

Solo exhibition, Fort Wayne Museum of Arts, USA 2014



INTRODUCTION

The historic development of sculpture is as influenced by the evolution of its raw materials as by the advancement of its conceptual content. Working in clay offered ancient artists a wider range of possibilities than carving in wood. Carving stone added both new possibilities, especially in the realm of greater articulation, and in the potential for permanence. Generation after generation, sculptors mined those possibilities to ever greater advantages leaving the world a rich legacy of three-dimensional art expressing the distinctive values of each age. In the modern world, material advances developed exponentially as industrialization, commercialization, and commodification fueled a scientific frenzy to create new raw materials with which more “stuff” could be made. The aesthetic offshoot of all that was that sculptors working in the 20th century could choose, among other things, to cast works in fiberglass and plastic, assemble works with welded steel or inexpensive milled lumber, wrap buildings in industrial nylon, or create “environments” alive with digital light and sound. The availability of these materials coincided with the evolution of an artistic ideology that sought to break free from both traditional concepts and materials.

In the midst of this perfect storm of sculptural expression, art professor Harvey Littleton, originally a ceramicist, looked back to an ancient material, glass, and sought to transform it into a medium for contemporary sculptors to work with in studio kilns. His efforts to introduce art students to this extraordinary medium launched the studio glass movement and, around the world, young artists were drawn to glass.

In the Netherlands, artist Peter Bremers, trained as a sculptor to work with a wide variety of materials, was introduced to working in glass through a workshop at the Jan Van Eck Academie taught by Dutch glass artist A. D. Copier. Already focused on light and its characteristics, glass seemed to be a logical substance to explore. Blowing glass, not surprisingly, attracted him first. But after a trip to Antarctica to see the magical beauty of that landscape, he envisioned a whole different way to achieve his goals in glass.

Peter’s work today, thirteen years after his epiphany in Antarctica, has deep aesthetic roots that reach back to the modern period of sculpture’s evolution when the most progressive sculptors sought a break with literal figuration. Channeling natural forms but pushing them further into metaphoric abstraction, sculptors like Brancusi, Henry Moore, Anthony Caro, and Isaac Witkin, created evocative works that referenced natural and human forms but distilled them to their transcendent essence. In a similar fashion, Peter’s work

is inspired by nature’s most extreme landscapes but certainly isn’t a depiction of these landscapes. The scenes Peter comes upon in his extensive and far-flung travels spur an inward journey of contemplation and introspection into himself and the wonders of the natural world. In my mind, the real subject of each individual piece of Peter’s sculpture is a “moment” from his inward journeys occasioned by his worldly excursions.

Peter’s work focuses on these moments of awe inspiring experience that he has translated into glass – moments in the sun baked desert, in wilderness canyons, or on spectacular flows of monumental polar ice. As breathtaking as Thomas Moran’s first Grand Canyon paintings or Albert Bierstadt’s Sierra Nevada Mountain series, these works in glass by Peter surpass that of any of these Luminists in their homage to nature and in their natural ability of glass to convey light rather than simply depicting it.

Glass is, unequivocally, the most important medium introduced to the “materials” menu in contemporary sculpture. Glass is to 21st century sculpture what commercial steel was to sculpture in the mid-20th century and what bronze was a century earlier. The artists focusing on this exciting medium are producing finer, more ambitious and more aesthetically challenging work than sculptors working in virtually any other material. Serious collectors of sculpture were the first to realize that and, now, museums are also waking up to that reality.



Charles A. Shepard III
Executive Director
Fort Wayne Museum of Art

Sculptors working in glass are truly the leading edge of contemporary three-dimensional art and Peter Bremers is right there on the front lines. Well-respected personally, professionally, and aesthetically, Peter is one of the most important artists in the field. Please spend time browsing these pages and developing your own relationship with these glorious pieces. I promise that you will be glad that you did.

