

Studio Glass Lights Up Newark Museum

Special exhibit celebrates 50 years of the studio glass movement.

By [Carol Selman](#)



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Glass making has been part of human history for a long time, perhaps as early as 3,500 B.C. But what is known as the studio glass movement—glass made in an artist’s studio as an autonomous work of art—happened much more recently, sometime around the middle of the last century.

The Newark Museum has been collecting studio glass since the outset. It is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the movement with, “Studio Glass: 1962-2012,” an outstanding exhibit on display now in its Contemporary Craft Gallery. The spotlight is on selections from the museum’s permanent collection that are recent gifts or purchases; many have not been shown before.

Ulysses Grant Dietz, senior curator and curator of decorative arts, talked about the exhibit, “This aesthetically diverse exhibition documents the development of glass as a challenging and rewarding medium for artistic expression beginning in the early 1960’s with the innovative ideas of American glass artist Dominic Labino and continuing to the present with the technically-astonishing recent collaboration of Venetian framework masters Lucio Bubacco and Diego Bottacin.”

It’s a small show, 16 pieces, representing a spectrum of styles and techniques. On either side of the entry are two figurative works. In Gianni Toso’s “The Chuppah,” a chaste bride marries under a traditional Jewish canopy, while Bubacco and Bottacin’s 2008 “Ups and Downs” depicts more carnal desire.

There are pieces that represent traditional uses for glass, if not always traditional shapes. These include a trio of vases by three different artists and a trio of paperweights by Paul Stankard—all virtuosic in concept and execution. Some works such as Eric Hilton’s futuristic “Arms of Time” 1998, imply unconventional uses for the medium—here as a shield.

Richard Marquis's "Teapot Goblet #78" from 1989, displays both mastery of Venetian glassmaking and a sly sense of humor. His exquisite blown glass and framework goblet incorporates a miniature teapot in the stem.

Brilliant colors dazzle in three pieces displayed in a row. Famed Seattle-based glassmaker Dale Chihuly, who has created major glassworks installations worldwide, is represented by an exotic, clam-like creature, "Permanent Blue Macchia with Cadmium Orange Lip Wrap" from 1986, a 1988 museum acquisition.

To the left of the Chihuly are two enigmatic pieces: "Shell Box" 2004" by Seth Randal, in dense blues, violets and reds and Stanislav Libensky and Jaraslava Brychtova's "Cross Composition" 1986, a sculptural Stonehenge for our age which glows from within. Toots Zynsky uses threads of red and blue extruded glass to create a bowl of startling texture and brilliance.

"Among all artistic media, glass is unique in its ability to transmit, diffuse and alter light, so that light becomes an essential part of its expressive quality," said Dietz. That is precisely why this exhibit is the perfect antidote for dark, winter days.

The Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., is located near the Washington Park NJ Transit Light Rail station; on-site parking is also available. The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free for city residents and museum members; for all others the suggested admission is \$10 for adults and \$6 for children, students and senior citizens with ID. For more information click [here](#).

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