

## **British Glass Biennale winners announced**

After months of anticipation, the winners of the British Glass Biennale, the highlight of the International Festival of Glass, have been announced.

The Biennale, which was officially opened by the Crafts Council's Rosy Greenlees, is the focal point of the festival and the main event of the British glass art calendar. Being selected to exhibit at the Biennale is a milestone in any glass artist's career, winning puts them on the map.

The headline award is the £3,000 British Glass Biennale Prize. This acclaimed award is selected by the Biennale jury and is recognised as one of the most prestigious awards in the world of glass. This year's winner is Egyptian born and Pembrokeshire based artist Ashraf Hanna. Ashraf trained at the Royal College of Art as a ceramicist and only made the move into glass two years ago. The British Glass Biennale is his first glass exhibition. His two untitled pieces of kiln formed glass, one charcoal grey, one deep blue were created with the support of fellow artist Heike Brachlow. The pieces contain a soft, round raised shape, with an inviting indentation, held within a more structured rectangular form, creating a piece which is masculine yet not intimidating.

77 artists were selected for this prestigious award from more than 200 applications. 13 of the artists are students and there are 122 pieces in the exhibition which runs from 28 May – 28 June in Stourbridge, West Midlands.

All selected artists have been living and working for the last two years in the UK or Northern Ireland but many originate from across the globe, including Costa Rica, South Korea, Israel, Sweden, Germany and Japan as well as glass artists living and working in the historic Stourbridge Glass Quarter.

The pieces embrace a vast range of glassmaking techniques including blown, kiln formed, slumped and engraved glass with pure clean crystal through to opaque vessels and pieces featuring surface painting and glass inclusions. Submissions range from the miniature to large scale installations; with huge glass hammers, giant spectacles, a glass rat trap, a table set for afternoon tea, painted pictures of Dudley Zoo and a glass nude.

The 77 talented artists made it through the rigorous selection process which was overseen by the Biennale panel made up of curator Janice Blackburn, writer Graham

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Fisher, glass collector Mark Holford, glass artist David Reekie and Ikon gallery director Jonathan Watkins.

The awards results in full:

Glass Sellers' Art & Craft Award, worth £5,000, presented by Gwenllian Rhys, FRSA, the Master of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers, went to Welsh artist Ruth Shelley for her patchwork-like, fused, slumped and sandblasted piece Indian Intarsia, infused with vibrant rainbow colours.

Glass Sellers' Art & Craft Award, Runner Up worth £1,000 went to Central St Martin's trained Nicholas Collins from Whitehaven in Cumbria for his Tumbling Blocks platters, one in charcoal and black, the other contrasting in white and pale grey, both featuring handcut and fused glass assembled in a chequerboard pattern.

Glass Sellers' Art & Craft Student Award also worth £1,000 went to Haley Haddow from London who is inspired by architecture, geometry and fashion design. Her kiln formed and slumped piece Orinoko Flow 1, echoes the river with its undulating bands crossing the sides of her deep blue asymmetric vessel.

Glass Sellers' Art & Craft Student Award, Runner Up of £500 went to Deborah Martin for her delicately monochrome 2D Nude in sheet glass and frit with fusing.

Art in Action Award for Contemporary Glass, worth £1,000 and complete with an invitation to demonstrate at Art in Action 2016, was presented by Simon Buchanan to Royal College of Art alumnus Margaret Alston from Wiltshire who has 35 years experience in glass. Her crisp white, deep sided pate de verre vessel has a pure simplicity, complimented by shimmers of pale grey running through the piece.

craft&design magazine award, presented by editor Angie Boyer, which provides a year's worth of media coverage and support, worth £3,000 including a front cover went to Elliot Walker from Wolverhampton who has only been working in glass for five years. His piece, still life with a lime features textured, bullet grey glasses and bottles complimented by a polished vibrant green glass sliced lime.

craft&design magazine highly commended award which comes with a media support package worth £1,750 went to Alicja Patanowska who left her native Poland to study ceramics and glass at the Royal College of Art. Her Stratum series features two clear round glass vessels, topped with a swirl of white porcelain, one concave, one convex.

The winners of two new awards for 2015:

The London Glassblowers Award for Emerging Talent, presented by Peter Layton was divided between two artists, with Mancunian Harry Morgan, now based in Edinburgh taking the £2,000 prize for his hefty Entropy Study 3 in glass and concrete, which manages to balance a weighty grey block atop delicate stringer glass legs, complimented by a slumped silver salver holding a dish of upright, though tilting stringers, and Cara Louise Walker from Glasgow receiving £1,000 for her Aphasia, Phantasmia and Amnesia pieces in glass and silver, using kiln casting, coldworking and silversmithing.

The National Glass Centre's Emerging Artist Residency Prize, worth £3,000 presented by Julia Stephenson went to Choi Keeryong from Seoul for his three pieces, Korean Glass 24, 25 & 27 featuring blown glass and English porcelain parts with inlaid colouring, and cold fusing. The pieces which are almost spherical include brightly coloured inlaid pieces which evoke delicately painted Korean script, topped by delicate ceramic lids.

Two remaining awards, the People's Prize sponsored by Warm Glass UK and another new award, the Young Collectors Award, sponsored by Mark Holford will be announced at the close of the festival on 31 May.

Local flavour came from the only Stourbridge-based artist to be selected for the show, Vic Bamforth, who has a studio at the Ruskin Glass Centre. His two blown and painted graal pieces, Ooz Going to Dudley Zoo and The Strongest Links with a portrait of political activist Mary Macarthur feature colourful local scenes infused with affection and humour.

**Elisabeth Johnson, International Festival of Glass Project Director said:**

"All of our judges had a really tough job on their hands, the quality of the pieces and the range of techniques on show was astounding. Ashraf was a worthy and unanimous winner, his pieces have an elegant simplicity which belie the skills required to create them.

"All of the selected artists have proven themselves, just by virtue of being chosen to exhibit and I'm sure that we will be seeing the evolution of many artistic careers following the awarding of these prizes from our many generous sponsors."

**Ashraf Hanna winner of the British Glass Biennale Prize said:**

"I really can't believe I've won the British Glass Biennale Prize, it's so unexpected. I only made the move to glass a couple of year ago and I was excited just to be chosen to exhibit. To have won is quite overwhelming and I'm so grateful to the panel for their appreciation of my work and their belief in what I do."

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"I would to thank the Arts council of Wales for affording me this opportunity by awarding me the Creative Wales Award 2013, for my project an exploration in the language of form and material which allowed me to explore the relationship between ceramics and glass. And I'm very grateful to Heike Brachlow for her wonderful support which made it all possible."

The established artists taking part in this year's Biennale are Karen Akester, Margaret Alston, Vic Bamforth, Scott Benefield, Juli Bolaños-Durman, Karen Browning, Edmond Byrne, Keeryong Choi, Katharine Coleman, Nicholas Collins, Erin E Dickson, Shirley Eccles, Rachel M Elliott, Fiaz Elson, Louis Thompson & Hanne Enemark, Sally Fawkes and Richard Jackson, Carrie Fertig, Corrina Field, Katya Izabel Filmus, Livvy Fink, Alec Galloway, Zoe Garner, Stephen and Kate Gilles Jones, Ashraf Hanna, Gillian Hobson, Ana Rosa Hopkins, Ingrid Hunter, Elin Isaksson, Max Jacquard, Shelley James, Angela Jarman, Alison Kinnaird, Emma Mackintosh, Julia Malle, Geoffrey Mann, James Maskrey, Gayle Matthias, Helen Maurer, Rosa Nguyen, Linda Norris, Amanda Notarianni, Jochen Ott, Inge Panneels, Jacque Pavlosky, Kevin Petrie, Bruno Romanelli, Ruth Shelley, Lisa Sheppy, Cathryn Shilling Amanda Simmons, Ayse Simsek & Heike Brachlow, Nancy Sutcliffe, Ayako Tani, Deborah Timperley, Elliot Walker, Cara Louise Walker, Karin Walland, Surinder Warboys, Emma Woffenden and Tord Boontje.

The remaining 13 student artists, who were equally eligible for the main prizes are, Jenny Ayrton, Emma Baker, Eddie Belvedere, Dan Bowran, Phoebe Gowen, Haley Haddow, Sienna Holihan, Deborah Martin, Faith Mercer, Harry Morgan, Alicja Patanowska, Tao Shen and Julia Williams.



28 May 2015

**Ends**

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### Notes to editors

The **British Glass Biennale** is delighted to be working once again in association with the **Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London**, who will select the winners of their Art & Craft Award and Student Award from the exhibiting artists within the British Glass Biennale.

Exhibition dates: 28 May to 28 June 2015.

The **British Glass Biennale** will be held in the Glasshouse Arts Centre and Ruskin Glass Centre, The Glasshouse, Wollaston Road, Amblecote, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 4HE. For more information, visit [www.biennale.org.uk](http://www.biennale.org.uk)

The **British Glass Biennale** is part of the **International Festival of Glass**, an exciting programme of events and exhibitions for glass enthusiasts and the public alike, which attracts visitors from around the world to venues across the Stourbridge Glass Quarter. The Festival centres round its four day public Glass Festival, from 28 – 31 May. Although the British Glass Biennale exhibition is free there is an entry charge to the Ruskin Glass Centre over the Glass Festival weekend. For more information, visit [www.ifg.org.uk](http://www.ifg.org.uk)

The Biennale jury is made up of:

- Graham Fisher MBE – Director of the British Glass Foundation
- Janice Blackburn – Curator of Contemporary Design for Sotheby's and 10 Downing Street
- Mark Holford – Glass Collector
- Jonathan Watkins – Director of the Ikon Gallery
- David Reekie – Glass Artist