

JAMES MONGRAIN

Bio

Born in 1968 in Minnesota, James Mongrain was introduced to glass while enrolled at Moorhead State University, under the instruction of his brother Jeff Mongrain, an internationally-renowned artist. He later studied glassblowing at Massachusetts College of Art and Appalachian Center for Crafts in Smithville, TN. At the onset of his career, Mongrain worked in hot shops around the country, including New York, Cincinnati, and New Orleans, where he focused his attention on becoming technically proficient in the Venetian tradition of goblet making.

In 1993, Mongrain worked as a co-gaffer at Pilchuck Glass School where he met internationally-renowned glass artist and mentor Dale Chihuly. Two years later, Chihuly invited Mongrain to move to Seattle, WA to work for Chihuly, Inc. as a gaffer for the "Chihuly over Venice" installation. The project took him to glass factories in Ireland, Mexico, and France, and culminated with the installation of 14 chandeliers over the canals and piazza of Venice.

In 1999, Mongrain was nominated for the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, and began the "Jerusalem Cylinders" with Chihuly; the pieces were part of the "In the Light of Jerusalem 2000" project. Mongrain was also a lead figure among a team of glassblowers working on Chihuly's "Fiore Di Como" in the Bellagio hotel, Las Vegas, and the "Bridge of Glass" in Tacoma, WA.

Mongrain's work has been exhibited nation-wide in galleries including the American Craft Museum in New York City, Traver Gallery, Foster White Gallery and Vetri in Seattle, Jenkins Johnson Gallery in San Francisco, Louisville Museum of Art in Kentucky, Marta Hewett in Cincinnati, and the Grohe Glass Gallery in Boston. He continues to work for Chihuly and other artists on special projects, but has focused his attention on designing and crafting Venetian goblets, Veronese vases, and a variety of custom work including sculptural chandeliers.

Statement

Inspired by the Venetian tradition of goblet making, I strive for a level of precision that unites traditional elegance with contemporary flair. These elements also manifest in my newest creations, sculptural chandeliers. It's my intention to continue to produce pieces that incorporate modern elements of form, color, and craftsmanship.