



Marie McGee editor/591-2300

Thursday, April 14, 1988 O&E

(F)1E

# State stands tall in world of glass

By Manon Mollgaard  
special writer

**A**S ANY glassblower WILL tell you, glass is the end product of the fusion of a siliceous matter such as powdered flint or fine sand, with an alkali, salt or metallic oxide.

It is also the stuff of which dreamlike forms are made.

April is the month when glass collectors pour into this metro area in droves to seek the quality of art glass that has made Michigan the foremost U.S. market for both American and European glass.

So successful has this venture been, started 16 years ago by partners, Ferdinand (Ferd) Hampson and Tom Boone of the Habatat Gallery in Lathrup Village, and with other galleries following suit, that Governor James Blanchard designated April as Michigan Glass Month for the eighth successive year.

No less than 19 galleries, museums and libraries, including one library and four galleries statewide, are showing art glass this year.

**FOR HAMPSON**, the combination of art studies and business management at Wayne State University, plus an eye for recognizing the potential of glass as art, has created an American Dream. (There are two other Habatats, in Miami and Chicago).

"The kind of artwork you see today wasn't around 10 years ago," he said, "but artists have learned to fuse, cast and slump and experiment with new techniques; they've discovered that glass can be cut like bronze. The versatility of glass is tremendous, and we are still only at the beginning."

True indeed. Every conceivable variation of glass artistry is to be found at the Habatat and in other



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Cast glass work by John Lewis is light blue on a deep-green base. It is part of the Habatat Gallery exhibit at the Triatria Building, Farmington Hills.

large exhibitions such as that of the Robert Kidd Gallery, Birmingham.

**GLASS**, IT seems, can be formed into figurative, abstract and outdoor sculptures. It can be clear, opaque, cracked, corrugated, layered, pointed, beaded, wrapped, made to look like stone or ceramics, and is often combined with other materials such as metals, wood and found objects.

Perhaps the first place to embark on a glass odyssey in the northern suburbs is the Donna Jacobs Gallery in Birmingham, where the ninth annual glass show is in progress with more than 100

examples of small and exquisite vessels, bowls and bottles dated 1400 B.C. to 6th Century A.D.

Many of these are from the far-flung regions of the Roman Empire (a few are Islamic) and were used to hold perfumes or cosmetics. Some were made by the ancient core-formed or open form (free-blown) processes. Several have acquired gloriously iridescent over-layings or skins, caused by age and interaction with soil, air or water.

Moving on to modern art glass featuring one-person shows, the Yaw Gallery on Woodward (a few doors down from Jacob's) exhibits 12 equally small and delicately formed cylinders, some beaker-shaped and others with a lip, by German artist Isgard Moje Wohlgenuth.

**THESE ARE PAINTED** in a painstaking method with metallic oxides dissolved in essential oils and the patterns are inspired by both the bold and muted motifs of Japanese kimonos. As in the Jacobs collection, the smallest vessel is approximately 2 1/4 inches and the largest 6 by 3 inches.

At Iona & Gallery of Farmington Hills are nine irregularly edged and beautifully crafted bowl and plate forms by Michigan artist, John Steiner. These incorporate both strong and pastel colors in a graduated, swirling motion. Steiner, who has an master's of fine arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, is an instructor of industrial design at the Center for Creative Studies.

**AS FOR** the giant exhibits, the Kidd has around 200 works by more than 50 artists. The Habatat has some 400 objects by around 100 artists housed in two locations — the gallery proper in Lathrup Village and the ultra-modern Triatria office complex in Farmington Hills.

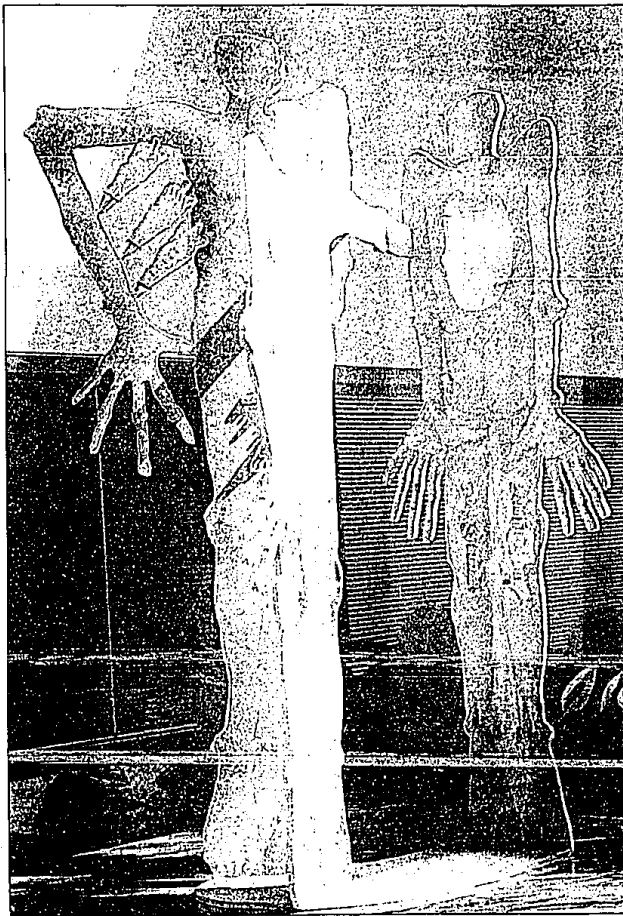
An exciting, lively and often playful show at the Kidd including well-known and up-and-coming American and Canadian artists is jam-packed with works occupying two floors.

Some of the winners here are Detroit's Paul Webster's layered sculptures of cracked glass painted in cake-icing colors, David Hopper's many-dimensional carnival figures enclosed in clear glass, tornado-shaped bowls by Kathleen Mulcahy, the seven-foot-high fun sculptures by Kevin Lockau constructed with telephone poles and glass, and Fred di Frenzi's Neo Post Pre-Raphaelite Biblical figures painted on thick glass with glowing colors.

**OUTSTANDING** are Robert Palusky's figures and his graceful, sensitively patterned and painted sphere.

As expected, and as a grand finale, the Habatat's 16th annual and second international exhibition is aglow with work by top American and European artists.

Some of the memorable works are Dale Chihuly's flowing, sensual lines in open shell or flower forms,



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer



"A Soldier's Thoughts," constructed glass 18 inches high by Robert Palusky, is at Robert Kidd Gallery of Birmingham. Below is a work from the Landscape Series by John Steiner at Iona & Gallery of Farmington Hills.

John Kuhn's paneled window in glass and metal with cut, polished and fused inset scenarios, Toots Zynsky's canes of glass, layered and slumped into form and Steven Weinberg's magical "ice palace" shapes inside "ice cube" glass.

Standing outside the gallery is one of Michigan artist Herb Babcock's dramatic abstract sculptures of metal, base and metal-lacquered, polished cubes of burgundy glass. Inside is one of his patterned glass discs with a metal structure from the "Shelter Series."

**BABCOCK TEACHES** glass design at the Center for Creative Studies and is exhibiting work in six other locations during Michigan Glass Month.

Hampson mentioned that less than one percent of artists who apply are accepted, but for the first time, Habatat is exhibiting artists from outside its own stable. One of these is Carol Sharpe, whose sculptures from found objects reveal ingenuity and a nice sense of humor.

"American glass artists are number one," said Hampson, "and Czech artists rate second." Fine work from Czechoslovakia includes a stunning abstract sculpture in heavy burnished, deep amber glass by husband and wife team, Jaroslava Brychtova and Stanislav Libensky.

**A DELICATE SCULPTURE** by Swedish artist Ann Wolff, with painted faces on discs with long, thin stalks, somewhat resembles Picasso's "La Femme-Fleur" portrait of Françoise Gilot.

The elegant Triatria lobby with its glass roof, massed plants and daylight makes a perfect stage setting for Habatat's larger sculptures and glass furniture.

Locations are: Donna Jacobs Gallery, Ltd., 574 N. Woodward Ave., Birmingham; Yaw Gallery, 550 N. Woodward, Birmingham; Iona & Gallery, Orchard Lake Rd., Hunter's Square Mall, Farmington Hills; Robert Kidd Gallery, 107 Townsend, Birmingham; Habatat Galleries, 28235 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village and 3225 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills.

All of these gallery shows continue through April.



Larger-than-life cast glass-and-wood figures (above) by Leslie Hawk are in the Habatat exhibit at Triatria of Farmington Hills. At left, at the same location is a glass sculpture by Danny Perkins in a rainbow of colors. Below is a selection of ancient glass on display at Donna Jacobs Gallery of Birmingham.

