

Helen Stolyarenko

My amazing summer-2012 at Pilchuck Glass School as a flatshop intern for Sessions 4 and 5:

It was an unforgettable 6-weeks long journey, a different life in a special world, where all was mixed in one: glass, art, fire, kilns, technologies, talented people, creative energies, grass, deers, inspiration, sharing ideas, drawing, fun, laugh, partying, funny auction costumes, slide shows, smiles, learning, discovering new horizons through people from all over the world.

My duty was to take care of the flatshop, where students have lessons, to provide them with all they need, give any kind of help or assistance. I tried my best to make the shop cleaner than it had been before I came, making a big clean-up and putting everything in order in the cabinets with tools and materials.

A great opportunity was studio access for staff members in off-duty time, I had a chance to make samples for my artworks in such techniques as flameworking, fusing, diamond cut, engraving, sand-blusting. I also tried processes new to me, such as sand-casting and print-making in the printshop.

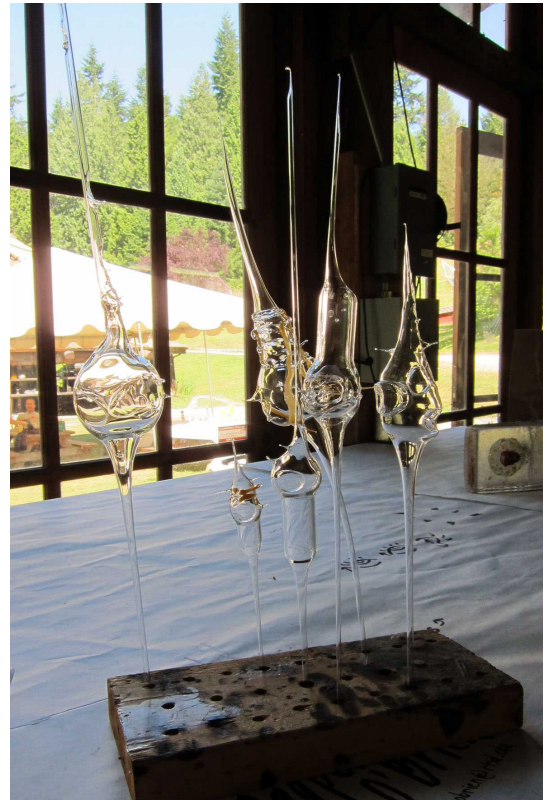
A special experience was to take part in the student auctions as a runner, presenting at the stage the pieces for sale, making it in a funny way and costume. I also worked on decoration for these events, which was a fun experience, too. It still surprises me, how work and fun live together and are naturally connected in this place. It's one of Pilchuck's specialties.

After coming back home, I learned that the piece that I had brought to Pilchuck from Russia and donated to the Big Auction, was successfully sold in October.

The greatest thing about Pilchuck experience was to donate energy to it's special atmosphere, full of creative electricity, a big gift was to get to know so many people, who are in love with glass and art, professionals, to share inspiration, experience and to learn from them.



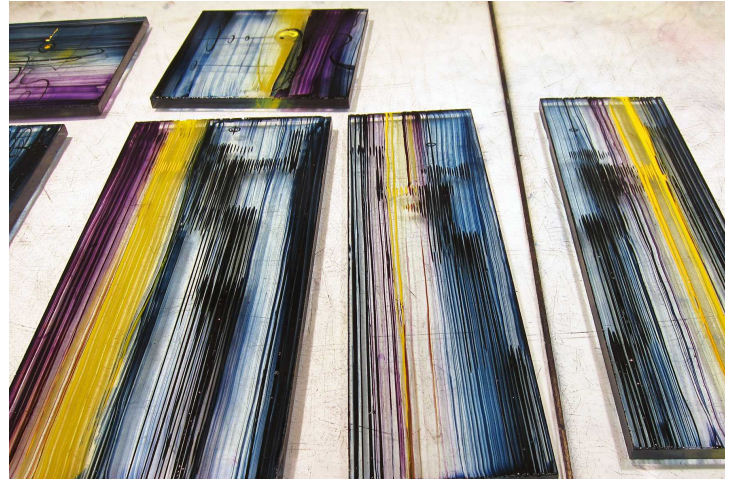
I had a great teacher, Miguel Unson (who used to be at my position in the flatshop during the previous session), he showed me some frameworking methods for my drawings. So I practiced with it:



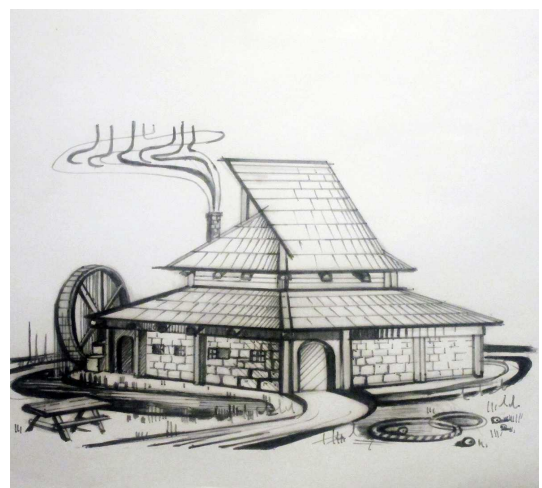
I've made a lot of drawings and models, following an inspiration flow. One of my paintings took part in the Trade show:



One of my favourite themes is what I call «rain people» (people, praying to rain or nature forces, mysterious energies), I experiment, depicting them in different styles and glass techniques, looking for the most expressive, successful ones. I've made a series of samples where I draw my people with diamond cut lines. I also used these plates to make prints on paper.



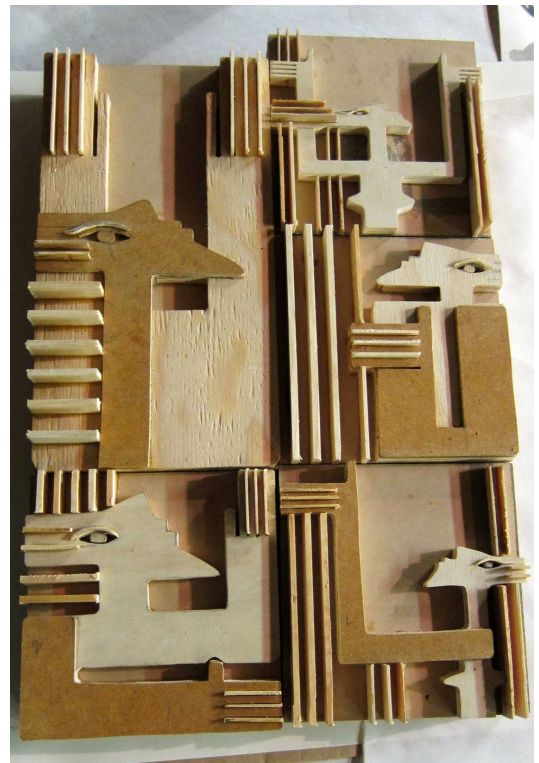
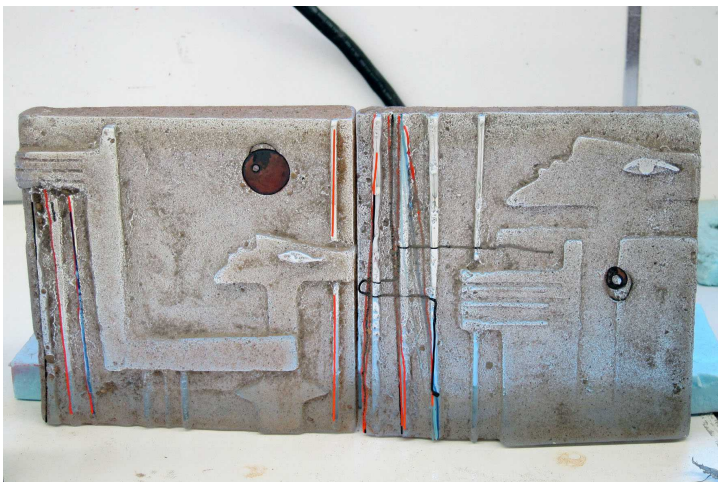
Jimmy Anderegg, a great person and glass-blower. As I'm not a glass-blower at all, I assisted him to make samples for my work. Jimmy asked me to draw stylized medieval Pilchuck, which he later used for his print in the printshop:



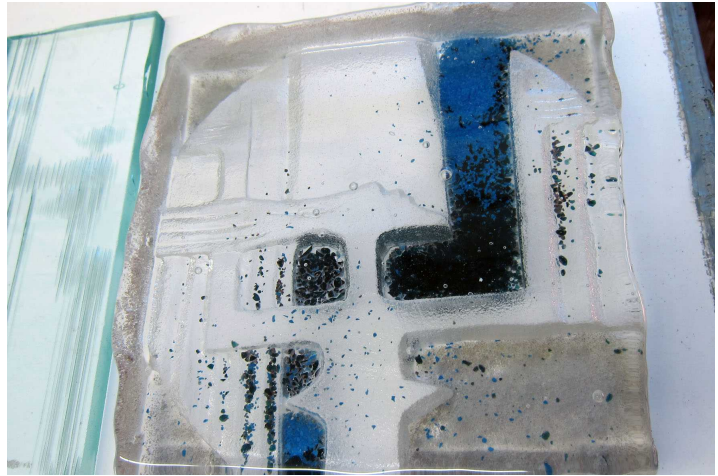
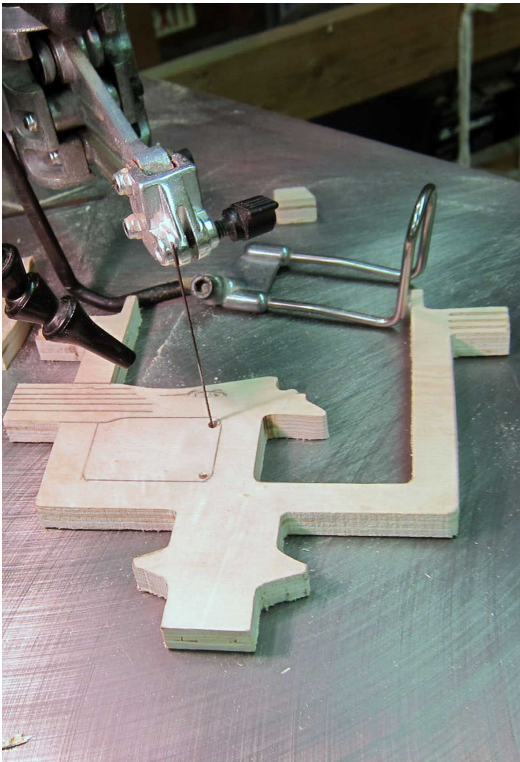
My first tries in sand-casting: I've made a series of wooden moulds to press sand in boxes and cast hot glass there.



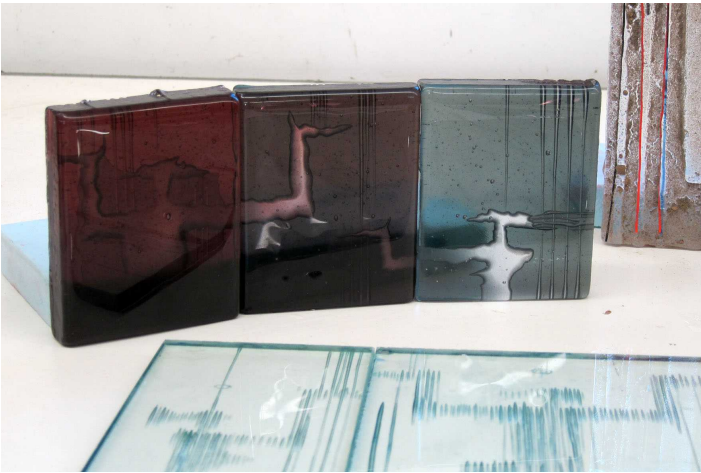
Here are 2 of the samples that I got in glass. These are ancient-stylized reliefs with mysterious praying people.



One more sample with clearer sand surface and the mould-making in process:



I tried the same theme («rain people») in another style and technique: the figures are deeply sand-blusted on thick fused glass blocks. I hope the best of these «rain-people» samples will grow into finished art objects. And here are some drawings for frameworked objects (alien plants):



I'm not a glass-blower, just helped those who are good at it, gave them a «dance support» in the hotshop during the Session 5 opening.



Being an auction runner at Pilchuck turned to be one of my favourite activities. Aline Romero, a talented young artist from Mexico, is one of new people I was happy to get to know.



Students from the sand-casting class were lucky to see a common demo by Norman Courtney and John de Wit. They showed how to make painted glass inclusions into sand-casting. Rob Stern and Jiri Pacinek were bright stars from Czech glass team.



Norman Courtney helped me a lot during my stay in Seattle, gave so much hospitality together with Juriko, his amazing wife, helped me to choose and buy a flameworking torch that I took to Russia with me. Among other people that I've been grateful to know, have got closer with, and who supported me greatly, are Jeremy Lepisto, Narcissus Quagliata and his daughter Annalisa, Justin Ginsberg, Csilla Szilagyi, Kati and Hilal Hibri, MG Stillwaggon, Logan Farell, Tom Mattausch, Amanda Thackray and others. Thank you, Pilchuck, for bringing these people to my world.

