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Cover: 'Earthborn' - Sand
casted glass by Koen
Vanderstukken
Above: Andrew Kuntz and Tara
Marsh playing Santa and
Santa's helper at the 2005
Goblet Exchange Party at
Glen Williams Glass studio.
Right: In the studio with Koen
Vanderstukken (middle).
Bottom right: Original
portable studio set up out-
side at St. Lawrence College,
Brockville 1975. The studio
was built by Clark Guettel.

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A Brief History of Glass Education in Canada

By Julia and Yolande Krueger

The investigation of the history of one's medium is important to not only enrich one's own practice but to historically situate it. Unfortunately, for the Canadian glass student, this is next to impossible. There is only one major reference regarding the history of studio glass and glass education in Canada: Rosalyn J. Morrison's *Canadian Glassworks 1970-1990*.¹ Morrison's examination is now 16 years out of date and lacks a combination of theory and history. Therefore a re-examination and update of glass education in Canada is in order. Owing to the lack of written material available, this paper relies heavily on e-mail correspondences, telephone and personal interviews with glass teachers across Canada.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GLASS IN CANADA

The history of glass is thousands of years old, and discussing its entire history is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, skipping ahead a few thousand years, the focus will narrow to Canada. Glass was first produced in Canada in 1839 in the Mallorytown Glass Works in Ontario.² Between 1840 and 1860, five Canadian glass factories made window glass and bottles in Quebec and Ontario.³ By 1900, machines were introduced to aid with the production of Canadian glass. Molten glass was mechanically pressed into a mould by a plunger. The Canadian Museum of Civilization argues that, by 1937, glass production by hand had ended in Canada.⁴

THE STUDIO GLASS MOVEMENT

The term "studio" can be traced back as early as 1923 and also to Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*.⁵ A new interest for handmade glass soon developed in Canada which became the studio glass movement of today. According to Morrison, it developed in "the 1960s, (around) American glass renaissance and by the centuries-long European glass making traditions that were featured at Expo '67, Montreal."⁶ In discussion with Clark Guettel, the founder of the Haliburton School of the Art's glass department and an alumnus of the first glass class in Canada, he explains, "In the studio glass movement, the artist is the maker and the designer. Remember that during the beginning of the studio glass movement, the pieces were limited to the artist's skill but enhanced by creative imagination."⁷ The objects are made in a more private-type studio rather than in a factory. The glass is not bound to the stereotypical notions of function but instead can be experimental. Studio glass also involves sculptural glass and demands that the maker be able to discuss his or her work. Sandra Alföldy states in her "Introduction" to *Crafting Identity* that it is "no longer enough to simply be a proficient craftsperson. One [has] to be able to contextualize...as well as manipulate."⁸

Studio glass in Canada is younger than the movement in the United States.⁹ The birth of the American studio glass move-

ment is credited to Harvey Littleton. Littleton was the son of the director of research at Corning Glassworks, New York.¹⁰ He received an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan in the late 1930s and then became a successful potter and teacher. In March 1962, the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio held a workshop on their grounds to demonstrate glass blowing led by Littleton. They used primitive homemade tools, and the pieces made were "garage art."¹¹ Littleton's Internet biography states the following:

*It was in that seminar that Littleton introduced the idea that glass could be mixed and melted, blown and worked in the studio by the artist. Up to that time it was widely believed that glass objects could only be made in the highly structured, mass-produced world of the glass industry where the labour of making glass is divided between designers and skilled craftsmen.*¹²

By 1964, Littleton established the first undergraduate glass course in the USA at the University of Wisconsin.¹³

It is important to note the influence the USA had on Canadian glass and glass education. Not only were there glass programs in the United States, but American teachers would eventually come to Canada to teach and give workshops while Canadians interested in glass would travel to the USA.¹⁴ The United States has a history of supporting craft within the educational system. For example, in the late 1940s, the United States passed the GI Bill which allowed free college education to any ex-soldier. This, in turn, produced an enormous growth in terms of craft education at the college level in the United States.¹⁵ Well-known ceramists such as Peter Voulkos (1924-2002) and Rudio Autio took advantage of the GI Bill.¹⁶ More research beyond the scope of this article needs to be done to examine if any American glass artist(s) took advantage of the GI Bill. Metcalf explains the ex-soldier's interest in craft:

*Many of these ex-soldiers were deeply suspicious of the regimented life in the armed services and were looking for an honourable vocation in which they could remain relatively independent and be their own boss. In addition, those soldiers with some visual sophistication were stimulated by the ferment in postwar artistic culture. This was the era of "free art" and "free jazz,"...In this atmosphere, craft work offered a way to participate in the new visual culture without having to starve: a marriage of art, self-determination and business.*¹⁷

Guettel stated in an April 10, 2006 interview that while he was still living in the United States, he began to make glass and jewellery because it was exciting, seductive, immediate and easy to sell.¹⁸

GLASS PROGRAMS IN CANADA

The glass schools highlighted in this article are schools that offer some type of official certification. There are other institutions in Canada that offer glass classes such as Red Deer

College. The glass program at Red Deer offers classes in the summer taught by teachers from all over the world. Robert Held taught the first classes there in 1979-1980 and it was designed as part of the "Series" program for continuing education.¹⁹

Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning in Ontario has the oldest glass program in Canada. The program was started in 1969 by Held.²⁰ Held was born in California and received an MFA in ceramics from the University of Southern California.²¹ In 1967, Held became the head of ceramics at Sheridan.²² That same year, he participated in a glass workshop with Mark Pieser at the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina.²³ It was from this two-week workshop in the United States that Held gained the excitement and enthusiasm to start the first glass program in Canada:

After returning from Penland, I went looking for glass blowing tools and equipment. I thought that you could just look up some in the yellow pages. How young and foolish I was. I looked in the yellow pages for glass and the first places were Consumers Glass and next Dominion Glass. That was it...So I called the first one - Consumers Glass and told them that I wanted to start a glass blowing studio at Sheridan. Their engineering department were all German techs. and knew about glass blowing from the 'old country'...They built the first glass tank at Sheridan and found some old pipes...the first annealer was an old English front loading ceramics kiln.

All this was in the 'kiln room' at the Lorne Park campus, next to the updraft kiln I built...[After an incident with the Fire Department], I was able to negotiate a compromise [with the director of the school]. If I could find a building for under \$5,000 that could be built away from the current building, I could keep the non-existent glass blowing program. I searched and searched and found the "Quonset" building. My budget for the entire first year of the glass blowing program was \$200.²⁴

Held hired American-born, glass-educated Karl Schantz in 1974. Held states, "Karl brought techniques and a style that were very different from mine."²⁵ In 1975, Schantz developed the cold working facilities at Sheridan.²⁶ Held left Sheridan in 1977, and Schantz became the head from 1977-1979. Daniel Crichton (1946-2002), a graduate of the Sheridan glass pro-

gram, was hired in 1978 and became the head from 1979-2002.²⁷ In 1988, the program moved from the "Quonset" in Mississauga to an approximately 6,000 square foot facility designed by Crichton on the Oakville campus.²⁸ Jeanne Farrero has been the most recent head of Sheridan's program, 2002-2004. Brad Sherwood is the acting head until December 2006.

Today, Sheridan offers a three-year diploma in glass. There are approximately twenty students per year. Kevin Lockau, a former casting and cold working teacher at Sheridan, states the program has an emphasis on glass blowing, but Sheridan also teaches casting and has a separate hot casting furnace.²⁹

The second oldest glass program in Canada is located at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. This program was founded by Gilles Désaulniers. Désaulnier received an MFA from the Catholic University of Washington, DC in 1966 on the topic of mixing colour by subtraction of light.³⁰ According to Morrison, Désaulnier was so inspired by the Czechoslovakian glass displayed at Expo '67 that he enrolled in courses in Prague taught by Libensky.³¹ In 1968, a board was preparing for the beginnings of a university in Trois-Rivières. They hired Désaulnier who proposed a fibre and glass program for the university.³² He then studied in Prague from 1969-1971, and upon his return to Québec, he set up a cold working facility at the university.³³ By 1975, Désaulnier had also built a hot shop there.

Unlike Sheridan, the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières offers a Fine Arts degree where a student can focus on glass after taking two core courses on the subject. The program is sculpture based and has an average of twenty-four students attending the core courses and three to four focusing on glass in their final year.³⁴ Désaulnier retired in 1996 where upon Jean-Paul Martel took over as head.³⁵

Norman Faulkner founded the Alberta College of Art and Design's glass program in 1975.³⁶ In 1973, Faulkner received a diploma in ceramics from Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD) and an MA in 1986 in glass from the Royal College of Art in London, England.³⁷ Faulkner attended a workshop with Mark Pieser in 1972 at Sheridan.³⁸ At the time, Faulkner

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Robert Held in the "early days" in the Quonset at Sheridan (note the fuzzy walls).



ACAD hotshop in September 1975.

was the ceramics technician at Sheridan. He returned to Calgary and built his own glass studio before he was hired at ACAD. He was hired as a ceramics instructor because he could work not only in ceramics but also in glass.³⁹ Faulkner brought his own equipment to ACAD to help get the program started. Glass was first blown in 1975 at the school. Casting began in 1983.

Today, the hot shop is larger. ACAD offers a four-year BFA program in glass. There are twelve students per year. The program is not designed to train factory style production blowing, but instead is experimental, broad based and allows students to focus on their own interests. It is a very diverse program that offers both blowing and casting. Marty Kaufmann was head from 2004-2006, and Tyler Rock is currently the head of glass at ACAD.⁴⁰

There were two glass programs in Ontario that no longer exist. Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario offered a glass program from 1971 until the mid 1980s.⁴¹ The Ontario College of Art's (now OCAD) glass program was in existence from 1980 - 1997. John Paul Robinson, a glass artist now teaching at Espace Verre, was introduced to glass while studying at Georgian and worked as the glass technician for Ontario College of Art's (OCA) glass program from 1982 until its demise in 1997.⁴²

Schantz was the founder and head of the program at OCA. Schantz was born and educated in the USA. He has both a BFA and an MFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology.⁴³ He also completed an artist residency there where he worked in glass. In 1974, Schantz attended the World Craft Council Conference in Toronto.⁴⁴ He used Sheridan's portable equipment to demonstrate glass blowing.⁴⁵

In 1981, Schantz opened OCA's glass department.⁴⁶ Eight to ten students were selected after a successful interview process. It was a four-year diploma program. Schantz states that the program was geared more towards a fine art approach to glass compared to a craft approach.⁴⁷ The program encouraged experimentation and also had the students create architectural and design based works. Francois Houdé (1950-1993) and Peter Zips taught at OCA.⁴⁸

Centre des Métiers de Verre du Québec/Espace Verre was founded in 1988 by Houdé and Ronald Labelle.⁴⁹ In order to receive grants from the government, Espace Verre was created as a make-work program for the unemployed.⁵⁰ However, by 1989, Espace Verre started to offer a Diploma of College Studies (DEC) in fine arts with a glass option in partnership with the Cégep du Vieux-Montréal. The first group of students to graduate from the DEC program did so in 1992.⁵¹

Today, there are approximately thirty students enrolled in the first, second and third years.⁵² Susan Edgerly, an instructor at Espace Verre, states, "As there is no studio head, there is no one vision of the direction of the program."⁵³ Espace Verre has the facilities to offer students the opportunity to try blowing, kiln working, pate de verre, glass painting, flame working and neon.⁵⁴

In 1993, Edgerly created the "Fusion: Transitional Workshop Program."⁵⁵ Graduates of the DEC program have the opportu-



Jim Norton blowing glass as a student at ACAD in 1979. Norton currently teaches at ACAD.

nity to continue working in glass at reduced studio rates with administrative and technical support.

The youngest glass program in Canada is offered through Sir Sandford Fleming College at the Haliburton campus in Ontario. In the summer of 1988, the first glass classes were taught through Fleming College.⁵⁶ Guettel was hired to teach classes in the summer using his own portable glass studio. In 2004, the Haliburton campus was built and included a glass studio.

Haliburton offers a fourteen-week intensive glass program. At the end of the fourteen weeks, students receive a certificate, and the credits can be used towards an arts diploma through Fleming College.⁵⁷ Because of the short time frame of the program, students mainly blow glass. Last year, there were twelve students in the program.

PEDAGOGICAL THEORY AND CANADIAN GLASS

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian writer who wrote on Education. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he outlines two forms of education: the banking system and the problem-posing system of education. Freire explains that in the banking system, it is the teacher's task to "fill" the empty vessel-like students with information. This information, which is often detached from reality, is memorized without question and repeated without really understanding.⁵⁸ The problem-posing system of education embodies communication. Both the teacher and student learn from each other and are jointly responsible for the act of learning.⁵⁹ Peter Dormer also describes the banking system of education in his chapter, "The Language and Practical Philosophy of Craft", as "instruction" because it is based on a right and wrong way of doing things, and it is non-negotiable.⁶⁰ Dormer describes the problem-posing system of education as teaching.⁶¹

A similarity can be seen between teaching styles of various glass instructors throughout Canada. When asked about the two systems of education, Faulkner states, "I think each student should be in a state of posing their own evolving problem sets. The nature of the glass process tends to rule out the straight ahead "banking" system, and this fact tends to ensure that both faculty as well as students are in a constant state of learning."⁶² Laura Donefer, a teacher at Espace Verre, states that she tries to help students find their creative voice through experimentation.⁶³ Edgerly describes her teaching style as "one of encouraging the students to reach far into their uniqueness and creativity, to boldly go where no man or woman has gone before, to really search for what interests them, what delights them, what concerns them, and to try and translate that into their work."⁶⁴ Lockau creates projects from questions he asks himself, and he believes that everyone comes to class

to learn, including the teacher.⁶⁵ Robinson explains his teaching style: "I try and get students to think creatively and to get excited about their own work. Ideas are the hard part; techniques can be learned or created."⁶⁶ Martel states that his approach to teaching emphasises the intention and the composition over technique.⁶⁷ Guettel tries to get the students to understand what glass is and how glass speaks, inspires and serves them. He iterates, "The only rules for blowing glass are safety rules. Otherwise, there are basic fundamentals and guidelines that can move you along quickly."⁶⁸ From these examples, one can conclude that the majority approach the teaching of glass from a position that is very close to the problem-posing system of education.

Faulkner makes a good point by explaining that the problem-posing system of education works well with the nature of glass. Because studio glass in Canada is approximately 35 years old and only approximately 40 years old in the USA, it isn't that long ago that everything was "unknown", and there were no rules and guidelines to follow. Dormer defines a discipline as a body of knowledge to be learned that has standards of excellence to be obtained.⁶⁹ There was no discipline known as "studio glass" before Littleton's experiments. Therefore there was no body of knowledge or standards of excellence with which to compare. The problem-posing system of education would be the only way to approach learning studio glass in the early days. Therefore, the teachers teaching today at schools in Canada all learned glass through addressing problems and communicating with others in the glass community. There were few "all-knowing" teachers.⁷⁰

However, studio glass has developed into a discipline with standards of excellence to be obtained and a body of knowledge available for reference. Dormer and the glass technician at ACAD, Mark Gibeau, explain that sometimes learning rules is a good thing and will help the novice or student to not feel frustrated.⁷¹ Guettel also makes the same point in his quote above, explaining that rules can move one along quickly.⁷² One can only imagine being asked to obtain a level of excellence without being given basic knowledge such as the annealing temperatures of glass. If one did not memorize the annealing temperatures from knowledgeable teachers and instead had to figure them out for oneself as they did in the early 1960s, one would spend the majority of his or her time at school doing annealing experiments rather than working on pieces.

From this investigation of the history of glass education in Canada, glass artists can contextualize their practice and also the writings of theorists such as Metcalf, Dormer and Friere. It is the aim of this article to not only update Morrison's *Canadian Glassworks 1970-1990*, but to also create a body of knowledge for Canadian glass students to reference and use to historically situate their work and educational experience. More research in all areas of Canadian glass is needed. In addition, the relationship between ceramics and glass is an area yet to be extensively examined in Canada. With a larger span of reference material from which to learn, glass students, glass artists and the general public in Canada have much to gain.

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