Dear Members,

The convivial cover of this edition of Gather is an image from 1732 which features prominently in the exhibition In Sparkling Company: Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s. It colorfully conveys the optimism we are feeling about gathering once more as restrictions lift and we continue to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Here at the Museum, we have enjoyed a stronger-than-expected start to 2021, and we anticipate that trend to continue this summer as guests rediscover the magic of glass with family and friends.

Postponed for a full year due to the pandemic, In Sparkling Company is well worth the wait, and I’m eager for you to experience it in its magnificent entirety! We invite guests to ‘fire up’ their summer by enjoying the hallmarks of any visit to the Museum: live glassmaking demonstrations, Make Your Own Glass experiences, and of course, breathtaking artworks in our collection. Fire and Vine: The Story of Glass and Wine, an exploration of the intertwined stories of glassmaking and winemaking through the centuries, opens July 3 in our Gather Gallery. Summer visitors will see a stunning new work by Vanessa German, and the 2020 Rakow Commission by Anjali Srinivasan, featured in this issue, will install later this year.

As Members, you are an integral part of our Museum community, and your ongoing support and engagement are a critical ingredient for our success. This has been especially true during the past year, the most challenging in our institution’s history. With your support, and the talents of our resilient, creative, and dedicated staff, we remain steadfast in our mission to inspire people to see glass in a new light.

Karol B. Wight, Ph.D.
President and Executive Director

Cover: Detail, Vauxhall 1732, Thomas Rowlandson (British, 1756-1827), 1784. Special Collections - Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University, Gift of Dickson Q. Brown, Princeton University Class of 1895. Courtesy of Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ.

Inside Cover: Detail, Mary Little, later Lady Carr, ca. 1765. Thomas Gainsborough RA (British, 1727–1788). Oil on canvas. Yale Center for British Art, Bequest of Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham. Photo credit: The Yale Center for British Art
**In Sparkling Company: Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s**

The long-awaited exhibition *In Sparkling Company: Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s* presents a veritable feast for the eyes, with glittering costumes and jewelry, elaborate tableware, polished mirrors, and dazzling lighting devices. These items that delighted the British elite also defined social rituals and cultural values of the period, and when presented together, paint a powerful picture of what it meant to be modern in the 1700s—and what it cost. But there’s much more to *In Sparkling Company* than glittering glass.

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**Pretty in Pink**

At the entrance to the gallery is something rather unexpected: a pink neon sign noting the exhibition title. Set against a full-size scene of London’s Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens in the 18th century, the sign—designed and donated by Matthew Day Perez of FagSigns, Brooklyn—may seem out of place at first glance. Yet Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, London’s hottest night spot, was famed for its ‘illuminations.’ From fireworks to theatrical ‘transparencies,’ people flocked to revel in the carnival-like atmosphere of the venue. Hundreds of glass lanterns were strung overhead and lit by an ingenious system of fuses to add to the delight of the experience.

“In *Sparkling Company* explores various facets of what it meant to be ‘modern’ in the 18th century,” said Christopher “Kit” Maxwell, exhibition curator. “It considers how the polished, optical surface effects of glass synchronized with and defined the social behaviors and the complex material values and identities of the British. Some theorists identify this period as originating the concept of ‘camp.’ A hot pink neon sign—produced by a neon company which serves the LGBTQ+ community as well as those feeling marginalized in a problematic world—seemed like the perfect collaboration.”
The Museum will host the 59th Annual Seminar on Glass, presented as a complement to the exhibition *In Sparkling Company* on Friday, October 8, and Saturday, October 9, 2021. All are welcome to register for the free two-day online seminar, which includes lectures, panel discussions, pre- and post-seminar digital materials, and conversations on issues relevant to 18th-century glass.

Register for Seminar and learn more at [cmog.org/seminar](http://cmog.org/seminar)

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**Looks Good Enough to Eat**

An elaborate display in the exhibition of a dessert table laden with glass sweetmeats and confectionary, includes marzipan apples and pears; candied orange slices, violet petals, dates, cherries, and lemon peels; and aniseed and millefruit biscuits, along with syllabub, pistachio ice cream, and sugar plums. The creation of these realistic glass desserts was led by accomplished CMoG flameworkers Eric Goldschmidt and Caitlin Hyde, who also hand-painted many of the delicacies. Goldschmidt and Hyde used 18th-century recipe books, historic illustrations, and other images to inform their work.

**A Lost Masterpiece Rediscovered**

A highlight of the exhibition is a painstakingly detailed virtual-reality recreation of the glass drawing room at Northumberland House, London: a dazzling interior last seen in 1874. Designed by Robert Adam and completed in 1775 for Hugh Percy, 1st Duke of Northumberland, the room was appointed with one of the most astonishing uses of plate glass in 18th-century Britain. It featured red-spangled glass panels, which lined the walls interspersed with decorative green-glass pilasters and eight vast mirrors. Lavishly decorated and sparkling in nature, the drawing room stood for a century before it was dismantled.

The glass paneling was eventually acquired by London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, but the original components of the room, including its furnishings, have never been seen together—until now. Visitors to the exhibition can see original, restored plate glass paneling, complemented by a digital experience that allows guests to virtually explore the space and imagine what it would have been like 200 years ago, while toggling between daylight and candlelight views.
IN SPARKLING COMPANY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An exhibition of this magnitude—including the illustrated publication and virtual reality reconstruction that accompany it—would not be possible without the collaboration and generosity of numerous individuals and organizations. The Museum acknowledges the invaluable support of the following, and is sincerely grateful for their contributions:

Donors
Daniel P. and Welmoet B. van Kammen (in memory of Marleen van Kammen)
Lani McGregor and Daniel Schwoerer
Dwight and Lorri Lanmon
Douglas C. McCorkle and Lynn Harris-McCorkle

Foundations
Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, U.K.
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Undertone Music

The seed for an exhibition on the entwined history of glass and wine was sown in a Curatorial team virtual meeting in July 2020. Marvin Bolt, now curator emeritus of science and technology, was recounting an extremely rare short book he had recently helped the Rakow Research Library acquire. Titled Il vaso di vetro quasi infrangibile, dove non si quasta mai il vino (which loosely translates to “Almost Unbreakable Glass Jar, where Wine Never Spoils”), the volume was written in 1611 by G.A. Fineo. Marv’s enthusiasm about this document, which proposes to use glass for the preservation of wine, was contagious.

It seemed like serendipity when soon thereafter, Carole Ann Fabian, director of collections & curatorial affairs, asked for ideas for exhibitions to complement In Sparkling Company, to open in 2021. The criteria were clear and informed by the pandemic moment: draw from the strengths of our permanent collection, include objects from across time and space (including materials from the Rakow), appeal to local and regional audiences, and feel celebratory and uplifting, reflecting our collective battle against COVID-19 and looking toward a brighter future. Inspired by Fineo’s 400-year-old treatise, the idea for an exhibition exploring the relationship between glass and wine just felt right.

I’m the curatorial lead for this exhibition, but behind the scenes I worked closely with the Museum’s three other curators: Christopher Maxwell, curator of early modern glass, Alexandra Ruggiero, curator of modern glass, and Susie J. Silbert, curator of postwar and contemporary glass, as well as Colleen McFarland Rademaker, manager, Archives and Special Collections at the Rakow Library. This group met to discuss possible themes of the exhibition, brainstorm objects to display, and review labels and other forms of interpretation. Because none of us were travelling, it was easier to work cooperatively and collaboratively in real time—a silver lining in the cloud of the pandemic.
During fall 2020, with limited access to the Museum itself, I combed Museum databases and publications to identify potential objects for the exhibition. A number of gems came to light: a rare 2,000-year-old fragment of blue and white cameo glass depicting a grape harvest; wine glasses made in Mexico, Japan, and Argentina in the mid-20th century; a complete set of Riedel’s ‘Sommeliers’ series of stemware, which revolutionized the way people purchase wine glasses and experience wine tastings—and so much more. The exhibition will include more than 80 objects from the permanent collection, dating from the 5th century BCE to 2012. The selections represent the vast and sometimes surprising array of ways glass makes the production and enjoyment of wine possible.
As fall turned to winter, I began to realize that the Museum’s collection lacked objects connected to the story of wine in the Finger Lakes, a narrative that everyone on the exhibition team agreed was important to include. I connected with local winery owners from whom I learned about the surprisingly long and rich history of wine in the region. Although I’d enjoyed a few wine tours and samples at local tasting rooms, I didn’t recognize that wine has been made in the Finger Lakes even longer than glass has—and that Finger Lakes wineries were pioneers in growing European grapes on the east coast of North America in the mid-20th century.

The spirit of the exhibition and a sense of optimism for the future is captured in a series of ancient mold-blown cups with the Greek toast KATAΧΑΙΡΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΦΡΑΙΝΟΥ. Rejoice, and be merry!

EXHIBITION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In order to share these local stories with visitors, the Museum has borrowed historical objects from: Pleasant Valley Wine Company, incorporated in 1860 as the first bonded winery in the United States; Dr. Konstantin Frank Cellars, a leader in introducing the European vinifera grape to the Finger Lakes; and the Glenn H. Curtiss Museum. We are grateful to our local partners, including Finger Lakes Wine Country, for their contributions.


Learn more at cmog.org/vine.
Strengthening Virtual Programming

Each year, the Museum offers a full slate of onsite and virtual programming, with generous support from Members and Ennion. This year, many Museum events continue to be held virtually, offering an opportunity to reach global audiences as never before. From lively discussions between curators and special guests to livestreamed hot glass demonstrations highlighting this summer’s new exhibitions, as well as family fun during our Little Gather series, there is plenty on offer for glass lovers of all persuasions and locations.

Connected By Glass

Glass connects us to the past and present, and to innovation and imagination. Engage with art and science remotely with a series of virtual events for all audiences. Livestreamed programming scheduled for the balance of 2021 will: take a closer look at Corelle; explore the world of glass cannabis pipe makers; delve into the long-standing connection between perfume scents and glass; and connect artists who work with glass with historians using the Museum’s collections to further their research. The Connected by Glass livestreamed series features Museum curators and educators, with special guests who share insights allowing viewers to discover the myriad unexpected ways people are connected by glass.

For dates and details, visit cmog.org/connected.

Limited availability. Visit cmog.org/classes for current and future course offerings.

Studio Course Offerings

The Studio will continue to offer a plethora of engaging and practical virtual classes through the summer months. With virtual classes taught by Studio staff members and local artists, students can learn from home and still master new techniques. Students can discover the history of flameworking, and take a virtual peek behind the stacks of the Rakow Research Library with library staff at the helm. Classes offer students of all levels, from hobbyists to glass artists looking to expand their reach, the opportunity to think about their glassmaking careers in new ways.

Limited availability. Visit cmog.org/classes for current and future course offerings.
In Sparkling Company: Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s

In May, virtual programs brought the stunning new exhibition In Sparkling Company: Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s to Ennion and Members through previews of the exhibition’s exciting contents. If you missed the opportunity to learn more about the exhibition or see the Museum’s first virtual reality (VR) experience, you can find the videos on the Museum’s YouTube channel at youtube.com/corningmuseumofglass.

For dates and details, visit cmog.org/live.

Hot Glass Team and Studio Live Streams

The Museum will present a series of weekly livestreamed demonstrations from early June through Labor Day. On alternating Thursdays at 5:30 pm, one of our Hot Glass Demo Team gaffers will take the lead to discover and recreate an object or style that inspires them from In Sparkling Company and Fire & Vine, exhibitions on view this summer. Every other Wednesday at 11 am, members of The Studio team will present lively instruction on a series of glassmaking topics.

Little Gather

Little Gather, the Museum’s popular children’s performance series, will be held virtually this summer, building on the success of last year’s digital program. Bringing Little Gather to viewers as a virtual series enables us to host performers from nearby and farther afield. Highlights include: the sounds and original songs of local favorite Doc Possum, and Barefoot Puppets from Richmond, VA, who will introduce audiences to Priscilla the rearrangeable puppet, helping kids to navigate “big emotions.” The Southeast Steuben County Library, longtime collaborator, will join virtually each week with a related hands-on craft activity at the conclusion of the performance. This year’s program will be broadcast using the Museum’s Zoom platform, allowing for viewer participation using the chat and “Q&A” features. We hope you and the young ones in your life will join us Wednesday mornings at 10 am from July 14 through August 18.

Visit cmog.org/littlegather for dates, details, and Zoom link.
Studio Scholarships

The journey from glass novice to professional glass artist requires the passion and commitment to spend countless hours in the studio. For many artists, The Studio is a place of learning and community that they will use to gain these skills and hone their craft. However, the time and financial resources required to build mastery are exorbitant.

“One of the barriers artists can face in achieving skills they need to work in glass are the financial limitations of renting studio time and paying for many classes over many years. Not everyone can afford it, even if they have potential,” said Amy Schwartz, director of The Studio. By supporting scholarships for students to take classes at various skill levels and techniques and subsidizing the use of facility rentals to provide space for artistry, donors help to bolster programs that promote building a more equitable and inclusive future for glassmaking.

At The Studio, creating a place for glass artistry to thrive has always been a priority. From first-time class participants to serious hobbyists, mid-career glassmakers to glass maestros, The Studio is a community meant for every level of glassmaking.

“We want to be able to offer even more scholarships for classes, expand our resources for the Artist-in-Residency program, and create more ways for glass artists to learn and hone their skills. In the future, we hope to find ways to continue to enhance what we can offer,” said Schwartz.

Right: Allison Burrell, the 2021 Regional Young Artist Scholarship recipient, at work in The Studio.
To make the classes and studio rentals possible, donors provide contributions to our scholarship funds. Some have established endowments that will exist in perpetuity, ensuring support for The Studio’s scholarships today and in the future.

David C. Burger, featured in the Winter 2021 issue of Gather, supported the creation of an endowment to support the new Regional Young Artist Scholarship. Allison Burrell, the scholarship’s 2021 recipient, is using the opportunity to expand her skills without concern for the financial impact of paying for multiple classes and renting studio time.

“Over the past few years, I’ve tried to take one class each spring and fall, but you can only learn so much so fast with that pacing,” said Burrell of past barriers to further developing her skills. With her focus on finding her voice as an artist and supporting herself doing what she loves, the Regional Young Artist Scholarship creates an opportunity for Burrell to practice glassmaking intensively. “This scholarship allows me to do in one year what otherwise would have taken me at least five,” said Burrell.

Visit cmog.org/studio-scholarships for more information. To learn more about funding a scholarship at The Studio, contact Advancement at development@cmog.org.

Scholarship Highlights

The General Scholarship and Residency Fund provides general summer scholarships and supports the Artist-in-Residence program. Individual contributions to The Studio can be made at give.cmog.org.

The Paul and Patricia Stankard Flamworking Scholarship Fund, created with the support of friends of Paul and Patricia Stankard and collectors of Paul’s work, is earmarked for the support of developing flamworking artists.

The Christopher John Kammerer Memorial Scholarship Fund was founded by the friends and family of the late Christopher John Kammerer. It aims to support promising, young, regional artists, and is available for courses that meet over our winter, spring, and fall semesters.

The Elio Quarisa Scholarship Fund has been established at The Studio to support furnace glassworkers who shared his passion for Venetian glassblowing.

The Amy J. Schwartz Endowment Fund was established through a generous contribution by longtime supporters Carl and Betty Pforzheimer to provide a number of annual scholarships supporting individuals interested in furthering their artistic skills in making glass.
At our Museum, and virtually worldwide, Members experience a more intimate connection with our Museum through insider access to new exhibitions, the permanent collection, and glassy Member programming. Through the charitable gift portion of your membership, you support us in actively educating, collecting, preserving, and sharing the art, history, and science of glass.

MEET OUR MEMBERS
Global Presence, Local Impact

Members live in 15 countries
41 States and the District of Columbia

529 Members for 10+ Years

Mark Norton (Willseyville, NY) attending a Studio class.

Preview upcoming Member events, find past editions of Gather, and learn more about the impact of your support at cmog.org/membership and cmog.org/ennion.
Martha and Dady Mehta (Ann Arbor, MI) members since 2002

Members Martha and Dady, Mark, and Alex talk about the importance of membership in our Member Q&A on pages 16–17

Alex Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) at The Studio in the late 1990s.
MEET OUR MEMBERS
What are they saying about us?

Our Members all have a unique story to tell. How did they discover the Museum? What brings them back time and time again? Why do they love glass so much? And Members continue to build on that story with every visit to CMoG. Membership brings a sense of community, exclusive access to our events and exhibitions, great discounts, and, of course, wonderful new memories each year.

Let’s meet some of our Members and find out what they love about the Museum.

Why do you feel a sense of connection to the Museum?

“As an artist (mostly graphic media), I am always on the lookout for design ideas and interesting pieces of work. The Museum has been a constant source of inspiration since becoming a Member in 2009. I often visit the Museum for specific galleries, such as the Carder Gallery. That connection extends to the people and artists associated with the Museum.”
Mark Norton, Willseyville, NY

“Because of our lifelong love of fine art and glass. We learned, while living in Vienna, that Czech glass was an ‘uprising’ from the controlling communist authority, and that artists such as Libenský and Brychtová were at first only able to be seen in very limited places. The Corning Museum of Glass was one of those places.”
Martha and Dady Mehta, Ann Arbor, MI

“For anyone interested in glass, everything is here: excellent teachers, students, staff, and especially glass!”
Alex Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Background: Red Pyramid by Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, 1993 (94.3.101), is a favorite of members Martha and Dady Mehta.
Why do you feel it’s important to support the Museum through Membership?

“I believe the Museum plays a vital role in communicating the depth and variety of glasswork to the greater public. In addition to being a great place to visit and browse, the Museum offers a lot of programming in the form of lectures, special exhibits, courses, and outreach. To me, these are important things that need my support as a member.”

Mark Norton

“I have many memories but, the first significant one was when my Mum and I flew down to Elmira with my friends Sue and George Robinson in 1987. George had recently obtained his private pilot’s license and we were all eager to go. This was during an exhibition called Glass of the Caesars, and we were all astounded at the displays and quality of glass work. We had lunch in the cafeteria then spent another hour looking at the exhibition along with some other more permanent displays. After a taxi ride back to Elmira, the two-hour flight to Ottawa, and a short drive, we arrived back home. We have all re-lived those memories many times, I still do!”

Alex Hamilton

Do you have a favorite memory or experience at The Corning Museum of Glass?

“I have fond memories of the opening of the new Contemporary Art + Design Wing. It was wonderful to meet the people who had put so much time and passion into something that the world can share. I found the architecture to be harmonious with the display of important contemporary works. It was an exciting event and I look forward to others in the future.”

Mark Norton

“It was love at first sight! It’s just such a wonderful place, any time we’re able to travel that far it’s a memorable experience. The Corning Museum of Glass is a monumental home for the history of glass art and sculpture from ancient times to the contemporary. We learn more each time.”

Martha and Dady Mehta

“We first visited the Museum in 1980 and soon thereafter became members, returning as often as possible each year. We found the Museum to be well run and the exhibits wonderfully organized and presented. It was worthy of our support.”

Martha and Dady Mehta

“Memberships are important for the Museum to continue to know who is out there, and who really likes glass. Members learn about upcoming projects and special events and membership also helps to fund those that need a hand in advancing their work and skills.”

Alex Hamilton
Objects in Focus

Tina Oldknow, former senior curator of modern and contemporary class, reflects on collector and philanthropist Daniel Ben Greenberg. A tireless advocate for contemporary studio glass, Greenberg passed away on February 21, at 79 years of age, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of art for future generations to enjoy.

My connection to Dan and Susan was not unusual for them, and mine was only one of many similar stories at museums across the country. Glass sculptures and vessels from Dan and Susan’s collection are also found at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte; the Honolulu Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Minneapolis Institute of Art; the Racine Art Museum; and the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe. Additionally, Susan was a trustee for 13 years at Pilchuck Glass School, near Seattle, Washington.

Dan and Susan’s gifts to Corning began in 1988 and ended in 2012, the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the American studio glass movement. They were very generous to the Museum, giving or supporting the purchase of 36 pieces. Their donations demonstrate the wide range of contemporary glass practice, which I have chosen to highlight with three objects.

Soon after we met, Dan and Susan asked me to make them a list of ten artists that I wanted for LACMA. Knowing nothing about contemporary glass, I traveled to Corning to learn more. I called the Rakow Research Library and requested to see all of their catalogues on contemporary studio glass, but just a small pile of books appeared on my arrival. One of the individuals on my list was the German artist Klaus Moje. Dan and Susan loved his work, especially his vessel forms, and they collected them over the course of many years. So, partly for nostalgia, but mostly for the exquisite craftsmanship, pattern, and color of Moje’s pieces, I chose this abstracted vessel form.

My relationship with Dan Greenberg and his wife, Susan Steinhauser, goes back to 1982. Then, I was a young assistant curator of Greek and Roman Art in the department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), with a new responsibility for a large collection of ancient glass and historical European glass. One day, I received a phone call from Dan Greenberg. He said: “I’m interested in starting a collection of contemporary glass at LACMA, let’s talk.” I reported this conversation to the head curator, Peter Fusco, and we looked at each other, frankly wondering what Dan meant by “contemporary glass.”

We arranged a meeting, and the rest is history: Dan and Susan not only worked with me and other curators at LACMA (and Corning) but inspired my curatorial transition from ancient art into contemporary art, craft, and design in glass.
While Moje represented a well-established studio glass pioneer, I wanted to balance Dan and Susan’s gift with work by a relative newcomer to glass, but who was also one of their favorites. This was the Argentinean artist Silvia Levenson, whose mixed-media piece also reflected Dan and Susan’s growing love for photography. In Plaza de Mayo, Levenson reflects on the innocent days of her childhood compared to her experience as a young adult during the Videla dictatorship in Argentina (1976–1981), when mothers went to the Plaza de Mayo looking for family members who had “disappeared.” This photograph of the artist and her sister was taken in that square, which has long been a focal point of political life in Buenos Aires. The photograph is embellished with colorful cast glass dresses and flowers, but also shoes with nails, foreshadowing difficult days ahead.

Dan and Susan never hesitated in helping me acquire an important work for the Museum. It is an incredible act of generosity, on the part of a collector, to give a curator funds to purchase a work of art by an artist that they do not collect. At the time, the purchase of Tire, by the major American artist Robert Rauschenberg, was a hard sell to the Museum’s acquisitions committee, and partial funding made it more attractive. Dan and Susan understood the Pop context of the sculpture, they appreciated the significance of Rauschenberg’s impact on the course of modern and contemporary art, and they agreed that it was important for the Museum to have such work in its collection.

Glass was only one of Dan and Susan’s passions. They formed very important and diverse collections of photography with the Getty Museum, in Los Angeles, and the National Gallery of Art, in Washington. Their collections of turned wood and ancient Chinese jades have also found homes in public arts institutions. To say that they represent a very special kind of collector is an understatement. Dan and Susan call themselves “serial collectors,” but this term belies the energetic focus and dedicated commitment that they made to their chosen fields of art, to education about that art, and to American museums.
35TH RAKOW COMMISSION:
NEW WORK BY ANJALI SRINIVASAN
BREATHES LIFE INTO A LOST ART

Susie J. Silbert, curator of postwar and contemporary glass, introduces the latest recipient of the prestigious annual commission, and provides insights about this exciting new addition to the Museum’s collection.

Q. Tell us about the 2020 Rakow Commission.

A. This year’s commission is an incredible piece by the exceptionally talented Anjali Srinivasan. All of Anjali’s work, whether as an artist, an educator, or an entrepreneur, is aimed at connecting people through and with craft. She mines the history of the built world and sparks wonder in the hands and knowledges that made it. Her Rakow Commission, based on the awe-inspiring sheesh mahal or mirror palaces of North India, is an absolute case in point. A six-foot-tall, four-foot-wide wall of mirrored glass that ‘breathes’ at you the longer you look at it, the piece is absolutely magical.

Q. How has the global COVID-19 pandemic affected the production and delivery of the 2020 commission?

A. The Rakow Commission is designed to give an artist the support they need to push their work into new areas. Anjali’s piece is no exception. It is her most ambitious piece yet, larger and more complicated than any other she has made. Remarkably, the work involves glassblowing, mirroring, constructing silicone sheets, building a metal framework, procuring motors and solenoids, designing and 3-D printing housings for those working elements, and developing a computer system to control them and sensors to activate them.

Nearly every one of those components had a COVID-based hitch. Anjali had to wait for her school’s hot shop to reopen to be able to blow
glass, had to be tested for COVID before entering, and then learn how to blow glass with an alternate inflation device to align with new safety protocols. The COVID-snarled international supply chain delayed the delivery of nearly every component: the chemicals for mirroring, the motors to make the piece breathe, and the special, conservation-grade silicone she used to create the mirrored skin. And then, there were delays caused by the illness itself. Thankfully, Anjali has not gotten sick, but COVID affected many collaborators.

Add to that the additional work caused on our end by COVID restrictions on our travel. We always produce a video to accompany the Rakow Commission—which is, I think, one of the best parts of the Commission, amplifying the artist’s message beyond the walls of the Museum. Our incredible videographer typically travels to the artist’s studio and films on location for several days. Operating under COVID travel restrictions this year, Anjali had to film much of her process herself, while we conducted a series of video check-ins throughout the year to document process. Like so many things under COVID, it just took a lot more time.

So, all of those things, plus the weight of the pandemic itself, amounts to what I have been calling a “COVID-suit.” It’s just a heavy amount of extra baggage Anjali has had to carry around as she goes about her work. And if that weren’t enough, she is also department head of the prestigious glass program at Massachusetts College of the Arts and had to learn to teach glassblowing via Zoom and is also still running her company overseas.

All of which makes it even more incredible that Anjali has approached all of these challenges with energy, enthusiasm, and a can-do spirit. There is really no one I would have rather been working with in this pandemic year. Anjali is always a bright spot!

Q. What is sheesh mahal and how does the artist connect it to this new work and the pandemic moment?

Anjali’s interest in sheesh mahal is rooted in reconnecting viewers with the artisans who constructed these incredible spaces. The mirror palaces were first built by the Mughals, who commissioned their construction in the 17th and 18th centuries, but their elaborate mosaics require near constant maintenance. In recent decades, that upkeep has been provided by a nomadic tribe that brought the mirrored glass across vast distances from the glassmakers, and installed it in the palaces, using time-honored techniques. The Gujarat earthquake in 2001 effectively disbanded the tribe, according to Anjali’s research, and since then, these spaces have been falling into disrepair.

Building from that rupture and loss—remembering the humanity of the artisans—is what Anjali’s work in mirrored glass is all about. In her earlier work on sheesh mahal, physical touch was central to the pieces. For instance, they would do things like breathe when you touched them (your hands completing hidden electronic circuits). The idea was to physically connect the viewer to the maker.

Adapting that idea to the Museum required a different approach, because even before COVID, we didn’t allow visitors to touch the artworks. We had the idea that the piece would be a breathing wall activated by the viewer’s physical presence rather than touch—and during the pandemic, that element has taken on greater significance. In this Zoom-inflected era, we are all trying to connect across vast distance, looking into flat walls of glass that mirror ourselves, and hoping beyond hope that we are coming across in our full humanity and that our connections with friends and family will remain intact even across distance and time. So, actually, we couldn’t have predicted it, but Anjali’s piece is the timeliest thing we could be working on.
Q. The surface of Anjali’s work is so alluring and draws the viewer in—what more can we learn from experiencing this work?

A. Like the best art, Anjali’s piece works on so many levels. It is immediately engaging—who among us is not drawn to the glinting, reflective surface of mirrored glass—and it rewards close looking by beginning to breathe back at you after you stand there for a few seconds. Even if the phenomenon of the breathing, glittering surface with its thousands of dust-sized reflections is all a viewer gets from the piece, it is successful. And then, like every great work, there is so much more to learn and know.

Personally, I have absolutely loved learning about sheesh mahal and the history of these mirror palaces across time. And it’s opened all of these new doors of interpretation for me. For instance, I have new understanding of the work of the pioneering Persian modernist Monir Farmanfarmaian, how it also comes from a mirror palace tradition and how that tradition differs in the cultural context of Persia versus India.

But really, Anjali’s artwork is not didactic. She is not trying to teach you about sheesh mahal in India. She is trying to connect you on a physical, visceral level to the idea that our world was built by people and that those people should be remembered. Like sheesh mahal, she is trying to inspire wonder. And that, she has done so successfully.

Q. How did you choose Anjali for the Commission?

A. The Rakow Commission is one of the most important ways the Museum contributes to contemporary glass and is one of the absolute best parts of my job. In choosing an artist for the commission, I am always alert to artists working in provocative ways, pushing the material into new areas. And I am always thinking about where the field of glass is going and where it could go and who has been advancing the field but is not yet included in the Museum’s collection.

With those ideas in mind, Anjali was an easy choice. She has been a leader, alongside many other incredible artists, of a new generation of glassworkers and thinkers that are posing new questions for and in the material.
I remember seeing her work in a solo exhibition at Heller Gallery at least 10 years ago and I remember thinking, “Huh. I never thought about glass that way before.” For me, there is no greater gift than having my notions about the material upended. It keeps me humble and it feeds my curiosity.

Also, I am deeply interested in the way Anjali’s practice builds community and how the rest of her work, as a teacher and as an entrepreneur working with artisans in India and Dubai, is in service of others. At the Museum, we take our role as a conduit and community builder seriously and supporting an artist that centers care in this way is absolutely in line with our mission.

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**About the Rakow Commission**

The Rakow Commission was inaugurated by the visionary benefactors Juliette K. and Leonard S. Rakow. Since 1986, their transformative gift has allowed the Museum to commission an artist annually to make a new work for the collection accompanied by a $25K cash award. The aim of the commission is to allow artists to push their work to new levels and to enable projects they would not otherwise have the means to pursue. Currently, the commission is awarded to artists not yet represented in the Museum’s permanent collection whose work is both technically and conceptually rigorous and adventurous. Incredible works have been accessioned in this way, including Rui Sasaki’s glowing, raindrop-filled room *I am a Pluviophile*, David Colton’s graffiti-and music-inspired cannabis pipe *Untitled, Corning Museum*, and many others.

Anjali Srinivasan’s work will be on view at the Museum in 2021. To learn more about the commission and watch Rakow Commission videos, go to: cmog.org/rakow-commission

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Right: Detail of Srinivasan’s 35th Rakow Commission, a six-foot-tall, four-foot-wide wall of mirrored glass that ‘breathes at’ the viewer. Image courtesy of the artist.
Museum News

Toyama Glass Art Museum Collaboration

On April 12, The Corning Museum of Glass and the Toyama Glass Art Museum signed a formal memorandum of understanding to collaborate on ongoing cultural projects. This act formalized activities that were already underway between the two institutions. In spring, Susie J. Silbert, curator of postwar and contemporary glass, served as a juror for Toyama International Glass Exhibition 2021, an international, open-submission triennial that showcases outstanding works of contemporary glass art from around the world. The exhibition will be on view July 10 through October 3, 2021, at the Toyama Glass Art Museum, Japan.

New Glass Now to open at the Renwick Gallery

That’s right, New Glass Now is back—or will be in October. A selection of works from the 2019 exhibition at CMoG will be on view at the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s (SAAM) Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, from October 22, 2021, through March 6, 2022. New Glass Now is the third iteration of a ground-breaking exhibition series. The two prior exhibitions, Glass 1959 and New Glass: A Worldwide Survey in 1979, catalyzed major changes in the glass field. SAAM’s Renwick Gallery hosted New Glass: A Worldwide Survey in 1980, and now represents the first traveling venue for the collection of objects, installations, videos, and performances made by 50 artists working in more than 23 countries. Stay tuned, we are in the early stages of planning some related Member programming in conjunction with the exhibition.

Museum Recognized for Safety and Marketing

The Corning Museum of Glass earned the Environmental Health and Safety Daily Advisor Safety Standout Award for Best Safety Committee. The awards selection committee was very impressed by the Museum’s application materials (they loved Penguin Pierre), the safety committee’s excellent response to COVID-19, and the team’s overall commitment to workplace safety. In addition, the Museum’s 2020 Penguin Pierre Visitation and Safety Campaign earned BRONZE in the Marketing and Promotion category of the 2021 GLAMi (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) Awards by MuseWeb, in addition to a 2021 New York State Tourism Excellence Award.

“These awards are a satisfying reflection of the dedication and creativity of the Museum staff during the past, challenging year,” said Karol Wight, president. “Kudos to everyone who has worked hard to ensure our workplace has remained safe and engaging for our staff and guests.”

Member Preview: 2021 Pumpkin of the Year

For the first time, we’re offering our Members an exclusive first look and opportunity to buy the 2021 Pumpkin of the Year! Made by local artist G Brian Juk, this colorful beauty is inspired by a stunning summer sunrise. The Pumpkin of the Year sells out every year. Visit shops.cmog.org to be among the first to scoop up this gorgeous gourd.
Studio Hosts David Whitehouse Resident

David Nasca participated in a David Whitehouse Research Residency for Artists from May 31 to June 19, 2021, investigating the Blaschka models of glass sea creatures through The Rakow Research Library and the Museum’s collection. As a New York State resident completing his Master of Fine Art program at Cornell University, David met the COVID-19 compliance requirements to proceed with the residency. The David Whitehouse Research Residencies for Artists and Scholars are made possible by funding from Ennion members Daniel P. and Welmoet B. van Kammen.

Annual Artist-in-Residence programs at The Studio provide artists the opportunity to research and experiment with new techniques and subjects in their work. During a month-long stay, Artists-in-Residence are invited to utilize the extensive resources of the Museum’s campus, including The Studio, the collections, and the Rakow Research Library archives. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Nasca residency will be the only one hosted 2021; other previously accepted residencies will take place in 2022.

New this year, The Studio is introducing the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) Residency. BIPOC artists are welcome to apply for this and other Studio residencies.

The application deadline for the 2022 BIPOC Residency is August 31, 2021. Artists can complete the online application at cmog.org/BIPOC-residency. The submission process for all other residencies will resume in 2022 for residencies taking place in 2023.

CMoG Supports National Guard Vaccine Effort

In April, the Museum’s Hot Glass Demo Team hosted representatives from the first National Guard-operated vaccine site in New York State, at Corning Community College—and worked with them to create a special glass project. When Master Sergeant Jason Borghi realized the glass vials that house the COVID-19 vaccine were developed in Corning, he reached out about creating a limited-edition challenge coin to commemorate the mission. To his knowledge, the Museum developed the only glass military challenge coin in existence. The project yielded interest from several local media outlets, and great enthusiasm from the public. We thank the National Guard COVID Response Joint Task Force led by F Company out of Buffalo for their service here in Corning, and for choosing to commemorate their mission by making glass with us.
Two Brilliant Minds:
In Memory of Jane Shadel Spillman & Dr. Robert H. Brill

The Corning Museum of Glass is deeply saddened by the recent passing of two of its longest serving staff members, Jane Shadel Spillman and Dr. Robert H. Brill.

Jane Shadel Spillman (1942–2021)

“As I reflect upon my personal and professional relationship with Jane, one word continues to percolate to the top—generous. By generously sharing her time, scholarship, and expertise she touched many lives and shaped the field of American glass.”

Mary Cheek Mills, former education programs manager

“Jane was a consummate researcher and scholar of the history of the American glass industry. She will be remembered for her enduring scholarship and dedication to this remarkable American art form, for her friendship, wise counsel, and advice, and for the connections that she made for so many of us.”

James Asselstine, president of the Fellows

“I worked with Jane for almost 20 years at The Corning Museum of Glass and there are many things that I remember, from events to acquisitions, challenges, and mysteries. But one trait of hers stands out to me, and that was her enthusiasm. She was selective in what she got excited about, but when it happened it was exciting and contagious.”

Stephen Koob, chief conservator emeritus

“In her 48 years at the Museum, Jane conveyed her enthusiasm for American glass in hundreds of articles and books and spoke at countless seminars (including 36 times at the annual Corning Seminar on Glass, a record). Throughout all this, she displayed a secure grasp of the details of American glassmaking history and shared them with delight, humor, and enthusiasm.”

Dwight Lanmon, former director
Spillman and Dr. Brill worked at the Museum for close to 50 years during very similar tenures: Dr. Brill from 1960 to 2008 and Spillman from 1965 to 2013, together representing the Museum for almost a century.

On paper, these two pioneers of the Museum’s early years focused on very different areas of study. Spillman joined as a research assistant and curator of education before becoming the Museum’s curator of American glass in 1978, while Dr. Brill was hired as a research scientist and served as director of the Museum from 1972 to 1975, leading its recovery from the flood of 1972, before returning to his research on the chemical analysis of historical objects.

But their careers at the Museum were deeply intertwined and shared numerous connections. Both authored scores of books, lectured widely, and served on numerous boards and committees to further the understanding and appreciation for glass. In doing so, they became world-renowned authorities on the art, history, and science of glass.

Individually, their impact on the Museum was extraordinary; collectively, these two brilliant stalwarts were instrumental in establishing the world-class institution we all enjoy today.

Below, friends and colleagues have shared memories of Jane and Dr. Bob.

**Dr. Robert H. Brill (1929–2021)**

“It is always an honor and a privilege to know and work with someone who is a pioneer in their field, and who set the standard for generations to come. The work that Dr. Brill conducted was groundbreaking and shed so much light on our understanding of archaeological glass. Scientists regard him as a giant, and rightly so.”

**Karol Wight, president and executive director**

“Dr. Brill was a pioneer in anticipating just how much we could learn about ancient glass from scientific methods. His ongoing research program established the Museum as a center for scientific research in glass, and he developed relationships with archaeologists, scientists, curators, and glass makers around the world. We wouldn’t know half of what we know about ancient glass without his vision and dedication.”

**Katherine Larson, curator of ancient glass**

“While the breadth and depth of Dr. Brill’s published work are legendary, seeing firsthand the hundreds of boxes of materials containing his research materials takes one’s breath away, and humbles anyone with aspirations to achieve scholarly renown. And yet, meeting with Dr. Brill was anything but intimidating. I greatly appreciated his support and encouragement for my work as I began a new field of study and will always treasure the memory of our conversations.”

**Marvin Bolt, curator emeritus of science and technology**

For more testimonials, visit blog.cmog.org
GATHER EVENTS CALENDAR: JUNE 2021–NOVEMBER 2021

Summer Hours
Open until 7 pm through Labor Day

EVENTS

Active Military Free Admission
May 15–September 6, 2021

Hot Glass Demo Team Live Streams
Bi-weekly demonstrations | Thursdays at 5:30 pm
June 3, June 17, July 1, July 15, July 29, August 12, August 26, 2021

Studio Live Streams
Bi-weekly demonstrations | Wednesdays at 11 am
June 9, June 23, July 7, July 21, August 18, September 1, 2021

Connected by Glass Virtual Event: Corelle
June 24 | 12:30 pm

Connected by Glass Virtual Event:
Rakow Commission Unveiling with artist Anjali Srinivasan
July 2021 | Date & Time TBD

Little Gather
Weekly virtual events for families | Wednesdays at 10 am
July 14, July 21, July 28, August 4, August 11, August 18

Connected by Glass Virtual Event: Glass Pipes
September 2021 | Date & Time TBD

Glass Farmers Market
October 1–11, 2021

59th Annual Seminar on Glass
Virtual conference | October 8–9, 2021

Ennion Celebration
October 20, 2021

Veterans Free Admission
November 1–30, 2021

Just After Thanksgiving Sale
November 26–28, 2021

ON VIEW

In Sparkling Company:
Glass and the Costs of Social Life in Britain During the 1700s
On view through January 2, 2022

Fire and Vine: The Story of Glass and Wine
On view July 3, 2021–December 31, 2022

Dish It: Corelle at 50
On view through February 27, 2022

Blown Away: Season 2
On view through January 2022

Visit cmog.org/events to learn more about these and other upcoming activities