



Lesley Nolan

Featured Artist

Lesley Nolan and her family have called Tallahassee home since October of 1989, quite a feat considering she and her husband both grew up in army families. Her grandmother and her mother, both army-wives, had to start a new home every couple of years. In Nolan's family, art was used as a way to help with living costs as well as for entertainment; thus Nolan grew up in an environment that fostered creativity. Nolan continued to keep her artistic surroundings by creating art as an outlet when she and her family moved to Florida.

Constantly having to move caused the notion of family to be very important to Lesley. She describes her work as having "a very autobiographical motivation." Her intent is to create an abstract view of people, which then causes the viewer to see their own family. Nolan began her career working with fabric and quilting, which provided a strong foundation for her later work in stained glass. She was drawn to the idea of "cutting little pieces and putting them together to tell [a] story." As her ideas evolved, so did her mastery of the glass medium, allowing Nolan to utilize the full range of her material.

Process:

To begin a new piece, Lesley starts by cartooning a 24 x 36 pencil sketch of an assortment of figures, occasionally using old family photos for inspiration. She places the rough drawing under a piece of glass and traces the figures with a black marker, then cuts out the outer outline of the piece. It is at this point that Lesley brings in the colors. Often beginning at the center, she composes either solid blocks of color or creates patterned glass to act as the garment or even skin tone of the figures. Each piece of colored glass is glued to the foundational clear glass piece. The piece is then fired in a kiln for 24 hours. After cooling, Lesley washes the piece and places it on her stainless steel molds, firing it again at a lower temperature, a process called "slumping." After over 48 hours in the kiln, the glass takes the wavy shape of the mold and finally, Lesley has her desired effect!

Lesley began her instruction with Newy Fagan at the Art Glass House in Cocoa, Florida, and went on to take seminars from noted glass artists such as Catharine Newell and Judy Hill. Most recently in 2009, Lesley Nolan was invited to the Professional Artist in Residence program at Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington.

Lesley Nolan has showcased her work in many cities all over the United States including Dallas, Albuquerque, and Portland. Her work can be found in corporate collections in Chicago and Minneapolis, and she has also taught several art programs at the Florida State University.