

Vale Craft Gallery

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JOE NIELANDER: ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I design and create each and every glass piece that comes out of my studio. When the pieces get too large for one person, I hire help to open the doors and turn the pieces while I manipulate them from the outside. Glassblowing is one of those crafts that as it gets larger, the difficulty increases dramatically, and therefore more hands are needed. Also, just because one starts a piece, does not mean one finishes a piece. It is difficult to control a material which changes from liquid to solid as well as from soft to brittle in a matter of seconds. The clarity of the clear glass, brightness of the glass colors, the magnification and three dimensionality created by thick, solid glass, and its ability to solidify while keeping its fluid sculptural forms, are qualities of the material which I like to incorporate in my work. My "Gestural Series" captures and freezes the free flowing material in its liquid state, producing one-of-a-kind sculptural forms. These forms, as well as their color combinations, catch the light and manipulate it into beautiful visual memories.

I enjoy working tightly and with precision to show some skill level, while I also enjoy the looseness and freedom of working more sculpturally. Functional items are a part of my life, however, I need a little something different now and then to keep me excited. I learned a variety of techniques during my years of being associated with Penland School and put many of them to use in my work. I draw out the first few pieces of each new series, but then I let the series run its course through hot work development. I love the process of blowing glass and the physical and mental toughness it takes to be successful. The timing, speed, agility and coordination which glass blowing requires, is more like a sport than a craft.