

James Wilbat



James creates his colorful art works in a series of steps. He first produces a palette to choose from by blowing large thin plates of individual colors consisting of a layer of colored glass, a layer of white glass, and two surrounding layers of clear glass. These plates must be cooled overnight before they can become part of the actual piece he is making. He next prepares the details for his pieces, which may include hollow cane, thin lines of colored glass and his signature twisty shapes, formed by fusing and twisting two strands of hot colored glass.

Now he selects several colors from the plates he has already made, and cuts them into the desired shapes and sizes. These shards are then placed into an oven and heated to 1000 degrees so that they will not shatter when picked up. Now on the blow-pipe, he gathers several layers of clear glass, shaping the hot glass with specially carved cherrywood molds or folded wet newspaper, or by rolling it on a steel marver table. When the glass on the pipe is the desired size and shape, James picks up the pre-cut heated shards of color from the annealing oven and fuses them one at a time into the surface of the clear glass. He keeps the piece he is working on at a constant temperature by frequently warming it in a 2400 degree reheat chamber. Next he fuses in the detail pieces by picking them up from the steel table. The glass is then blown and shaped, knocked off the blow-pipe, and placed into an annealing oven where it will cool slowly overnight. Once the piece is cooled, it is ground and polished on several different grinding stones to smooth the bottom. Most of the pieces are sandblasted, acid-etched or cut and polished further.

