

Winter 2008

# ARTS

## ACROSS KENTUCKY

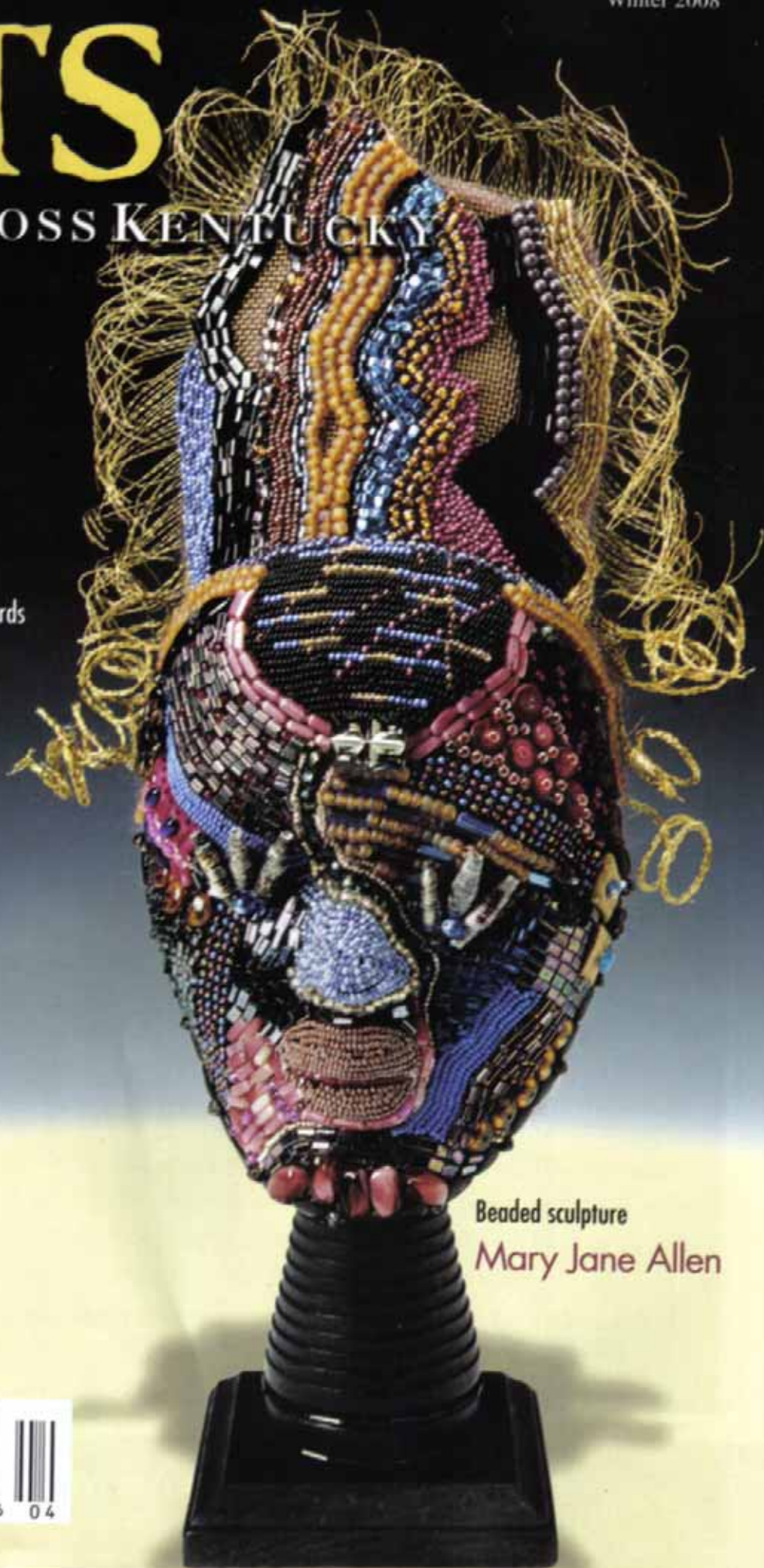
### Apprenticing with a Master

The Legacy of Stephen Rolfe Powell

### Jane Gentry Vance

Fostering an Appreciation for Kentucky Words

### The Kentucky Quilt Trail



Beaded sculpture

Mary Jane Allen

PRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LEXINGTON, KY  
40511  
PERMIT  
#850

\$2.95



We are grateful to the following individuals and organizations

Kat Macaraog  
 Tim Davis  
 Judy Sizemore  
 Mitzi Elliott

Contributing Authors

Brook Forrest White, Jr.  
 Lisa Austin  
 Dory L. Hudspeth  
 Marie Hochstrasser  
 Belinda Anderson  
 Gwenda Adkins  
 Judy Cato  
 Arlene Wright-Correll  
 David Dominé

Arts Across Kentucky is a nonprofit project published by Biz Cards Today to showcase and promote the arts in the Commonwealth.

**Bizcards Today**

387 Cobble Drive • Lexington, Kentucky 40509  
 Phone: (859) 215-5319, Fax: (859) 255-0938  
 email: nancy@artsacrossky.com

Visit us at [www.artsacrossky.com](http://www.artsacrossky.com)

Arts Across Kentucky welcomes comments and corrections from its readers. Subscriptions are \$19.95/year. Please call or email for manuscript submission information.

Editor: Nancy Branner  
 Advertising: Ellen Deaton (859) 356.2938  
 Creative Art Director: Brian Taylor  
 Copyediting: Nancy Branner  
 Photography: Nancy Branner  
 Ed Peterbaugh

Copyright 2007 Bizcards Today.  
 All rights reserved.



Mary Jane Allen  
 Regal Mystic beaded sculpture

# ARTS

## ACROSS KENTUCKY

Art  
 Craft  
 Travel  
 Entertainment

### FEATURED STORIES

**Apprenticing with a Master**  
 The Legacy of Stephen Rolfe Powell . . . . . 8

**Knowledge Is Priceless**  
 Aminata Cairo's Living Dance . . . . . 13

**Beautiful and Bewitching**  
 Kentucky Artists Bead . . . . . 16

**Jane Gentry Vance**  
 Fostering an Appreciation for Kentucky Words . . . . . 20

**Shear Imagination**  
 Fleece to Art . . . . . 26

**The Kentucky Quilt Trail** . . . . . 33

**New Art Projects in Harlan County: Part III**  
 Photography Exhibits Feature Southeast Kentucky . . . . . 37

**A Taste of France in the Bluegrass**  
 Edible Art at Le Deauville . . . . . 44

### DEPARTMENTS

*Editorial*

**Give Me Your Best Shot** . . . 7

*Artist Profiles*

**Enter the World of**  
 Art Photographer Larry Wright . . . 41

*Arts in Education*

**Where I'm From**  
 George Ella Lyon's Powerful Prompt . . . . . 29

**Janice Holt Giles**  
 Short Fiction Prize Information . . . 40

### Flame Run solicits entries for "Twist & Shout"

Flame Run Art Glass Studio is looking for entries for *Twist and Shout*, a juried art show that will run in conjunction with Abbey Road on the River, a Beatles festival that drew 25,000 people to Louisville last year. Awards will be given in various categories and for best of show. Flame Run co-owner Brook Forrest White Jr. said the idea for the contest came to him when he realized the Beatles' song "Twist and Shout" could be about glass blowing. "Glass blowing is about action, motion and vitality," White said. "When you blow glass, you are constantly twisting and turning the blow pipe."

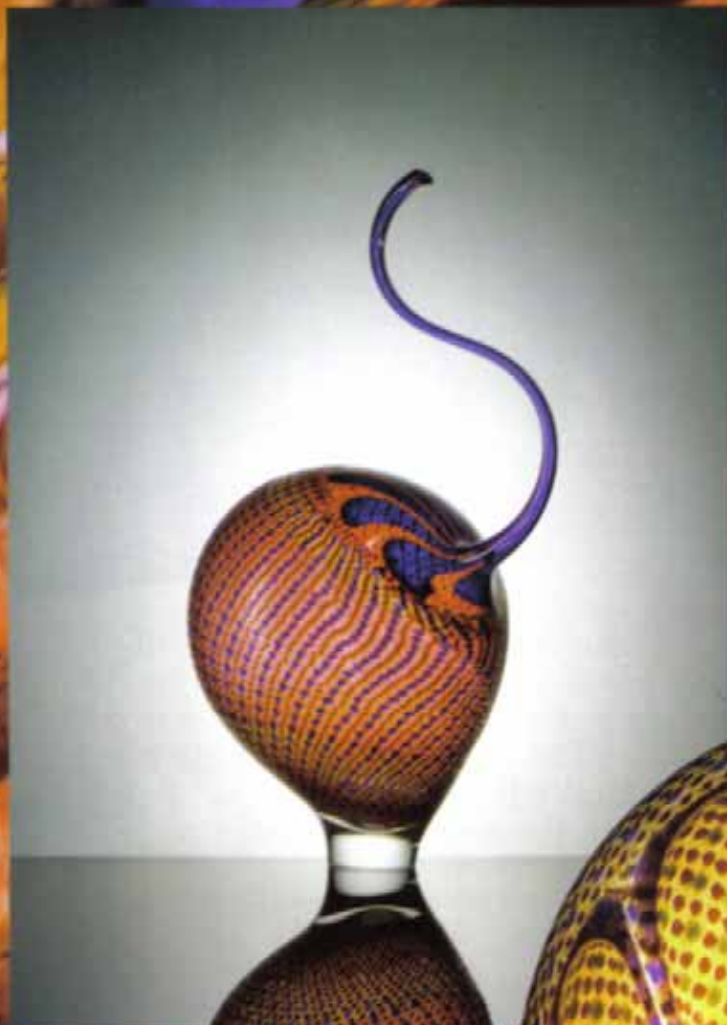
Photos of three pieces in jpeg or tiff format may be submitted to [brook@flamerun.com](mailto:brook@flamerun.com) by Feb. 28, 2008. Artists must also include a title, dimensions, description of their technique and, if the piece is for sale, a price. An entry fee of \$35 should be sent to Flame Run at 828 E. Market St., Louisville, KY 40206.

Last May, Abbey Road on the River featured 60 bands performing on eight stages. The show, which has made Louisville its permanent home, is in its seventy year.



Brook Forrest White, Jr., *Twist & Shout*, 2006

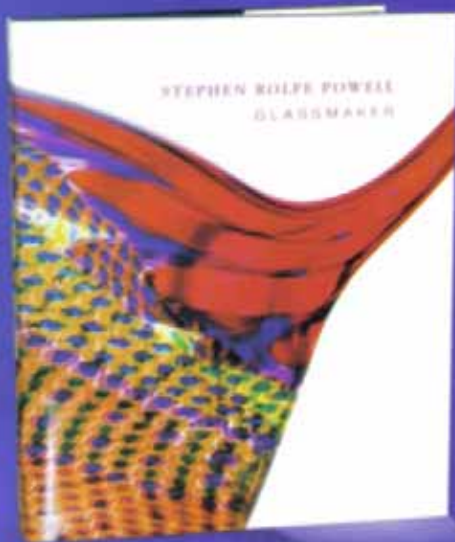
Photos by David Harper



Starfling Frenetic Tease, 35" x 23" x 16.5", 2006



Frenetic Leering Sniffer,  
30.5" x 24" x 19.5", 2005



# menticing with a Master

## Legacy of Stephen Rolfe Powell

By Brook Forrest White, Jr.

**S**tephen Rolfe Powell's passion for glass is so great that he actually leads a double life. His day job is that of an award-winning college professor whose classes are among the most popular on campus. His not-so-secret other life is that of highly respected and sought after glass artist who thrives on the roar of the glass furnace and blow torches turned wide open. To achieve great success in just one of these "lives" would be remarkable for most people. The ability to excel at both could be called "just being Steve."



Lauren Arnold, Stephen Rolfe Powell, and Paul Hugues; Demonstration in Tacoma, Washington.

Powell's work has made him an internationally renowned artist, and he is widely considered one of the top glass artists in the world. But perhaps his most defining moment occurred in 1985 when he created the very first hot glass program at Centre College in Danville. That small glassblowing studio provided Powell with the resources to create his signature glass art and allowed him to share his love of glass with his students and the world.

In the early days of glass classes at Centre, in addition to the furnace (where the molten glass is stored for pick-up on the

blowpipe) and the glory hole (where the glass is kept hot enough to work), there was only one small blowtorch used to heat the pattern and the mold. As his work grew in size, so did the size and number of torches utilized throughout the process. All that fire, along with the driving beat of the loud and ever-present music, generates a breath-taking show for the numerous spectators.

Powell's process for creating awe-inspiring glass art is a passionate performance that explodes with movement and color. The hot glass studio team is intensely focused on the



process because timing is critical. There is little room for error when he gathers 30 pounds or more of molten glass on the end of a five-foot metal blowpipe and then, with deft accuracy, applies his trademark pattern of colors to the surface. The atmosphere literally heats up as the final move approaches. The last step in the process is a make-or-break situation. The crescendo builds to a climax as Powell puts the final touches on the art and then ends abruptly as the piece is removed to an oven to cool. Over the years, the carefully choreographed work sessions have evolved into a fire-driven thrill ride.

Powell's sheer determination and dynamic personality make the studio an exciting place. His natural talents in art and sports are perfectly combined for him to realize his vision for his glass artwork.

When I first began assisting him, Powell would stand on a classroom chair to get high enough to blow the glass into its

final form. The glass pieces grew in size, necessitating the construction of a wooden stand, but the work quickly outgrew that as well. Finally, we welded together a five-and-one-half-foot tall metal platform complete with steps. Those first glass pieces stood knee-high. Ten years later, they are as tall as his students.

At the end of a glass-blowing session, Powell shakes hands with all of the team. This simple, magnanimous gesture acknowledges the contribution of his assistants and apprentices in the creation of his work. He further recognizes his team by listing their names on his show cards and posters. This may seem like a small thing, but in reality it is rare for an artist, much less an artist of Powell's caliber, to recognize his or her assistants in this way.

Some may wonder how a one-year visiting instructor in ceramics at a very small liberal arts college in the middle of Kentucky came to be such a force in the glass art world? However, this global recognition comes as no surprise to the individuals who were lucky enough to work with Powell over the years. Being an apprentice to him is a heady opportunity to learn what it takes to be a successful artist. His students are exposed to situations far beyond a classroom and apprentices are involved in every aspect of the creative process from molten state to gallery pedestal. The experience includes constructing and maintaining studio equipment, performing demonstrations, traveling to galleries and museums for show openings, attending lectures and conferences, and meeting other well-known artists. Powell has high expectations and challenges himself and others to push their boundaries. His legendary work ethic sets the pace; being on his team is not just a job, it is a deep personal commitment.

During the time I apprenticed with Powell, it became my mission to perform to the best of my ability every time I walked into the studio. His students came together to work harder than we had ever worked before. We went to his classes during the day, and then we would come back in the evenings and on the weekends to assist him in his personal work. The summer sessions were particularly intense, with the heat and humidity of the Bluegrass area adding to the sweat from the heat of the furnaces. Mixed in with this demanding work was a good dose of fun. Powell's unique sense of humor provided some

*Poochy Serpentine Striker, 37" x 26.5" x 15", 2006.*

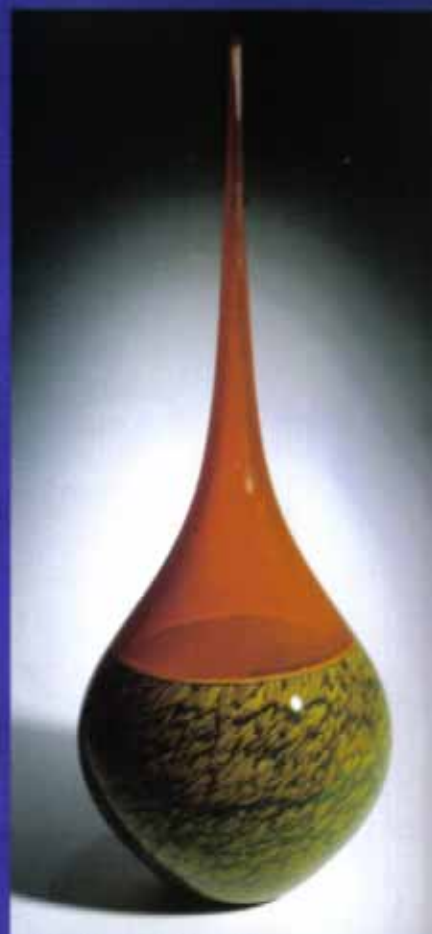


D. H. McNabb



Photo courtesy of Brook White

From left, standing: Jason Matzek, Tommy Spake, Stephen Powell, Paul Hugues. From left, front row: Paul Nelson, Chris Bohach, Brook White.

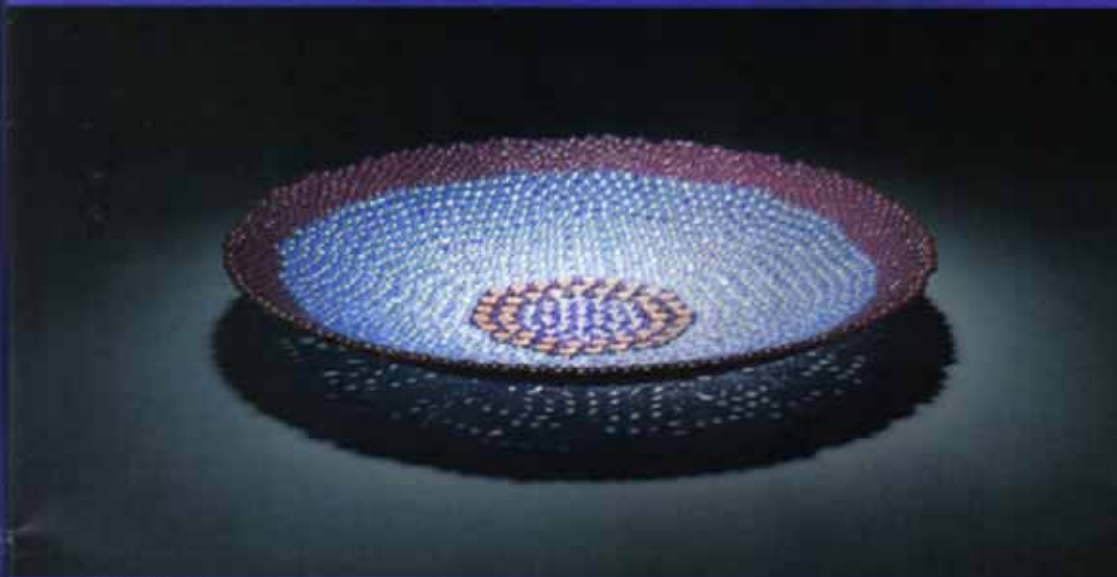


Brook Forrest White, Jr.

great entertainment. His all or nothing attitude was not for everyone, but those who weathered his hectic schedule received an invaluable, spirit-stirring experience.

Many of his apprentices have gone on to pursue glass on their own, and several have started to have influence in the glass world themselves. Some have become assistants to other well-known artists. One is a world-renowned ancient glass expert and two are college professors, each heading their own glass program. A few others have operated their own private glassblowing studios; one now co-owns the largest glassblowing studio in the southeastern United States. Many of Powell's former apprentices now create and exhibit their glass art across the country.

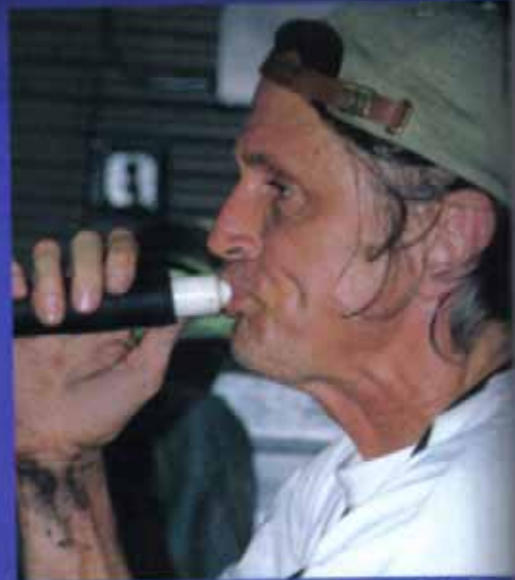
There may have been others working with hot glass in



Paul Hugues



The early years (from left): Peter Palmquist, Paul Nelson, Stephen Rolfe Powell, Brook Forrest White, Jr.



Stephen Rolfe Powell

Kentucky before him, but no one has had a greater impact on Kentucky's current glass art phenomenon than Stephen Rolfe Powell. Much has been written about his work and its impact on the glass world. In fact, almost all of the recent developments in Kentucky involving glass art can be traced directly back to him. The reference to him as the "Godfather of Kentucky Glass" is an apt accolade.

Powell's high-powered hot glass act transforms molten silica into provocative vessels that explode with lush color and tantalize the eye; his energy radiates from each piece. His mesmerizing body of work and international reputation are

there for all to see, but his inspiration and influence on his apprentices may be his greatest, albeit more subtle, legacy. ♡

(For more information on Stephen Rolfe Powell, Brook Forrest White, Jr. and the process of glass-blowing, see AAK, Fall 1999, Spring 2003, and Fall 2004.)



Brook Forrest White, Jr. was one of Stephen Rolfe Powell's first apprentices and worked with Powell for more than a decade. He and his wife Susie Slobough White are co-owners of Louisville's FLAME RUN Gallery and Hot Shop.



# Crossroads:

## Spirituality in American Folk Traditions

November 16, 2007-February 24, 2008  
**OWENSBORO MUSEUM OF FINE ART**  
 901 Frederica Street • Owensboro, KY • 270-685-3181

ADAM AND EVE, Kentucky blue sandstone, 1999, Tim Lewis, Isonville, KY  
 Collection of Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, A Gift of Folk Art Society of America