

Barbara Kee

Antique glass beads were what originally brought me to study how glass had been made historically. I have studied glass bead making sites throughout the world, the techniques used in making beads, trade bead routes and the interesting use of color throughout history.

Who are you and what do you do? Barbara A. Kee, Glass Artist, Lamp-worked and Fused Jewelry and Home Decor.

Why do you do what you do? Because I cannot draw, but instead have a good eye for color and composition, glass is the perfect media for me in which to work.

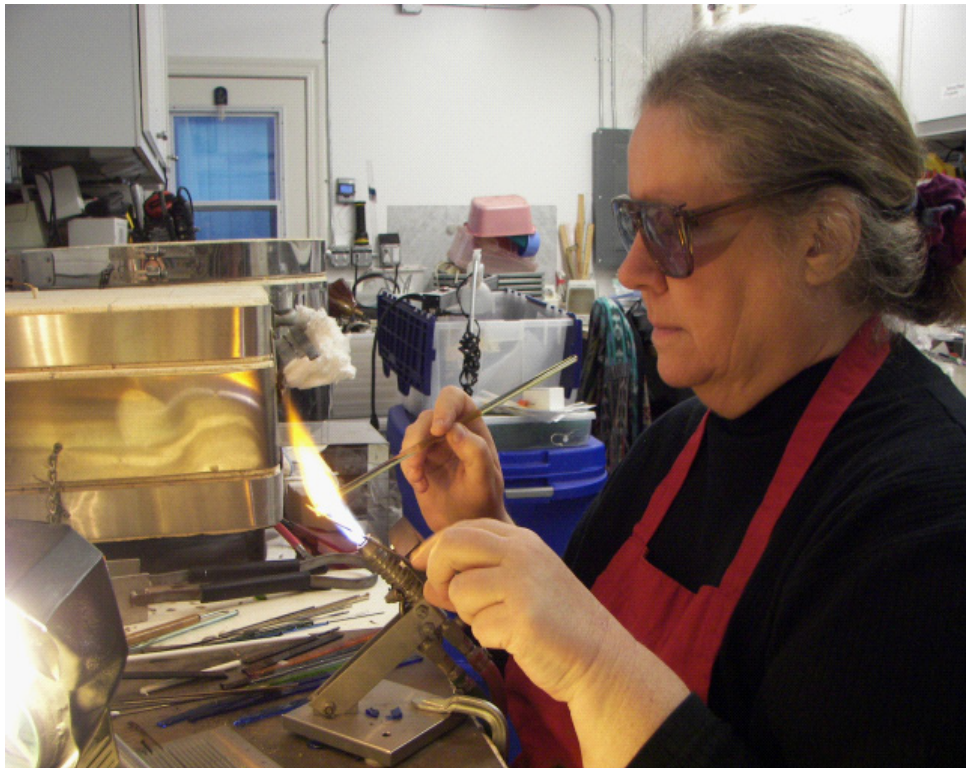
How do you work? I have a small one car garage that has been permanently converted into an extensive working studio and I have kilns, saws, a grinder and a oxy/propane torch and utilize each in it's own way to melt, form and rework the glass I use in my designs.

What's your background? Before becoming an artist full-time, I was a Marketing Manager for various service and product manufacturers.

What's integral to the work of an artist? A playful and forgiving spirit and a willingness to make mistakes when you try something new.

What role does the artist have in society? We remind society of the better part of ourselves as human beings -- we create, we play, we make beautiful things that hopefully cause people to stop and consider.

How has your practice change over time? Repetition is the best way to perfect technique -- I continue to work on perfecting many techniques in lamp-working, fusing and slumping.



What art do you most identify with? Modern, abstract artwork because I can't draw, but I love the play of color and light in glass -- Dale Chihuly is my inspiration.

What work do you most enjoying doing? Beadmaking on the oxy/propane torch -- it's almost like meditation when I'm in the "zone."

What themes do you pursue? I love to explore the plays of color and light, so I'm always working with different combinations of both and am almost always amazed at the subtle richness and variety.

What jobs have you done other than being an artist? Marketing and business management in services and products, both wholesale and retail.

Why art? Because I don't feel like I have a choice -- it's something I feel compelled to do.

What memorable responses have you had to your work? Custom

designs working collaboratively with a customer and nailing it as to what the customer has in their mind's eye.

Is the artistic life lonely? What do you do to counteract it? Sometimes, I find "in balance" and on the money with my own creative spirit is best done when I work by myself; so to counterbalance this aloneness that I need to be at my most creative, I've taught and worked with other friends who are into glass as a social occasion -- sort of like an old-fashion sewing/quilting bee.

What do you dislike about the art world? The small, pettiness that one sometimes experiences in groups of artists.

What do you dislike about your work? Working in the heat of the summer with kilns at 1500 degrees F or on the torch with a full-blown flame.

What do you like about your work? Working Spring and Fall when the weather is neither hot nor cold, but just right and I can do everything including

getting my hands wet while sawing or grinding and not be miserable physically.

What makes you angry? People who feel they need to micro-manage others or who are disrespectful.

What research to you do? Finding non-glass artistic techniques and try to adapt them to use with glass.

What superpower would you have and why? The ability to speak all languages -- I think it would be very, very interesting!!

What is your dream project? A local, smaller public arts project that I could do in glass given the scale of my tooling and studio.

What's the best piece of advice you've been given? "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't; either way, you're right!"

www.artitudestudio.com/current_site/ARTISTS.htm

Interview questions used with permission of Lee Morgan of News and Media Republic - a not-for-profit media.