

GLASS STUDIO HIGHLIGHTS

Meet Gracie and Margaret; they have both been coming to the studio since 2011. We asked these two artists to answer a few questions about their medium, art background, and inspirations.



Gracie DiGrande

Born and raised in San Francisco. I have been interested in art since childhood. Art was my favorite subject in school and during my school years I experimented with many different art mediums. Originally I aspired to have a career in art, but life took me down a different path. Art has remained my outlet for my creative expression, which is why I love to work, learn, and grow at Sharon Art Studio.



Margaret Bidgainberry

Native San Franciscan. Late bloomer in the art world. Working in stained glass since 2011 when my youngest child left for college. That prompted my motto "It's all about me now."



Image credit: Gracie DiGrande

Interview with Gracie DiGrande & Margaret Bidgainberry

Glass students at Sharon Art Studio

by **Cassandra Sechler**

FOSAS Program & Design Associate

How did you discover your talent for glass art?

MB: I had no idea I had any talent for glass art. Being a dental assistant I was familiar with handling the tools used for glass making. They're not so different from tools in a dental lab.

GD: Glass art has always fascinated me and I wanted to see if I might be good at it.

Who were your early influences?

GD: Early influences for me would be the church windows and various other stained glass windows I would see in my neighborhood or around the city.

Tell us about your glass experience; what inspired you to start working in glass?

MB: I've always loved stained glass, blown glass, any kind of glass art. I was always too busy with family and work to pursue any type of class. Things happen for a reason, the catalog was in my mailbox and I was ready for the next phase of life.

GD: I find stained glass windows to be works of art and when I look at them I would think to myself "How did they do that?"

What has working with glass taught you?

MB: Glass making is a process. There is a beginning and an end, with a whole lot of middle. You have to take it one piece at a time. Glass cannot be rushed.

GD: For me working with glass has taught me patience. It is a medium that will not be rushed.

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interview continued...

What is your favorite thing about glass as an art medium?

MB: I guess I would say the infinite possibilities available. Color, texture, thickness, and lighting can change what a piece of glass can look like from morning until evening.

GD: My favorite things about glass as an art medium are the vibrant colors and unusual textures available.

Where do you find inspiration for your compositions? What kind of themes interest you?

MB: I've given many pieces as gifts so I think about what the recipient likes. If I see a photo I like or something in nature, I ponder the possibility of turning it into glass. I've incorporated a sand dollar into a glass piece. And of course, where would we be without GOOGLE!

GD: Inspiration is everywhere for me. The challenge is translating the inspiration into glass.



Image credits: Gracie DiGrande (Left), Margaret Bidgainberry (Right)

Are there any particular emotions or feelings you hope your pieces evoke?

MB: Just an appreciation. We all look at art differently.

GD: I hope my glass creation will make you smile and have you think "How did she do that?"

What's the most difficult thing about working with glass; what's the most rewarding?

MB: FRUSTRATION is probably the most difficult for me. When a piece won't fit or breaks repeatedly, I don't mind the intensity. You become very focused. The most rewarding is the finished, soldered, polished piece. It's your own personal masterpiece each and every time.

GD: The most difficult thing about working with glass is not cutting your fingers!

Any words of wisdom to aspiring artists who want to pursue glass as an art medium?

MB: Take your time. Listen to your instructors. Ask questions. There is an artist in all of us. Most of all, enjoy!



Above Image Credit: Margaret Bidgainberry

Interested in learning more about glass? Why not take a class! See pages 31-33, and sign up for a class this winter!