


Beauty Beyond Nature

THE GLASS ART OF PAUL STANKARD

November 12, 2011 - June 17, 2012
Organized by Museum of Glass

Traveling Exhibition Managed by
Museum of Glass



 MUSEUM OF GLASS

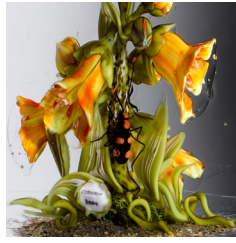


Cover photo: detail, **Four Seasons Cloistered Assemblage**, 2008
Above: **Four Seasons Cloistered Assemblage**, 2008
Opposite page: detail, **Honeybee Swarm Orb**, 2010
Photos by Ron Farina Photography



*Receive this glass
it holds my
memories
crafted blossoms
suspended
in stillness
to be pollinated
by your sight
anticipating your
touch
through time.*

~Paul Stankard



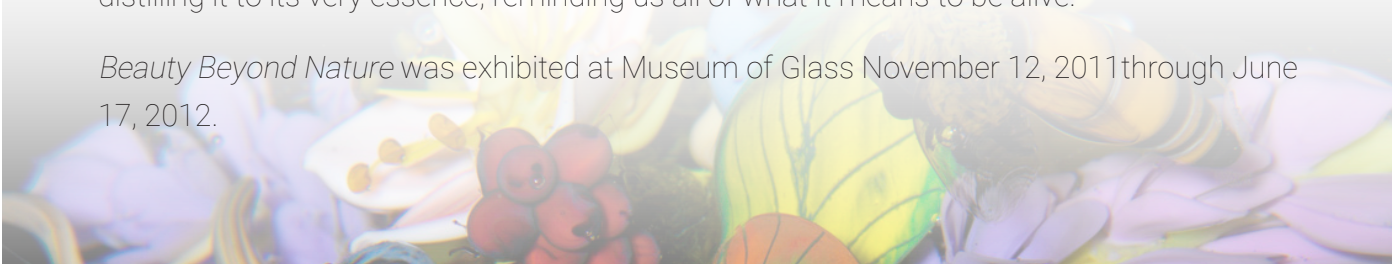
Details: **Winter Squash Paperweight; Crown Imperial Botanical with Honeybee; Pineland Pickerel Weed Column; Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees; July's Field Flowers Diptych**
Photos by Ron Farina Photography

Paul Stankard's evolution from scientific glassblower to small-scale sculptor is documented in more than 65 works from the Robert M. Minkoff Collection that span more than four decades. The work gathered into the exhibition *Beauty Beyond Nature* tells the remarkable story of a scientific glassblower who began experimenting with the paperweight form in 1969 and, within a decade, took those botanical forms encased in clear glass to new levels of technical virtuosity and expressive achievement. Working at first after hours at his home studio, Stankard overcame the technical and artistic hurdles to achieve increasingly detailed botanical accuracy and realism in his early works. But Stankard had greater ambitions that took him into new expressive terrain, and he began to push into new forms of his own invention, increasing the scale and shifting the orientation of his botanical sculptures into previously uncharted expressive territory. Along the way, Stankard left behind strict realism as he matured into an artist engaging the redemptive power of nature through an increasingly rich visual vocabulary of forms and compositions.

The exhibition *Beauty Beyond Nature* provides an in-depth chronological record of Stankard's breakthrough forms and ideas. The work on view is grouped into five distinct categories: *Paperweights; Botanicals; Cubes & Columns; Orbs; and Diptychs, Triptychs, & Assemblages*, so that the formal issues of each can be considered on their own. Viewers can also understand Stankard's evolution, which began with the paperweight form, but quickly developed into new vertical forms, seeking the qualities of suspension in time and the additional perspectives on his botanical forms encased within. The complexity of the botanical forms within his sculptures changes over time, with increasingly detailed veining of leaves, or delicate tendrils.

Through the works on display, a viewer can chart the evolution of a true American master as he set out on his quest to capture the wildflowers of his youth and immortalize them in glass. He succeeded, not only in depicting the natural world he loves so much, but in distilling it to its very essence, reminding us all of what it means to be alive.

Beauty Beyond Nature was exhibited at Museum of Glass November 12, 2011 through June 17, 2012.





Photos by Ron Farina Photography



Paul Stankard

Paul Stankard is one of the most prestigious and world-renown glass artists, famed for encasing his extremely delicate sculptures of flowers and insects in globes or cubes of clear glass. The recipient of numerous awards and holder of two honorary doctorates, Stankard has had his work shown across the United States and Europe as well as in Japan and Taiwan. He is currently a Fellow at the Corning Museum of Glass and serves as a founding board member of the Creative Glass Center of America in Millville, New Jersey.



Photo courtesy of the artist

Stankard finds many corresponding themes between his work and that of Walt Whitman:

“As an artist who has worked with my hands in glass for 35 years, the line ‘the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery’ continues to amaze me. And the native flowers he chose to write about like pokeberries and common mullein are easily overlooked, ordinary. He speaks of the ant’s perfection, the egg of a wren.



Detail, **Floating Orchids and Field Flowers Orb**, 2008
Photo by Ron Farina Photography

Stankard credits Whitman as an important inspiration for his own aesthetic and expectations for himself as an artist. “What Whitman did with words, I seek to do with glass on a visual level,” he says. “My dream is to articulate fresh information about nature in glass. My work is driven by respect for living things, and by delicacy and detail. I try to match Whitman’s depth of feeling with my own passion and skill. You have to bring something to Whitman - it isn’t immediately available at first. I want from the viewer the same openness, curiosity, and maturity that are needed for Whitman’s work.”



Paperweights



Braided Bouquet Paperweight, 2008
d 2 ¼ in.
Photo by Douglas Schaible Photography



Winter Squash Paperweight, 2000
H 3 1/8, W 2 ½ in.
Photo by Douglas Schaible Photography

From his very first attempts in 1969, Paul Stankard took a radically different approach to making paperweights than the European tradition of gathering and shaping glass at a factory furnace. While the French production paperweights so popular in the nineteenth century were usually made in series and depicted stylized flowers using colorful millefiore cane patterns, Stankard works alone at a flameworker's torch, making realistic portraits of the flowers he grew up with in suburban Massachusetts. After a full day of work as a scientific glassblower making laboratory apparatuses, he would spend his evenings and weekends in a workshop set up in his home utility room, where he set about developing new techniques to create individual flowers native to the northeastern United States with painstaking botanical accuracy. Through trial and error, he made quick progress in developing more convincing techniques of veining plant leaves, for example, or portraying the individual stamens inside the bud of a flower. As his paperweights evolved during the 1970s, he became increasingly adept at concealing the artifacts of the flameworking process so that the labor-intensive techniques he pioneered didn't distract the viewer from the mystical and spiritual qualities of plants he sought to convey. The intensifying detail and complexity of Stankard's paperweights transformed what was happening inside. However, the scale of the work rarely changed, staying just below three inches in diameter even in the most recent paperweights, which have achieved a level of realism so convincing, many viewers are surprised to learn the flowers inside are not real but made of glass.

~ Andrew Page

Botanicals



Mask and Golden Orb Botanical, 2001
H 4 7/8, W 2 1/8, d 2 5/8 in.
Photo by Douglas Schaible Photography



Crown Imperial Botanical with Honeybee, 2009
H 5 1/2, W 2 3/4 in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography

Stankard wanted an entirely new form of glass sculpture to lift his botanical compositions out of the paperweight's squat dimensions and into a perpendicular orientation. The form he invented and named the *Botanical* marked a major shift from spherical to square, from horizontal to vertical, and offered new possibilities for viewing and framing his work. Energized by this rectangular format and its multitude of viewing angles, Stankard's work became more ambitious, his compositions more complex, and his interpretations of the natural world more spiritual. He introduced honeybees to pollinate his flowering plants. In a magical realist flourish, tiny human forms are intertwined with the plants' increasingly complex root systems. In a further shift, he began to position symbolic spheres above the flowering figures as he introduced abstraction into his formerly realistic work. By the mid-1980s, small words such as "seeds," "fertile," and "pollen," written on slivers of cane slightly larger than a grain of rice, began to be nestled into the composition. In the early 2000s, Stankard began to incorporate masks, the human face offering yet another mode of expression within his botanical clusters.

~ AP



Columns & Cubes



Homage to Daisies Cloistered Column, 2009
H 7 3/8, W 4, d 3 3/8 in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography



Green-Banded Bouquet Cube with Masks and Pineland Flowers, 2003
H 3 7/8, W 2 5/8, d 2 5/8 in.
Photo by Douglas Schaible Photography

Once the vertical had been achieved, Stankard almost immediately set about experimenting further with the scale and lighting of his works. Even as he continued with the *Botanical* form, he also began to experiment with modifications to the form in pieces he titled *Columns* or *Cubes*, which offered larger dimensions and an innovative set of techniques to control the light inside. By laminating a layer of colored glass to strategically filter or absorb light, a technique he calls “cloistering,” Stankard began to play lighting designer, adding drama and mystery to his repertoire. Sometimes a singular cluster of flowers and berries might be barely framed by a cube, as if it were about to burst forth, as a way to focus attention on their vitality and visual splendor. In other cases, a taller column achieves the impressions of depth and space to a degree not possible with the established proportions of the *Botanicals* form. The *Columns* and *Cubes* are some of Stankard’s most vital works and reveal an artist unafraid to take on the technical challenges he’s been solving since he set out to make his very first paperweights in the late 1960s.

~ AP



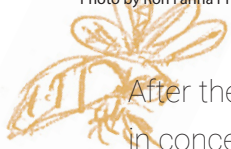
Orbs



Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees, 2005
d 5 ¼ in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography



Native Flowers, Earth Clump and Human Forms Orb, 2010
d 5 3/8 in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography



After the paperweight, all of Stankard's innovative forms were his own creation, developed in concert with his *Botanical* breakthroughs. They seem to have sprung forth naturally from Stankard's desire to offer new ways of seeing the wonders he had achieved in glass. The discovery of the *Orb* form, however, was the result of a collaboration with one of his coldworkers, Robert Stephan, who grinds and polishes Stankard's work to its pristine final result. Visiting the Stankard studio, Stephan noticed one of the cube forms and offered to laminate it into a perfect 360-degree sphere by adding curved pieces of glass to all six sides. When Stankard saw the first completed sphere, he knew in an instant that he had a new form that distilled his work to its very essence by uniformly magnifying the elements encased inside. This new format, and its unforgiving lens on the slightest imperfection, challenged Stankard to maintain the credibility of his botanical designs and conceal the marks of their construction. What remains is Stankard at his purest. Stankard credits the *Orb* compositions, which debuted in 2004, with pushing him further in his quest to translate nature into glass.

~ AP



Diptychs, Triptychs, & Assemblages



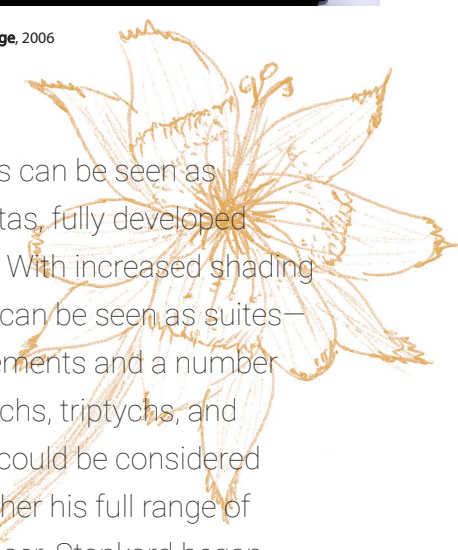
July's Field Flowers Diptych, 2000
H 5 7/8, W 5 3/8, d 4 in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography



Minkoff's Garden Cloistered Assemblage, 2006
H 8 3/8, W 8 1/4, d 4 3/8 in.
Photo by Ron Farina Photography

If one thinks of Stankard's work in musical terms, the paperweights can be seen as *études*, or "studies," in French. The *Botanicals* can be seen as sonatas, fully developed compositions that change key and have three or four movements. With increased shading through light control and greater volume, the *Columns* and *Cubes* can be seen as suites—musical compositions of increasing complexity, with several movements and a number of key changes. The next forms that Stankard developed, the diptychs, triptychs, and assemblages that emerged at the turn of the twenty-first century, could be considered Stankard's symphonic arrangements, with the artist bringing together his full range of virtuosic techniques into a thematically unified work. Like a composer, Stankard began to weave together color and form into his most ambitious and complex arrangements, setting up his elements in grids that intensify the effect of each. With space between each discreet component, Stankard shows his mastery of the vocabulary he developed at the torch, a language that speaks to the themes he has distilled into three primary areas of focus, which he has begun to refer to as "sex, death, and God" in public presentations of his work. These mostly cloistered groupings represent Stankard in his most confident and full-throated expression of nature's song of the connections between spirituality and the plant kingdom.

~ AP





Museum of Glass

Located in Tacoma, Washington, Museum of Glass is a premier contemporary art museum dedicated to glass and glassmaking in the West Coast's largest and most active museum glass studio. Now in its 20th year, the Museum has established a reputation for hosting impactful and

engaging artist residencies, organizing and exhibiting nationally traveling exhibitions, and creating unique programs for visitors, all while building a growing permanent collection chronicling the development of modern and contemporary glass.

Since opening in 2002, the Museum has served as a catalyst for change in Tacoma. The iconic building was erected on a Superfund site which started the restoration of the Thea Foss Waterway. Today, you will find a thriving arts and culture center, including six museums all within walking distance.

Museum of Glass is inherently a maker's space. Our Hot Shop and Hot Shop Team — considered to be among the finest in the world — provide rare public access to glassmaking demonstrations, and host dozens of Visiting Artist Residencies annually, including students from the Hilltop Artists program, contributing to the development of individual artist careers and the global glass art community.

The Museum has also ignited the creativity of children through innovative programs such as Kids Design Glass, Science of Art, and Junior Curator Academy. Hot Shop Heroes, a glassmaking program for soldiers and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, has contributed to the healing of members of the U.S. military.

It's rare to find a venue where you can watch live glassmaking, experience glass art from emerging artists as well as masters, and have the chance to try your hand at it. Museum of Glass prides itself on providing a transformative experience for our visitors and a sustained impact on our community.





Detail, **Green-Banded Bouquet Cube with Masks and Pineland Flowers**, 2003
Photo by Ron Farina Photography

Tour Availability

Museum of Glass, Tacoma:

November 12, 2011 – June 17, 2012

Hunter Museum of American Art, Tennessee:

December 6, 2012 – April 21, 2013

Low Art Museum, Florida:

November 2, 2013 – January 5, 2014

Bergstrom Mahler Museum of Glass, Wisconsin:

September 13, 2014 – February 15, 2015

WheatonArts, New Jersey:

April 3 – December 30, 2018

Dates will be determined when venue bookings and shipping arrangements are finalized for the tour. Tour originated at Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington, and is traveling throughout the United States.



Exhibition Specifications

Square Footage: approximately 2,000

Number of Works: approximately 70 small glass paperweights and sculptures

Rental Fee: \$25,000, plus pro-rated shipping

Duration: Negotiable

Open Dates: Ongoing

Support Material: Didactic text panels, documentary video, and interactive education materials

Contact:

museumofglass.org/travel

travelingexhibitions@museumofglass.org

Curatorial Department - 253.284.4705

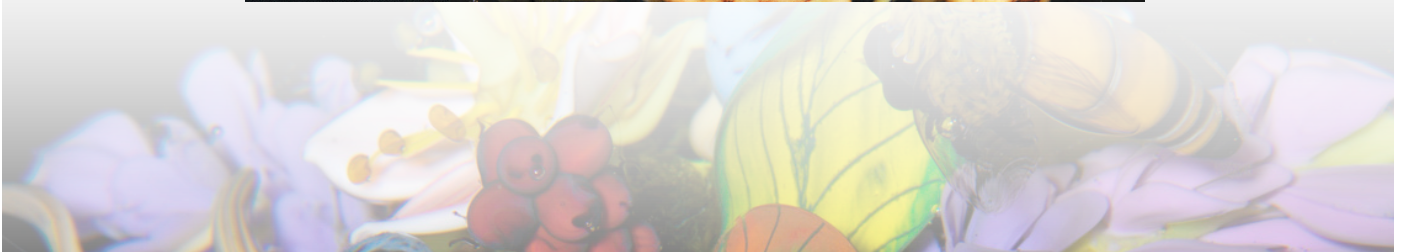
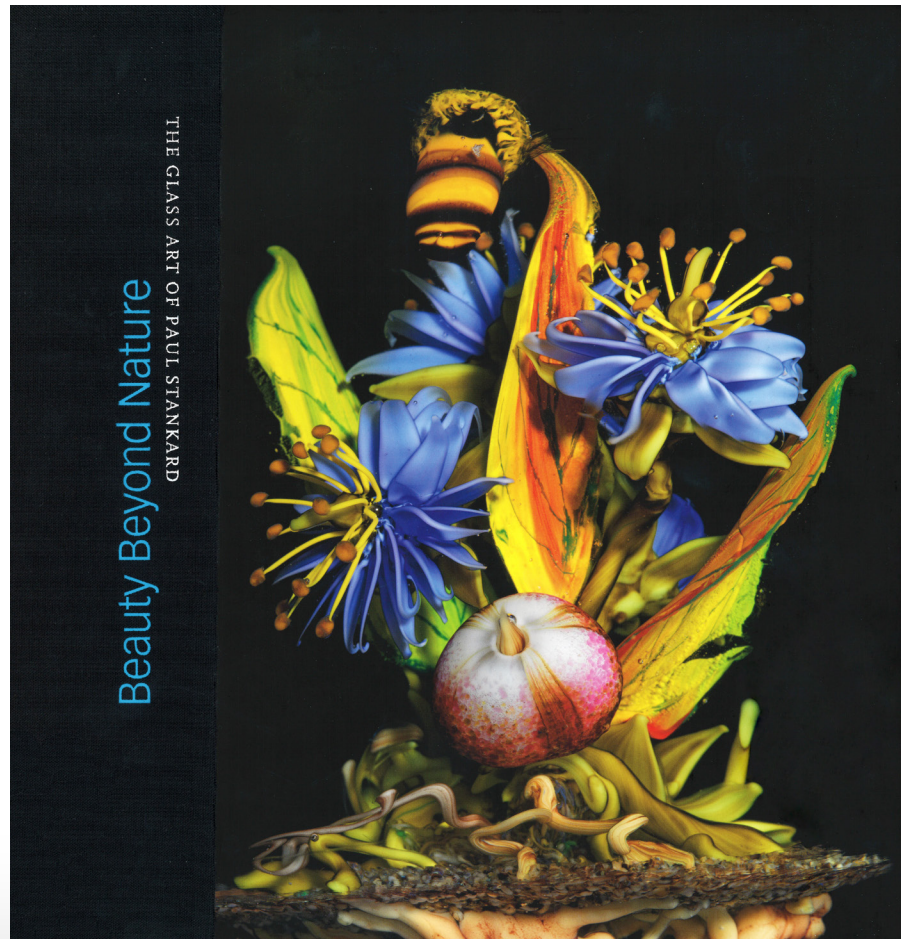


Details: **Pineland Pickerel Weed with Honeybee Paperweight**, 2007
Apple Blossom Paperweight with Honeybee, 2006
Mask and Golden Orb Botanical, 2001
Native Flowers, Earth Clump and Human Forms Orb, 2010
Photos by Ron Farina Photography

Beauty Beyond Nature: The Glass Art of Paul Stankard

A new way of understanding the accomplishments of a true American master and his development from his earliest attempts at capturing a daisy in glass in 1969 to his glorious 2010 orb encasing a honeybee swarm. Paul Stankard's finely wrought organic detail is illuminated through never-before-seen high-resolution photographs enlarged and printed with the highest production values to create a unique book that is itself a work of art. In an essay by William Warmus, an interview by Andrew Page, and photographs by Ron Farina and Douglas Schaible, *Beauty Beyond Nature* (published by the Robert M. Minkoff Foundation, Ltd., 2011) reveals Stankard's work as a powerful touchstone that connects us to the potency of the natural world and reminds us of what it means to be alive.

Hardcover. 168 Pages. Retail price \$60.00.





Above: **Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees**, 2005
Back cover: detail, **Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees**, 2005
Photos by Ron Farina Photography

Image Credits

All Objects

Paul J. Stankard (American, born 1943). Collection of Museum of Glass, gift of the Robert M. Minkoff Foundation. Photo by Ron Farina Photography, unless otherwise noted.

Cover image

Four Seasons Cloistered Assemblage (detail), 2008. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 10 5/8 x 5 15/16 x 3 11/16 in. (27 x 15.1 x 9.4 cm).

Page after cover

Four Seasons Cloistered Assemblage, 2008. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 10 5/8 x 5 15/16 x 3 11/16 in. (27 x 15.1 x 9.4 cm).

Pages 1–14, background photo

Honeybee Swarm Orb (detail), 2010. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 7 11/16 in. (19.5 cm).

Page 2, photo 1

Winter Squash Paperweight (detail), 2000. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 3 1/8 x 2 1/2 in. (7.9 x 6.4 cm).

Page 2, photo 2

Crown Imperial Botanical with Honeybee (detail), 2009. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 1/2 x 2 13/16 in. (14 x 7.1 cm).

Page 2, photo 3

Pineland Pickerel Weed Column (detail), 2002. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 7 7/16 x 3 7/8 x 3 15/16 in. (18.9 x 9.8 x 10 cm).

Page 2, photo 4

Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees (detail), 2005. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm).

Page 2, photo 5

July's Field Flowers Diptych (detail), 2000. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 7/8 x 5 3/8 x 4 in. (14.9 x 13.7 x 10.2 cm).

Page 4, top photo.

Photo courtesy of the artist

Page 4, bottom photo

Floating Orchids and Field Flowers Orb, 2008. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 8 in. (20.3 cm).

Page 5, photo 1

Braided Bouquet Paperweight, 2007. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 2 1/4 in. (5.7 cm)

Image Credits

Page 5, photo 2

Winter Squash Paperweight (detail), 2000. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 3 1/8 x 2 1/2 in. (7.9 x 6.4 cm).

Page 6, photo 1

Mask and Golden Orb Botanical, 2001. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 4 7/8 x 2 1/8 x 2 9/16 in. (12.4 x 5.4 x 6.5 cm).

Page 6, photo 2.

Crown Imperial Botanical with Honeybee, 2009. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 1/2 x 2 13/16 in. (14 x 7.1 cm)

Page 7, photo 1

Homage to Daisies Cloistered Column, 2009. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 7 3/8 x 3 15/16 x 3 3/8 in. (18.7 x 10 x 8.6 cm).

Page 7, photo 2

Green-Banded Bouquet Cube with Masks and Pineland Flowers, 2003. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 3 7/8 x 2 9/16 x 2 1/2 in. (9.8 x 6.5 x 6.4 cm).

Page 8, photo 1

Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees, 2005. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm)

Page 8, photo 2

Native Flowers and Earth Clump, 2010. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 4 1/2 x 2 1/4 x 3 in. (11.4 x 5.7 x 7.6 cm).

Page 9, photo 1

July's Field Flowers Diptych, 2000. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 7/8 x 5 3/8 x 4 in. (14.9 x 13.7 x 10.2 cm).

Page 9, photo 2

Minkoff's Garden Cloistered Assemblage, 2006. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 8 1/2 x 8 5/16 x 4 3/8 in. (21.6 x 21.1 x 11.1 cm).

Page 11

Photo by Chuck Lysen

Page 12

Green-Banded Bouquet Cube with Masks and Pineland Flowers, 2003. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 3 7/8 x 2 9/16 x 2 1/2 in. (9.8 x 6.5 x 6.4 cm).

Page 13, photo 1

Pineland Pickerel Weed with Honeybee Paperweight (detail), 2007. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 2 3/16 x 3 1/2 in. (5.6 x 8.9 cm).

Image Credits

Page 13, photo 2

Apple Blossom Paperweight with Honeybee (detail), 2006. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 2 1/8 x 3 1/4 in. (5.4 x 8.3 cm).

Page 13, photo 3

Mask and Golden Orb Botanical (detail), 2001. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 4 7/8 x 2 1/8 x 2 9/16 in. (12.4 x 5.4 x 6.5 cm).

Page 13, photo 4

Native Flowers and Earth Clump (detail), 2010. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 4 1/2 x 2 1/4 x 3 in. (11.4 x 5.7 x 7.6 cm).

Page 16 (not numbered)

Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees, 2005. Blown glass with flameworked elements; 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm).

Page 20 (not numbered)

Lilac Bouquet Orb with Honeybees (detail), 2005. Blown glass with flameworked elements. 5 1/4 in. (13.3 cm).



 MUSEUM *OF* GLASS

1801 Dock Street, Tacoma, WA 98402 USA
museumofglass.org

For information on sponsorship opportunities for this exhibition,
please contact Museum of Glass Curatorial Department at 253.284.4705,
travelingexhibitions@museumofglass.org.