

Gallery hopping

By SIMONE ELLIS

From space ship bowels made of self-luminous glass, to portraits buried beneath mystical opaque glass, to deep black cone-shaped vases, to non-utilitarian bowels filled with twirled and rounded objects, the Glass Exhibition at the LewAllen Gallery is even more interesting than last year's successful glass show.

This along with a group show at the Allene Lapidis Gallery is a sign that the season of art has begun in Santa Fe.

■ **LewAllen Gallery, 225 Galisteo, Glass Exhibition,** through April 27, 988-5387.

Drawing largely from members of the renowned Pilchuck School of glass blowing, the gallery has put together another extensive show that demonstrates that working in glass is a fine art.

Featuring works by Martin Blank, Dante Marioni, Benjamin Moore, Richard Royal and newcomer Janusz Walentynowicz, combined with weavings by Ramona Sakiestewa, this is a dazzling exhibit.

The first thing that might strike one when entering this exhibit is the balance of color. The colors range from unearthly, glowing yellows and blues in Marioni's *Goose Beak Pitchers* to deep space blacks in Moore's *Elements* vase series, to subdued, pale lime and copper colored figures by Walentynowicz. Sakiestewa's red, black and tan geometric weavings hanging on the walls interact with the glass works in a surprisingly musical way.

Martin Blank, who was in last year's glass exhibit, is showing a series of spiral covered vases that lie on their sides like magical shells tossed upon a deserted shore. Blank's spirals are his trademark and he has taken this motif to a new horizon with remarkably thin sided bowels filled with abstract glass "fruit."

The "fruit" is made up of wiggly snakes, small blank spirals, and crystal balls with bubbles left here and there in the interior.

Marioni, who is known for his flawlessly blown vases, is represented by three works of astounding color and shape. Titled the *Goose Beak Pitcher* series, these three foot tall vases are illuminated color in three dimensions. By a

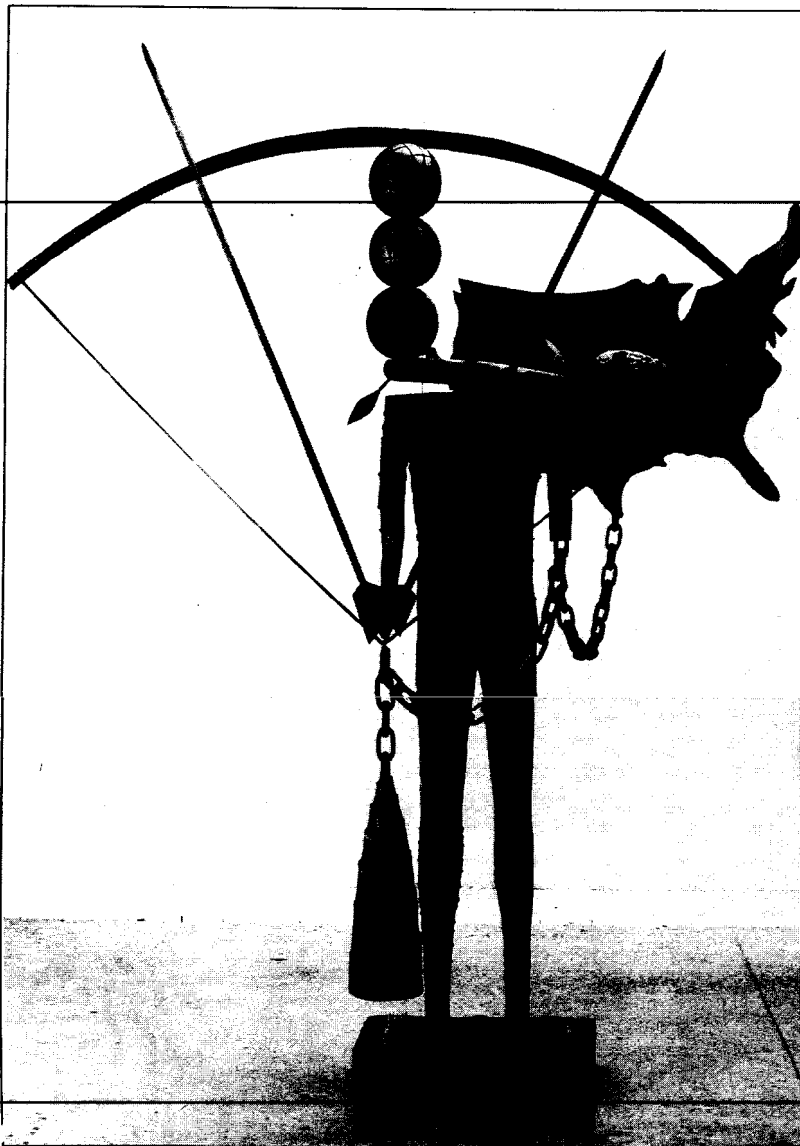


Photo by Rob Outlaw

'American Babylon II,' wood with acrylic, wire and nails by John Buck

mysterious process of melting pigmented glass particles, Marioni creates colors as personal as the most painterly of painters.

Moore, who astounded Santa Fe audiences last year with his glowing spheres within shallow bowels, is back this year with a series of cone-shaped vases made from the deepest black glass one has ever seen. Each vase is supporting a elementally shaped attachment, such as a cube or a sphere.

The black of the vase reflects everything in the

room with a convex distortion recalling funhouse mirrors.

The expertise in Moore's glass blowing is mind boggling.

Most interesting, though, are the figurative works by Walentynowicz. Born in Dygowo, Poland, Walentynowicz works in glass with the ease of a renaissance painter or sculptor.

Mixing cloth and paint with glass figures made from negative molds, Walentynowicz creates images hidden, obscured as if in a dream.

He is represented by nine works, mostly wall pieces, that resemble antique mirrors at first glance. Then, upon closer viewing, each one reveals a figure, often a self portrait, peering out from beneath the murky, semiopaque glass, like a body frozen in a stream... or a dream.

Something, Somewhere features a lime green figure, boyish in his musculature, standing out in bas relief from an ancient-looking granite colored glass oval. He holds a wrapped piece of cloth as a band across his forehead. The

expression on his boyish face is one of nonintellectual, childhood pleasure.

Migrating Bird is the showpiece of his work, featuring a boy-sized, marbled glass figure in repose. His curly black glass hair glitters in lava-like chunks. His skin is bronze colored, run through with marbled white, cracked lines. He is laying on a glass blanket made up of bits of green, blue and white. Over his nakedness Walentynowicz has fitted an opaque piece of folded lime glass that can be removed to expose his nudity.

This touch is a clever comment on today's modest (censored) trend in art. It is reminiscent of the fig leaf of days past.

Another beauty of Walentynowicz's is *Teddy*, a wall piece, self portrait of a young boy staring out from beneath cracked, dappled brown glass. His painted red lips in an expression of wonder, he holds a gnarled *Teddy* bear over his nakedness.

Don't miss this show. Whether you are a new fan of glass as a fine arts medium, or a skeptic about the potential of this medium, this exhibit displays the state of the art of glass.

■ **Allene Lapidis Gallery,** 217 Johnson St., Group Exhibit, through May 4, 984-0191. Artists include John Buck, Sammy Peters, Mary Frank, Ida Kohlmeyer, Michael Lucero and Peter Ambrose, Woody Gwyn, Cecile Touchon, Tony Delap and Cheryl Laemmle.

A tantalizing preview of this summer's schedule of exhibits at the Allene Lapidis Gallery, the group show currently up there is worth a visit. Consistently a procurer of big name, nationally known artists, the group show at the Lapidis gallery is similar to a contemporary museum tour.

There are three works by sculptor Peter Ambrose, who creates metaphorical figures from geometrically shaped pieces of wood, metal and glass. At first totally abstract, Ambrose's works take on a human scale that is communicated by cubistic, dancer figures, often with a luminous piece of glass for the head.

Sammy Peters' large paint-covered canvases are stunning. One can stand in front of one of his works for a long time without seeing every texture or color created there.

Peters is a painter's painter.

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