New Horizons

Habatat Galleries brings world of glass to Birmingham

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN STATE WRITER

After 31 years of showing contemporary studio glass, Perdinand Hampson speaks as passionately as ever about the art medium. A few minutes carlier he was directing workers who were putting the finishing touches on his new space in

muches on list new space in Birmingham. Inbatat Galleries remains a leader in glass art because of Hampson's never ending quest to introduce the wonderful world of glistening sculptures and wall art to the masses. The West Bloomfield resident is always looking for new ways to showcase internationally recognized as well as emerging artists. Glass collectors travel from around the world to view his annual survey known as the International.

Here in Habatat Galleries'

his annual survey known as the international. Here in Habant Galleries International. Here in Habant Galleries Brimingham location moveable walls will transform the gallery. Weekly mini-exhibits, major monthly shows and foot traffic to view them are all part of his marketing strutey. A lower level running under Habata and a series of businesses on the block could eventually house the International every April but for now the work of Dalc Chibuly, Lucio Bubacco, Richard Ritter, Emily Brock, Mary Shaffer, and Dan Dailey shine in the well-lit 2,000 street-level space which opened July 18. It was only a matter of time before Hampson ended up opening a gallery in the heart of downtown Birmingham. The high ceilings and combination of artificial and natural light creates an elegant atmosphere. It's been a long journey from opening his first gallery in opening his first gallery in

Dearborn in 1971. Subsequent moves to Lathrup Village and Farmington Hills kept him searching for the perfect location. Several years ago, he envisioned a Michigan version of New York City's Soho arts district in Pontiae but it never materialized so a year ago he moved the headquarters and gallery once more - this time to Royal Oak. Over the years, he's added locations in Boca Raton, Pla., Chicago and Great Barrington, Mass.

I always wanted to be in Birmingham but I couldn't find a space I could afford for the large shows like the International," said Hampson. We tried to make Pontiae an arts center but found in Birmingham too difficult to compete with. Then I had this idea of a warehouse gallery not being located in a commercial retull area. I found a building in Royal Oak that I loved! But Hampson never gave up on the Birmingham dream.

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I locked at a space just down the street then Sept. It stopped me until I saw this space in January and became very excit. Said Hampson. I thought the space was spectacular. You can walk in and enxision how it a right even though it is not a huge gallery; it's an ideal scale. I plan to show three pieces of an artist work in Birmingham then take clients to the warehouse in Royal Oak to see more. Hampson didn't always show only contemporary studio glass movement, and a young man named Dale Chilulu,



Air bubbles rise like musical notes from the red cello in this glass work by Janusz Walentynowicz.

or Janusz Matentynowicz.

Back then it was glass, wood, cemndes, painting. By the mid 70s I started noticing very good glass artists with no place to show. We began doing our annual national glass exhibits and started offering these artists in one person exhibits. By the end of the 70s I became more impressed by what was happening with new techniques being explored that opened up all types of avenues. We started gaining a national reputation for showing these artists and by 1979 decided to show only glass. "It was a difficult decision. Only 15 percent of sales came

1979 decided to show only glass.
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Only 15 percent of sales came
from glass. It was a real leap of
fitth, it took a year to make the
decision. These arritists really
needed help. We had a purpose
and a mission. My dream was to
develop and show important
artists making a significant contribution to our culture.

Hampson continues to do
that by fenturing artists like
Janusz Walentynowicz who
combines casting techniques
with reverse painting on glass to
create portraits of cellists. Air
bubbles rise like notes from the
creater portraits of cellists. Air
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creater portraits of cellists. Air
bubbles rise like notes from the
cred instrument played by one
woman. Cello and White Dress
focuses on a fenale musician
with blue hair. Embedded in
clear glass, this sensitive wall
piece captures the cellist at
work, ber delicate fingers on the
strings. Walentynowicz fools the
opy into thinking glass is
alabaster in a sculpture of a cellist shown on a podestal at the
front of the gallery. Hampson
probably relates most to A
Matter of Faith, a sculpture featuring a faucet protruding from
an oversize snowball. A puddle
of water stands at the base.



Ferdinand and Kathy Hampson show off their newest gallery in Birmingham

Nearby, Mary Shaffer alumps clear flowing glass over the edge of a column. Toots Zynsky melds colors to together in large bowls. Emily Brock takes the viewer into miniature worlds using a combination of lampworking and casting technique. Natural light shines through the Chiluly's in the window where passersby stop to ponder Dan Dalley's Dog Parguart vessel. Surreal circus performers with leads – half-wolf, half- man serve as handles in another Dailey sculpture. But stop and

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see for yourself.

"I developed an early infatuation with glass," said the 55-year
old Hampson. There's some
thing so alluring about having
an interior and exterior world. I
became so enthusiastic about
what artists were doing – casting, slumping and fusing glass,
laminating – creating works I
never thought possible.
"The artists using glass continue to be in a Renaissance.
There's an intense and growing
market for artists working in
the field. Our future will be in

museum exhibits all over the museum exhibits all over the world, and staging online exhibits. In September we'll have a major online auction of older objects, pieces you wouldn't find in a gallery today.

"We curate 4 to 6-exhibitions

"We curate 4 to G-exhibitions for museums around the world annually from Mexico to Thiwan and China. It's a little scary sending 200 glass pieces to China but we're always out there and exploring. It's what makes Habatat fun."

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Budweiser CONCERTS



27. Winners will be notified on Wednesday, August 28. Employees and immer.
Sports & Entertainment and The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers are not aligible.

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