

Dream weaver

Eric Markow and Thom Norris find success with woven glass

ALLISON WILLIAMS
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and Thom Norris have parlayed into a whole enterprise.

ART. You can blow glass and you can stain glass, but weaving it? It's a bizarre prospect, but one that Virginia artists Eric Markow

STARTING OFF as stained glass artists in the early '90s, Markow and Norris attempted to add texture to their already colorful



Markow, left, and Norris work out of a studio in Falls Church, Va.

"It's like the intersection of texture and color"
Thom Norris

glass works. They ended up dabbling in fused glass, a medium somewhere between hot, or blown, glass and colder stained glass. By carefully manipulating the fused glass, they were able to work it into a woven pattern that looks like the knobby, homespun work of a craftsman — only in glass instead of yarn.

While blown glass is heated to a molten level, Markow and Norris' unique process doesn't get that hot. "[Blown glass] is like honey,

whereas ours is more like taffy, able to keep its shape," says Norris.

The process took close to five years to develop and its details are a closely held trade secret. "The glass is in and out of the ovens four or five times to get it finished right," says Markow of the labor-intensive technique. "It cooks upwards of 100-200 hours." As a result, the duo only produces about 80 to 100 pieces a year — leaving

them with a

four- to six-month waiting list.

THE BOWLS, triptych images and visually striking skulls (with cast-glass horns, above) they create are impressive, hefty pieces. Eventually, simple weaves evolved into more

complicated patterns, like herringbone. "It's like the intersection of texture and color," says Norris. "You're able to get the nice tactile feel; it invites a person to touch it and feel it, get closer to it."

After 13 years together, the pair doesn't see an end to their line of woven glass sculptures. Recently they began a line of nest babies, small bird nests in a variety of colors that hold tiny cast glass eggs, and created a backstory for each of the many styles.

"I think it's the collaboration between the two of us that allows us to create something great," says Norris. "There is a market for glass, and there will always be a market for it. It has so much to offer to the buyer as far as color and texture and light."

Markow & Norris works are available at:
www.wovenglass.com

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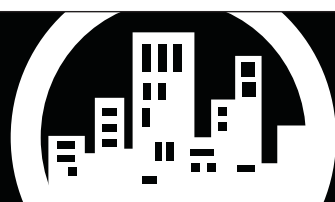
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