

JOHN KILEY

Bio

John Kiley uses primary geometric forms as the architecture for his deconstructed glass sculptures. Juxtaposed colors and carved optic passageways create a separation of space, allowing the viewer to peer into and through the form. Often his sculptures are balanced on edge seeming to defy gravity. A Gaffer on Dale Chihuly's team in the late 1990's John worked also worked as a principal assistant to Lino Tagliapietra from 1994 -2011.

He says of his work: "I am drawn to how glass, and it's perceived delicacy and preciousness, can create a sense of tension, concern and longing in the viewer. The final decision I make before a piece is complete is how it will be situated. During this final step, there is a moment when I don't know for sure if it will survive or lie broken on the studio floor. It is in this final step that each piece finds its own unique balance; in this moment, the sculpture emerges and comes to life."

Statement

When I was a child, my parents, tore the roof off of our house and began a seven-year remodel. With the exception of a couple of months sleeping in a borrowed RV parked on the street, our family of four lived among the constant demolition and reconstruction. Along with the piles of broken plaster and splintered wood inside the shell of our home, the yard was also a construction zone, full of mounded soil and puddles of mud. A favorite pastime of the neighborhood kids was engaging in dirt-clot throwing wars, and our yard provided plenty of ammunition.

One day I picked up a handful of soggy earth, and began to slowly and deliberately fashion it with my bare hands. After perhaps an hour of shaping, the amorphous matrix began to take the form of a ball and eventually a perfect sphere.

To me, this tennis ball sized object was too perfect to sacrifice in battle, so I placed it in a small glass dish borrowed from the remnants of my Mother's kitchen, and hid it inside a barn shaped tool shed behind our house. This spherical shrine was perched on a shelf at my eye level, just to the right of the door. I would visit it almost daily.

Weeks later, I decided to share my creation with the other kids in our neighborhood. After summoning everyone for the big reveal, not a single one of my cohorts believed that the sphere was merely soil shaped by hand! The leading theory amongst the group was it must be a ball coated with dried mud.

I pondered two options, return my treasure to the shed or break it open and impress my friends? At this moment, I had no idea what the outcome would be.

Looking at the broken pile of earth, splayed out on the sidewalk, I felt a sense of pride that I had created something so perfect, and a sense of loss that it was ruined it; or was it? I stood there, my gaze fixed on the destruction below – not a pile of ruin but clearly a broken sphere. The round outside surfaces were still intact - rough inside sections cast contrasting shadows and questions arose; which is more interesting, intact or sectioned, outside or inside, material or shadow? Why was I so drawn to this broken form?