

# Facets of Modern and Contemporary Glass

This ongoing exhibition encourages museum visitors to consider Richard Jolley's nearby [Cycle of Life](#) installation within a larger context. It also reflects the KMA's progress in building a focused collection of sculptures in glass by international artists who share Jolley's interest in new technical and conceptual approaches to this ancient medium.

*Facets* includes objects produced during and after the 1980s by a broad spectrum of artists from around the world. Their creative efforts were made possible in large part by the American Studio Glass movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s, during which methods were developed to allow artists to experiment with hot glass on a small scale outside of factory settings. In contrast to factory teams that mass-produced functional glass vessels, the studio movement emphasized the making of one-of-a-kind sculptural objects by individual artists. This new approach soon spread from the United States to well-established glass production centers in Czechoslovakia, Italy, Sweden, and beyond, inspiring dozens of younger artists to establish their own hot glass studios and take experimental approaches to the medium.

This experimental spirit is visible in the diverse selection of works featured in *Facets*. Transparent, hot-worked forms by studio glass pioneers Dominick Labino and Harvey Littleton represent the artists' groundbreaking exploration of color relationships and the elastic properties of hot glass. They paved the way for the broad range of experimentation in recent decades by a younger generation of American artists including Curtiss Brock, Jon Kuhn, Dante Marioni, Steven Maslach, Tommie Rush, and others whose work is represented in the KMA collection. Whether producing vessels or sculptural objects, many of these artists explore a variety of chemical compositions, surface treatments, and sculpting methods that underscore the potential of glass as a contemporary art medium. Some artists bypass traits associated with glass—brilliant transparent colors, graceful vessel forms, and smooth glossy surfaces—in order to open up new expressive and technical possibilities. Cast structures by Czech artists such as Václav Cigler and František Vízner feature bold abstract forms, simple color schemes, and etched surfaces. British artist Luke Jerram, who is colorblind, creates colorless glass sculptures representing powerful environmental forces—whether atmospheric or microscopic—that have affected human lives around the globe.

The KMA wishes to thank June and Rob Heller and Mrs. M. Blair Corkran for generously underwriting the fabrication of new exhibition cases for *Facets*.





**Steven Maslach** (San Francisco 1950; lives and works in Bainbridge Island, Washington)

***Dichroic Bowl 91-20***, 1991

Blown dichroic glass and polished crystal

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Linda Neely in honor of Richard Jolley and Tommie Rush

Steven Maslach is an important figure in California's Bay Area studio glass movement. He is especially known for his transparent blown forms using refined dichroic glass, which contains multiple micro-layers of metals or oxides which give the glass a particular transmitted color and a completely different reflected color. In this work, he creates a striking contrast between the delicate symmetrical bowl and its blocky slab base.



**Dominick Labino** (Fairmont City, Pennsylvania 1910-1987  
Grand Rapids, Ohio)

***Emergence Series***, 1981

***Sea Kingdom Series***, 1983

Hot worked glass, air trap, internal metallic veiling

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. M. Blair Corkran in memory of her husband

Along with Harvey Littleton, Dominick Labino is considered a pioneer of the American Studio Glass Movement. In 1962, he and Littleton demonstrated the feasibility of working with hot glass using portable furnaces in small studios rather than industrial factories. Labino applied his skills as an inventor and scientist to a succession of groundbreaking experiments in glass composition, furnace construction, and color formulation. He specialized in small hot-worked forms such as *Emergence Series* and *Sea Kingdom Series* in which he masterfully combined colored glasses in their molten state to produce subtle internal imagery. One of his *Emergence Series* sculptures was featured on the cover of *National Geographic* in December of 1993, which helped introduce the achievements of studio glass artists to a wider audience.



**Harvey Littleton** (Corning, New York 1922-2013 Spruce Pine, North Carolina)

***Descending Form #5***, 1989

Blown, cut, and polished glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2013 gift of Linda Neely in honor of Richard Jolley and Tommie Rush

Harvey Littleton was a legendary sculptor, printmaker, and pioneer of the American Studio Glass movement. His innovations with sculpting hot glass have influenced generations of artists, including Richard Jolley.

*Descending Form #5* represents Littleton's signature technique of encasing solid tubes of colored glass within one another in dramatically bent, cut, and twisted sculptures.



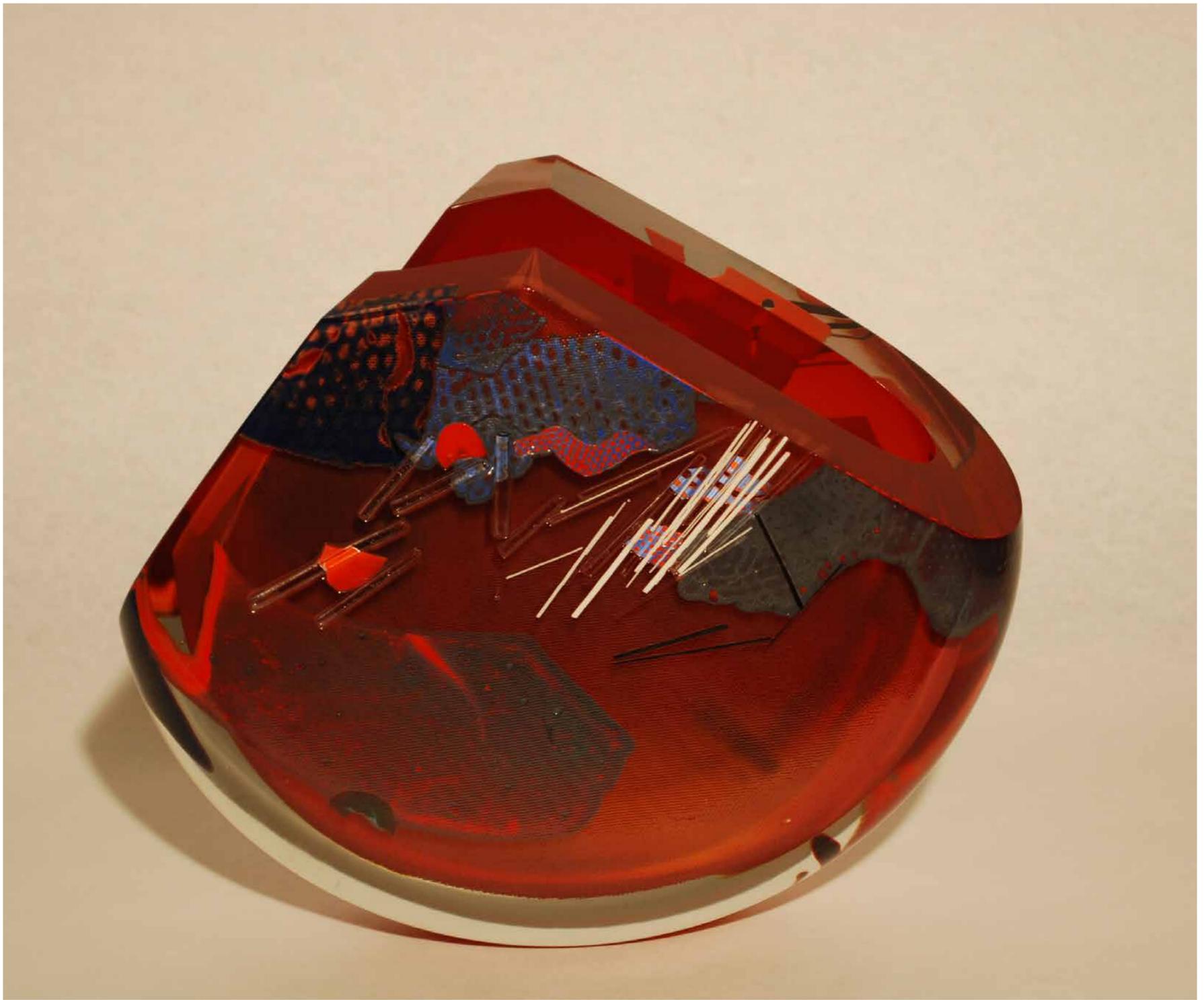
**Dante Marioni** (Mill Valley, California 1964; lives and works in Seattle)

***Red and Yellow Pair***, 2001

Blown glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Jennifer and Greg Dunn

Dante Marioni is an internationally known artist who discovered a love for glassblowing from his father Paul Marioni, one of the pioneers of the American Studio Glass Movement. While many contemporary glass artists explore non-traditional forms and methods, Marioni prefers to use centuries-old Venetian glassblowing methods to create meticulously crafted interpretations of classical vessel forms. *Red and Yellow Pair* represents the artist's trademark approach in its delicate balance, strong color contrasts, and vertically elongated contours.



**Joel Philip Myers** (Paterson, New Jersey 1934; lives and works in Marietta, Pennsylvania)

***Red CFS***, circa 1986

Blown, cased, hot-applied glass shards and cane, cut, sandblasted, and acid-etched glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 gift from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. M.

Blair Corkran

In his inventive blown glass vessels, Joel Philip Myers explores expressive combinations of vibrant color, abstract shape, and varying surface texture. In works such as *Red CFS*, he fuses a broad range of glass fragments onto the vessel's surface during the blowing process to produce arrangements resembling abstract expressionist paintings.



**Curtiss Brock** (Albuquerque, New Mexico 1961; lives and works in Cookeville, Tennessee)

***Coupling***, 2005

Blown glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by the Knoxville Museum of Art's Collectors Circle, 2007

Curtiss Brock has received national attention for his glass sculpture. Rather than exploiting the inherent qualities of glass—transparency and brilliant shine—the artist uses various techniques to alter the surface of his blown glass forms so that they resemble stone. Their rounded shapes appear worn as if they had been pulled from a riverbed. *Coupling* is from his *Stone Grouping* series in which multiple glass forms are tightly clustered in a manner meant to suggest a larger unit.



**William Morris** (Carmel, California 1957; lives and works in Seattle)

***Trophy***, 2000

Blown and acid-etched glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2000 purchase with funds provided by KMA

Collectors Circle

Formerly Dale Chihuly's chief glassblower, William Morris has become one of the foremost glass sculptors in this country. Inspired by archaeology and ancient cultures, he creates distinctive objects whose delicate colors and distressed surfaces all but disguise their identity as contemporary glass. The unique appearance of his objects is achieved through rapid cooling, multiple reheating and the application of colored glass powders. Morris' *Trophy* series explores the duality of animal skulls as sacred objects of power for ancient cultures and as graphic evidence of humanity's conquest of nature.



**František Vízner** (Prague, Czechoslovakia 1936-2011  
Brno, Czech Republic)

***Bowl with Peak*, 2002**

Cast, cut, sandblasted, and acid-etched glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. M. Blair Corkran in memory of her  
parents Mary Lee and Julius Hale

František Vízner was a leading figure in the Czech glass community and achieved an international reputation for his distinctive cast and cut studio vessels. Their translucent, minimal, sculptural forms feature jewel-like color and velvety, acid-etched, and sandblasted surfaces. While making strong reference to traditional utilitarian bowls and platters, his works exist as purely sculptural forms. *Bowl with Peak* gives the appearance that the solid glass form is in fact a liquid whose surface has been disturbed by an object dropped into it from above.



**Dalibor Tichý** (Kolin, Czechoslovakia 1950-1985 Prague, Czechoslovakia)

***Untitled***, 1981

Cast and hot-worked black and cobalt glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. M. Blair Corkran in memory of her husband

Dalibor Tichý was a gifted artist known for his experimental works in which delicate veils and tendrils of monochromatic glass appear to sprout upward out of roughly hewn cast forms. Within this limited set of variables, the artist came up with an astonishing range of variations during his tragically short career, and developed special tools to help him achieve his distinctive vessel forms.



**Iván Navarro** (Santiago, Chile 1972; lives and works in New York)

***Surge***, 2013

Neon lights, aluminum box, mirror, one way mirror and electric energy

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by June and Rob Heller

Chilean artist Iván Navarro uses an alternate approach to working with glass—rather than melting, blowing, and hot-working it, he prefers to modify commercial mirror and plate glass. He then combines it with industrial parts and lighting systems to create enigmatic, interactive sculptures that resemble endless tunnels. He laser-etches single words or phrases onto their mirrored surfaces, and often selects wordings that suggest multiple meanings. *Surge* connotes the forward motion of a crowd, a sudden rise in electric current, or the motion of water.

The artist draws inspiration for his multi-media works of art from minimalist sculpture of the 1970s by Dan Flavin and Donald Judd, and from personal experience. His interest in powering art with electricity, for instance, stems from childhood memories of community blackouts imposed by the Chilean government.



**Toots Zynsky** (Boston 1951; lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island)

***Trillo***, 2016

Fused and thermoformed colored glass threads

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Mary Hale Corkran

Toots Zynsky is internationally known for her fibrous heat-formed glass sculptures that are inspired by sources as varied as light, video art, textiles, and the optical power of color. To make her vessel forms, Zynsky arranges thousands of colored glass threads onto a round heat-resistant plate and then fuses them inside a kiln. While hot, the disc-like mass of fused glass threads is turned upside down and slumped over a cone-shaped mold. Finally, the artist reaches into the kiln with heat-resistant gloves and squeezes the glass into a unique undulating form.



**Tommie Rush** (Mobile, Alabama 1954; lives and works in Knoxville)

***Crystal and Amber Botanical Bowl*, 2014**

Blown and acid etched glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, purchase with funds provided by Melinda Meador and Milton McNally

Tommie Rush has achieved international attention for her hot-worked vessels in which she explores the expressive possibilities of color, various surface treatments, and sculpted botanical forms inspired by her own gardens. She began as a ceramic artist before shifting to working in hot glass by the late 1970s. Since 1980, Rush has maintained a studio practice in West Knoxville. Rush has been active on several national boards including the Glass Art Society, Penland School of Craft, and the American Craft Council.



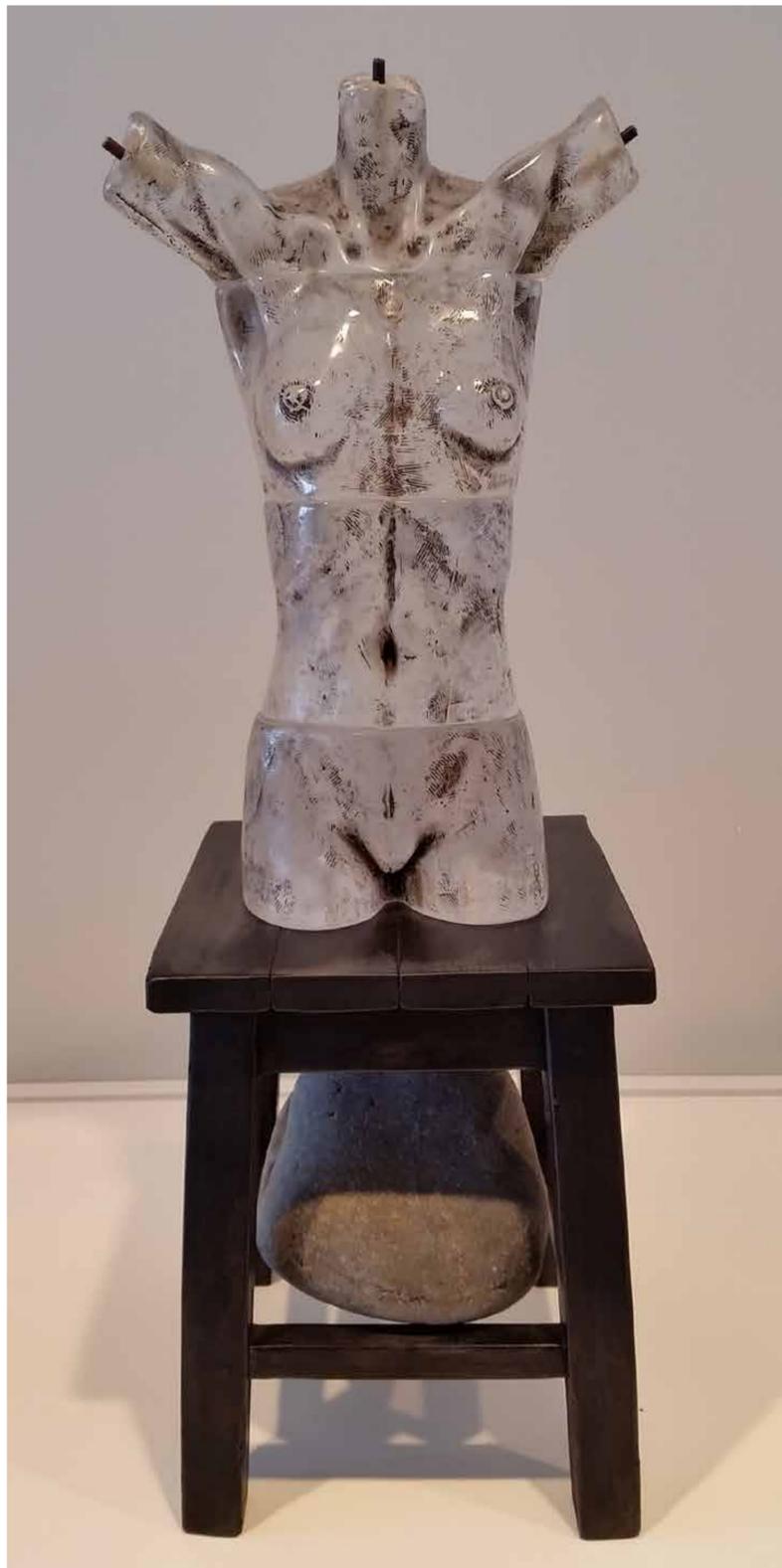
**William Morris** (Carmel, California 1957; lives and works in Seattle)

***Artifact: Pouch***, 1995

Blown and acid etched glass

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2016 gift of June and Rob Heller

William Morris grew up near Indian burial mounds and has had a lifelong fascination with ancient artifacts and cultures. After taking ceramic classes in high school, his job as a truck driver for the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington sparked his interest in sculpting glass. He went on to become the protégé and chief glass blower for Dale Chihuly, one of the current masters of American glass sculpture. By the mid-1980s, Morris opened his own studio practice and began developing a distinct method of working with hot glass. His method involves applying glass powders and acid to hot blown forms in order to transform them into sculptures resembling pottery fragments, bones, horns, and other seemingly timeworn artifacts.



**Clifford Rainey** (Whitehead, County Antrim, Northern Ireland 1948; lives and works in Oakland, California)

***Maquette for Clear Torso***, 2000

Cast glass, steel, wood, stone, and paint

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2016 gift of June and Rob Heller

Rainey is a California-based British sculptor best known for his expressive cast glass sculptures inspired by ancient civilizations, the fragility of life, and the power of nature. Fragmented torsos appear frequently in his work, and are inspired by his love of classical sculpture, and his continuing interest in the body as a vulnerable shell containing an eternal soul. His inclusion of a river stone within the legs of the torso's support base has a dual purpose: to represent a counterweight used by artists to stabilize sculptures in the studio, and to represent the vastness of geologic time compared to the fleeting nature of human existence.