston Singletary, as well as William Morris, Robert Wilson and Tony Jojola. The show runs through Dec. 31.

The featured techniques include blown, hot wired, etched, assemblage, sand carved, cast, kiln-formed, stained and more. Most of the works reflect nature or the environment via images of flora and fauna, as well as the human body, a consideration for acquisition, said curator Christian Waguespack.

"This looks at how (artists) brought nature into their work through the representation of flowers, animals, the body, space, science and the environment," Waguespack said. "It's pretty broad."

The edgy abstractionist Frederick Hammersley jigsawed vibrant slices of cut glass into a self-portrait.

"He was always very experimental and playful," Waguespack said.



"Wasco," Preston Singletary, 1999, blown and sand carved glass, collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art, gift of Dr. Donn and Pamela Duncan, 2015. (Courtesy of the New Mexico Museum of Art)

The portrait still features the telltale hard-edged geometry of the Albuquerque artist's oil paintings.

"He's playing with color and shapes, the way the broken pieces fit together," Waguespack said.

Preston Singletary merges glass art with Northwest Native Tlingit designs. He created a half-wolf, half-orca creature in blown and sand-carved glass.

"It's translucent – that white glass with the head figure is on a highly reflective surface," Waguespack said.

Judy Chicago's "Peeling Back" replicates her radiating designs within a pastel palette with female genitalia in the center.

William Morris created a still life resembling a cornucopia spilling fruits and vegetables. But he replaced the plants with bones.

"This is a very playful piece," Waguespack said. The artist used an Italian technique called scavo to create texture and weathering. The word scavo means excavation.

"It's a very toxic process," Waguespack said. "It replicates the look of glass after it's been buried for thousands and thousands of years."

Most famous for coming to New Mexico with O'Keeffe in 1929, Rebecca Salsbury (Strand) James was the most experimental in her choice of media of the artists from that time period, Waguespack said. The exhibition features her "Milkweed Pod" (1934) in oil on glass.

"She's most famous for her colcha embroidery and reverse painting on glass," he explained.

In reverse glass painting, the artist paints the highlights on the back of the glass before starting the rest of the composition.

"You get a surface that's smooth and clear," Waguespack said. "It's a technique that she mastered."



“Artifact Still Life,” William Morris, 1990, blown glass clear with “scavo” and gold leaf, collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art, gift of Dr. Donn and Pamela Duncan, 2015. (Courtesy of the New Mexico Museum of Art)

Glass has been used as an artistic medium for thousands of years and remains one of the world’s most prevalent art forms.

“Glass is becoming more and more popular in New Mexico,” Waguespack said. “We’ve got several glass studios in Santa Fe. Even (famed glass artist Dale) Chihuly taught at the Institute of Indian Arts and Culture. It’s definitely got a presence here and a big, strong following.”

‘The Nature of Glass’

WHERE: New Mexico Museum of Art, 107 W. Palace Ave., Santa Fe

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday through Thursday; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday; through Dec. 31

HOW MUCH: \$12 general; \$7 New Mexico residents; children 16 and under free; state residents 60+ free Wednesdays; free 5-7 p.m. first Friday of the month; at

nmartmuseum.org

<https://www.abqjournal.com/2602062/the-nature-of-glass-explores-the-medium-through-a-variety-of-techniqu.html>