

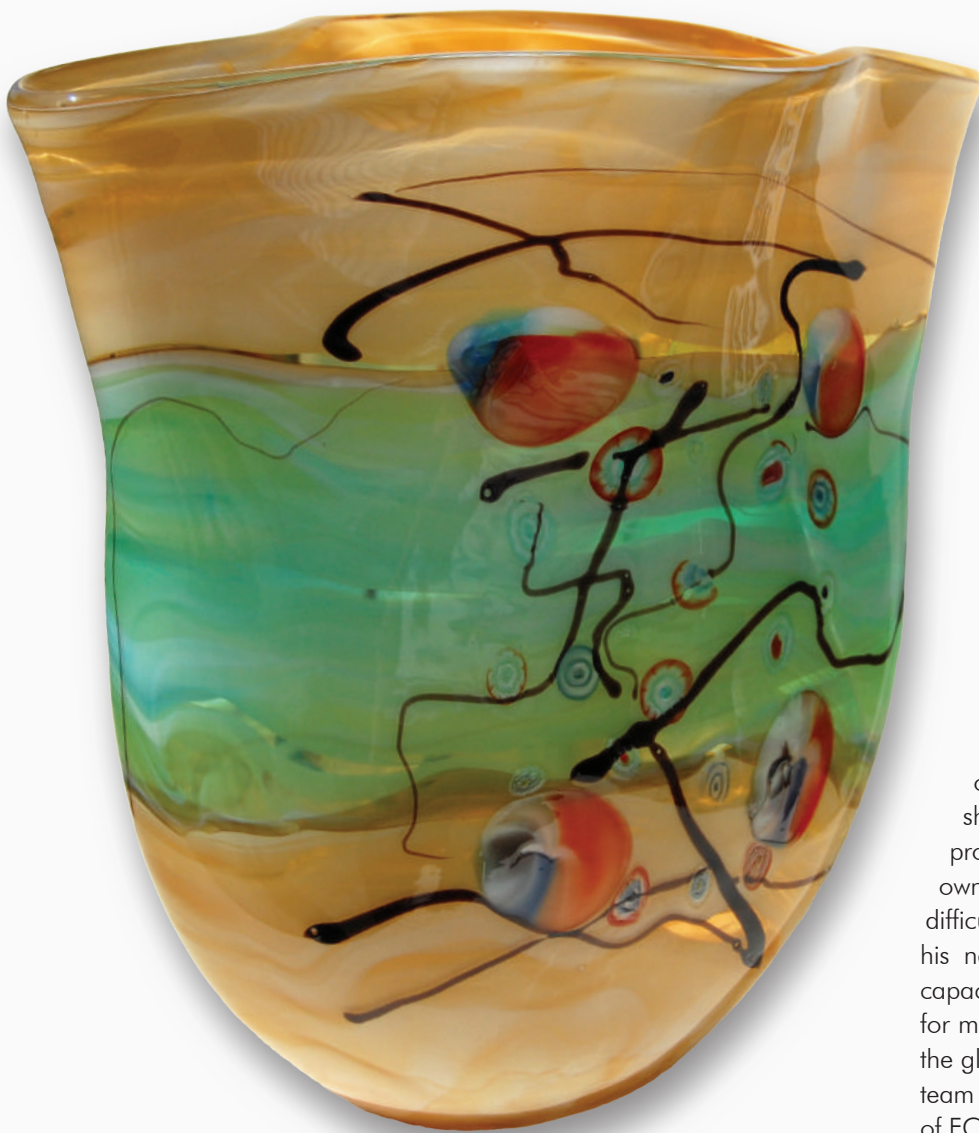
ARTIST FEATURE

EC Custom Glass

An Art with Ancient Beginnings

Hand blown art glass has a rich history dating back more than 2,000 years to the first century B.C. In keeping with the great traditions of art, EC Galleries has been working with fine art glass craftsman since its inception in 1995. With the demand for fine art glass growing, the gallery launched its own line of custom hand-blown glass, bringing together the talents of an extraordinary team of master artisans. Designed to represent a range of emotions, themes, and techniques, each piece of EC Galleries' custom glass is crafted with the greatest care and expertise.

"We introduced EC Custom Glass after being approached by a corporate designer who needed a large number of hand blown glass objects of specific shapes, colors, and sizes for one of his projects," explains Ruth-Ann Thorn, co-owner of EC Galleries. "We had a very difficult time finding an artist who could meet his needs not only in terms of artistry, but capacity. Having worked in and around glass for many years, we decided we would design the glass ourselves and we went looking for a team of artists to produce it. That was the birth of EC Custom Glass."



Since its addition, EC Custom Glass has received an enthusiastic reception, adding to the gallery's already diverse selection of artwork. Offering hand blown glass in a wide variety of styles, EC Custom Glass combines sophisticated design with the longevity of a medium that has stood the test of time for more than 2,000 years. These unique pieces also make wonderful gifts. Whether chandeliers, tabletops, bowls, fountains, plates, vases, or sculptures, EC Custom Glass has something for you. "We are always looking to add to and enhance our selection," says Ruth-Ann. "Our greatest desire is to provide our collectors with works that will enrich their lives."

A Three-Step Process

Glassblowing was first developed by the Phoenicians in approximately 50 B.C. It then spread to the Roman Empire, where its popularity greatly expanded and led to the beginnings of a trade network among glass workshops. Given its extraordinary usefulness, glass and glass blowing spread quickly and today it is an art form practiced around the world. As is the case with a fair number of arts, many of the most sophisticated glassblowing techniques were first developed in Italy, including incalmo, reticello, zanfirico, and latticino, which are often considered the ultimate refinement in art glass.

Glassblowing is a technique that employs a blowpipe, or blow tube, to inflate molten glass into a bubble, or parison. The process requires three furnaces. The first is commonly referred to as "the furnace" and contains a crucible of molten glass. The second is used to reheat the work of art during the transition between steps. The third and final furnace is called the "lehr" or the "annealer," which is used to slowly cool the glass over extended period of time. Ranging from a few hours to a few days, this last step is essential to maintain the structural integrity of the glass.

EC Custom Glass is available at Exclusive Collections Galleries. View online at: www.ecgallery.com

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