

NANCY CALLAN

Bio

Having firmly established herself as one of the preeminent contemporary artists working in glass sculpture, Nancy Callan's artistic voice has never been more resonant than in her forthcoming exhibition at Traver Gallery. In her new body of work, Callan celebrates and draws on her early experience as a graphic designer to bring pattern and color to the forefront. Her colorful blown forms become a beautiful canvas for the intricate overlapping, woven, organic, and playful cane and murrine designs she creates.

Building upon the techniques she mastered during her 19-year tenure on Lino Tagliapietra's team, Callan creates cane-glass patterns that are completely her own. Like drawings in three dimensions, lines rhythmically undulate in and out of the rich glass colors. Callan's works are exuberant, energy filled, and delightfully bold. We are proud to be the first gallery to show this new body of work and thrilled to introduce it to you, our collectors.

Callan earned her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1996. Her numerous awards include the Creative Glass Center of America Fellowship and residencies at the Museum of Glass (Tacoma, WA), The Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH, the Pittsburgh Glass Center, Pittsburgh, PA, and The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA. She has offered advanced glassblowing workshops at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, WA, the Pittsburgh Glass Center, Haystack Mountain School in Deer Isle, ME and Penland School of Crafts in Ashville, NC. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Shanghai Museum of Art, Shanghai, China, The Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA, the Museum of Glass, Corning, NY, the Muskegon Museum of Art, Muskegon, MI, and the Museum of Northwest Art, La Connor, WA, as well as in numerous private collections.

Statement

From Here to Infinity

As I approach twenty years of working with glass, I am amazed at how much there still is for me to explore in the material. The quest for the perfect form matched with the ideal surface, color, or pattern is an ongoing challenge. But most exciting are the new possibilities that open up through experimentation. Using the traditional techniques to create something fresh and modern is what I am most interested in right now. This approach allows me to feel grounded in the traditions of the material but also free to depart and explore the possibilities, which are indeed infinite.

“String Theory” marked the beginning of an adventure in linear complexity and the spatial qualities of glass. Multiple overlays and the compression of grids and spiral patterns create incredible depth as space folds and lines recede to infinity. I ground these drawings on blue and black glass to deepen the space. Today’s physicists are constructing theories of our universe that postulate dark matter, black and white holes, and other incredible features of the cosmos. Glass is a fantastic medium for dreaming up new ways to bend space, stretch time, and renew a sense of wonder.

Moving from macro to micro, the “Droplets” suggest another universe, the world of elements and beings too tiny for the naked eye to perceive. The glass in these pieces highlights the qualities of transparency and suspension. The tiny pieces of cane expand into hollow translucent tubes as the form is blown, mimicking the way we might view water through a microscope and discover a hidden world full of life. This pattern is also used on other forms (“Graphite Anemone”, “Aquamarine Orb”) where it moves in vertical direction, suggesting upward growth or the delicate ribbed surfaces of certain seashells, sponges, and anemones.

As we go through life, we attempt to stitch together our impressions, experiences, and knowledge into a unified whole. “Quilt” is my homage to this quest and to the humble beginnings of many creative endeavors. So often we begin with a thread, a word, or a doodle, and months or years later a finished product emerges. In this piece I let you into my sketchbook to explore the possibilities in a new way. The lines, patterns, and cane drawings are the building blocks for future creations, and are beautiful simple statements on their own. I look forward to the next chapter.