

Seasons greetings

US glass artists, Eric Markow and Thom Norris, describe the execution of their complex, hand-woven glass pieces as “a marriage of science, art and alchemy”.



They say the techniques and concepts they have honed over the past decade are inspired by “the inexplicably complex framework of the natural world”. Working under the brand name, Markow and Norris, the pair produces up to 60 glass pieces a year – intense when you consider that each piece requires extensive planning, execution and more than 100 hours of kiln time.

The partners initially collaborated on organically inspired stained glass window commissions but, as fusing techniques became more popular, they began experimenting with strips of glass, weaving them together to produce colourful, textured pieces that are now collected by glass lovers around the world. Pieces are aptly named Confetti, Fire Petal, Spring to Autumn, Ocean Wave and Ruby Magic Carpet, among other things. The craftsmanship is outstanding, as is the pair’s ability to capture various seasons and moods.

Markow and Norris are represented by more than a dozen galleries in the US, and last year won the coveted National Capital Art Glass Guild award for Excellence in Glass.

See: www.wovenglass.com

Heart of glass

“It is possible to legitimise the use of Aboriginal iconography on glass surfaces, by explaining that dot painting was originally done in sand, and glass is essentially sand,” says artist Sam Juparulla, whose glass coolamons, wall pieces and vases also communicate their Aboriginality through shape and symbolism.

For the past six years Juparulla has been working in close association with glass artist and entrepreneur, Paul Sanders, in an innovative venture called Bonegilla Glass, based in Albury, New South Wales.

Before becoming a full-time artist, Juparulla studied archaeology at the Australian National University, with his research focusing on the manufacture of glass tools, or ‘Glass in the Aboriginal tool kit’. It was Paul Sanders – who holds a postgraduate diploma in design from Monash University, and a BA in visual arts from Charles Sturt University, Riverina – who supplied materials for this project, and it was this project that led him to glass-making.

Today the pair work in a 50/50 partnership arrangement, with Sanders increasingly focusing on the business side, developing retail lines with partner, Summer Matthews. Bonegilla Glass also collaborates with other Aboriginal artists and is increasingly taking on architectural commissions, with a huge piece recently mounted in the prayer room of the Santa Sabina College in Strathfield, New South Wales. While both Juparulla and Sanders appreciate the fact that the market is hungry for Aboriginal art, they take their responsibilities to the culture very, very seriously.

Indeed, Juparulla, a fully initiated Wati man from the central and western desert region south of Alice Springs, regularly travels back to the country to maintain his links with the Arrernte, Luritja, Pitjantatjarra and Yankuntjatjarra people, while also carrying out his ceremonial duties as a Wati. Bonegilla Glass is represented by Axis Modern Art and Ladner & Fell Gallery in Melbourne, and Hogarth Galleries and the Glass Artists’ Gallery in Sydney.

Images by Mark Donaldson Photography. All works available from the Glass Artists’ Gallery in Glebe, New South Wales.

