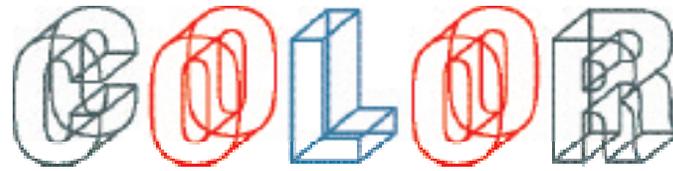


ALL FIRED UP OVER



Morag Totten recalls a dismal time in London, when she would both leave for work and arrive home in the dark. After the long siege of gloomy darkness, she took a trip to Nairobi. “The sky went all the way up!” she says, “like life after a rainstorm.” It was here Totten discovered her love for color, soaking it in like water to a dried-out sponge. “The colors of the people, the sky, the greenery, the flowers, all of it!” She also remembers a time when traveling in India, that she stayed in a village just because she loved the colors of the women’s saris. “I didn’t understand at the time what this fascination was about,” she says.

After years of absorbing the colors of her travels in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India and Africa, Totten, a native of Brisbane, Australia, now transfers her love of color into the pieces of glass sculpture she creates in her home studio in Park City. Initially, Totten began to play with scrap pieces of glass she picked up at Creative Glass in Salt Lake City. “They showed me how to cut the glass, using just two tools, a scorer and a breaker.” Totten is also a “scrounger,” walking the rail trail and Daly Canyon, picking up whatever catches her eye to use as support pieces, or anchors, for her sculptures. “Springtime is a good time to pick new things

up,” she explains. “After the snow melts and before the crews come in to clean up, I can find handmade nails that come out of the walls of mines or along the rail trail, twigs in rivers, or bent wires.” She also frequents antique stores and fairs to build her inventory, and gets gifts from friends. “My dentist brought me some old tools and I made a sculpture for him using them.” She’s incorporated antique silverware, coat buttons, safety pins, copper pipes, flutes, painted sticks, and copper and pewter wires into her designs. “The challenge for me is finding things I really like.”

Totten chooses her pieces of glass seasonally as well. “I’ll feel a season changing,” she says. “That’s the best time to buy glass. On sunny days I’ll buy oranges and aquas. On cloudy days it’s browns.”

Displaying sheets of glass that will eventually be cut into shapes for the sculptures, Totten holds each pane to the light streaming through the window, likening a red to fire, an orange to pumpkin. Her sculpture designs are taken from nature, such as the shape of a fish, or more often, creations of her imagination.

Totten credits her husband, Joe, for helping her define her life’s work. “He said, ‘Identify five words that have a lot of meaning for you.’ Those words were “texture,” “color,” “fiber,” “clay,” and “metal.” After visiting friends in Park City, Joe and Morag made the decision to move here. “I’d never lived in mountains before. They are so powerful. They put me in my place on the planet.” Long popular with Park City residents, a wider audience is equally appreciative of Totten’s work; her window sculptures virtually sold out at last year’s Park City Art Festival.

Totten’s glass sculptures can be seen at Artworks Gallery on Main Street, The Original Way in Trolley Square, and at www.parkcityart.com. She can be reached at 435-655-7746. *

Sedona Callahan really does plan to scrounge the rail trail with Morag one of these days. Really.

By Sedona Callahan Photo by Timothy Thimmes

