

New dimensions in art glass



BY ANN LARSON

A TWO-GENERATION TEAM IS CREATING POWERFUL AND BOLD STATEMENTS

One of the most ancient materials used and created by mankind, glass is a mysterious substance. Made by melting sand, it transforms from opacity to translucence or transparency. Like a super-cooled liquid, glass captures light and has an inner glow, which has made it a perfect medium for the creation of art.

In their studio west of El Jebel, Lee Lyon and Jacqueline Spiro have taken art glass into a new realm. Using techniques that predate recorded history, they pour melted glass into large molds to cast glass walls, doors, windows, furniture and free standing sculpture. It is the sheer size of their creations that is so powerful and bold.

Spiro and Lyon produce large cast-glass panels, one to four inches thick, for use as interior and exterior decorative and architectural elements. They carve

out designs in their exclusive resin-bonded sand molds to create relief decorations on the glass surface.

"The thing about our glass that is so different is that we can work in any shape at all and any size. We are only limited by our equipment. Also, every step of our process is done by hand," says Spiro.

The development of their process that takes art glass from the small and delicate to the large and dramatic came out of a serendipitous meeting of two generations. A successful businessman who retired early and moved to Aspen in 1978, Lee Lyon began a new career as a studio ceramic artist that lasted for two decades.

"I had a commission for a clay wall for Rupert Murdoch's home in Beverly Hills," says Lyon. "He wanted more color, so I used broken windshield glass.



One-of-a-kind glass doors make a bold statement.



Daniel Boyer

To learn more about glass and color, I went to Pilchuck Glass School. What I learned there made me decide to become involved in glass and I got rid of all my clay.”

He now needed an assistant and was introduced to Spiro, who had recently moved to Aspen after a short stint working in New York. She was looking for a new direction in life.

Together, Lyon and Spiro became a team and discovered the resin-bonded sand mold process that has enabled them to create bold glass pieces that have been shown in solo exhibitions and are installed in private homes and public spaces throughout the country.

A herd of buffalo stand beneath a huge, intricately etched sun on a lobby wall in Denver. Circular and angular shapes meld together perfectly on an eight-panel door at a private residence in the Roaring Fork Valley. A hummingbird looks real but is instead cast glass in a window detail at an Aspen home.


When Mary and Patrick Scanlan were designing a new home in Woody Creek, they chose Spiro Lyon Glass to create doors for the entry and master bedroom.

“Their glass fit the design, the art and whole style of our rustic contemporary house. They worked with us and our architects,” says Mary Scanlan. “The glass



doors make a statement. They are different and unique and we like that aspect of it. Everyone loves them.”

The team is currently engaged in a nine-month project for a home in Iowa. The three-piece, 20-foot-long and 8-foot-tall sculptural wall commission is an example of the immensity of their work.

In a blend of generations, Spiro and Lyon have created a new direction in the world of art glass, bringing this ancient art to new heights and dimensions. 

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Though the artists work mostly on commissions, Spiro Lyon Glass shows smaller pieces of sculpture at Sardella Fine Art in Aspen

