



**AIDA: Fostering Israel's Contemporary  
Artists Working in Glass**

*By Erika Vogel and Doug Anderson*



B.

A.  
*Noa Hagiladi*  
 This is My Baby,  
 He used to Say, 2006  
*pâte de verre*  
 0.8 x 12 x 12

B.  
*Dafna Kaffeman*  
 Bread Wheat, 2006  
 six glass pieces,  
 fabric, thread  
 0.8 x 17.7 x 14.6

*In 2003, Andy & Charles Bronfman and Dale & Doug Anderson, along with friends and colleagues, created the Association of Israel's Decorative Arts (AIDA). AIDA's mission is to foster the development of contemporary decorative artists from Israel by connecting them to an international audience of galleries, institutions, and collectors.*

The earliest pieces of blown glass are thought to date back to about 50 B.C. and have primarily been discovered in what is today modern Israel. Given this fact, it is striking that until recently, the land that gave birth to glassblowing has had little activity in glass art since those early days.

Not until the mid-1970s did the studio glass movement reach Israel when Marvin Lipofsky travelled to Israel and spent time at Israel's preeminent art school, the Bezalel Academy of Art in Jerusalem. While there, he built a glass furnace for the Ceramics Department. The first courses in glass were taught in the late-1970s and a formal department with a full curriculum was established in 1997. Believe it or not, the furnace built by Lipofsky over 30 years ago is the same furnace in use today. Until 2006, Bezalel housed the only large glassblowing facility

in Israel, making it challenging for graduating students as they had nowhere to continue their craft upon graduation. To date, Bezalel remains the only university where students can study glass making in Israel.

Two museums, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and the Eretz Israel Museum near Tel Aviv, have displayed contemporary glass in their galleries since the 1970s, but until the mid-1990s, private dealers and collectors remained largely disinterested in glass as a contemporary art form.

The major attitude shift came in 1997 with Dale Chihuly's exhibit at the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem. The exhibit was an eye-opening experience for Israel's artists and the country as a whole, demonstrating the potential of glass as an art form. Time and again, AIDA hears from artists that this exhibit was a defining moment for them to become engaged in glass. Indeed, over the past ten years, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of Israeli artists working in glass as well as increasing interest in the media amongst dealers and collectors. That said, there is still much catching up that needs to be done to achieve international standards and surmount Israel's modest resources.

A number of recent developments within the Israeli glass movement have caused AIDA to invest more time, energy and resources into this community. In 2007, two local artists working in glass opened their own private hot shop in Tel Aviv, the first studio of its kind in Israel, called G Studio (formerly Trio Vetro Studio). A number of new initiatives coincided, including a major museum exhibition and gallery, both providing opportunities to Israel's emerging artists working in glass.

Henrietta Bruner, the glass curator at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, curated *Fragile Reality: Israeli Artists Creating in Glass* which opened in the winter of 2007 and was the first show of its kind showcasing glass by contemporary Israeli artists (AIDA provided support for the printing of the exhibit's catalogue). In addition, Miriam Yaniv opened the Yaniv Glass Gallery in Tel Aviv, showing and selling their work. Both the exhibition and gallery have provided significant new opportunities for Israeli artists.

As AIDA's mission is to foster the development of contemporary decorative artists from Israel, and since glass is emerging as a viable art form, the organization has established several programs to support Israel's studio glass artists.

Since 2003, AIDA has sponsored fellowships for Israeli artists at Pilchuck Glass School and the Corning Museum of Glass. These programs provide artists with advanced training, an opportunity to network with international colleagues and learn about the local art market. The high-demand for fellowships has demonstrated that further glass initiatives in Israel are required in order for Israeli artists to continue to progress. As a result, AIDA launched a pilot project with G Studio where the organization rented studio time at the glassblowing facility for five promising artists.

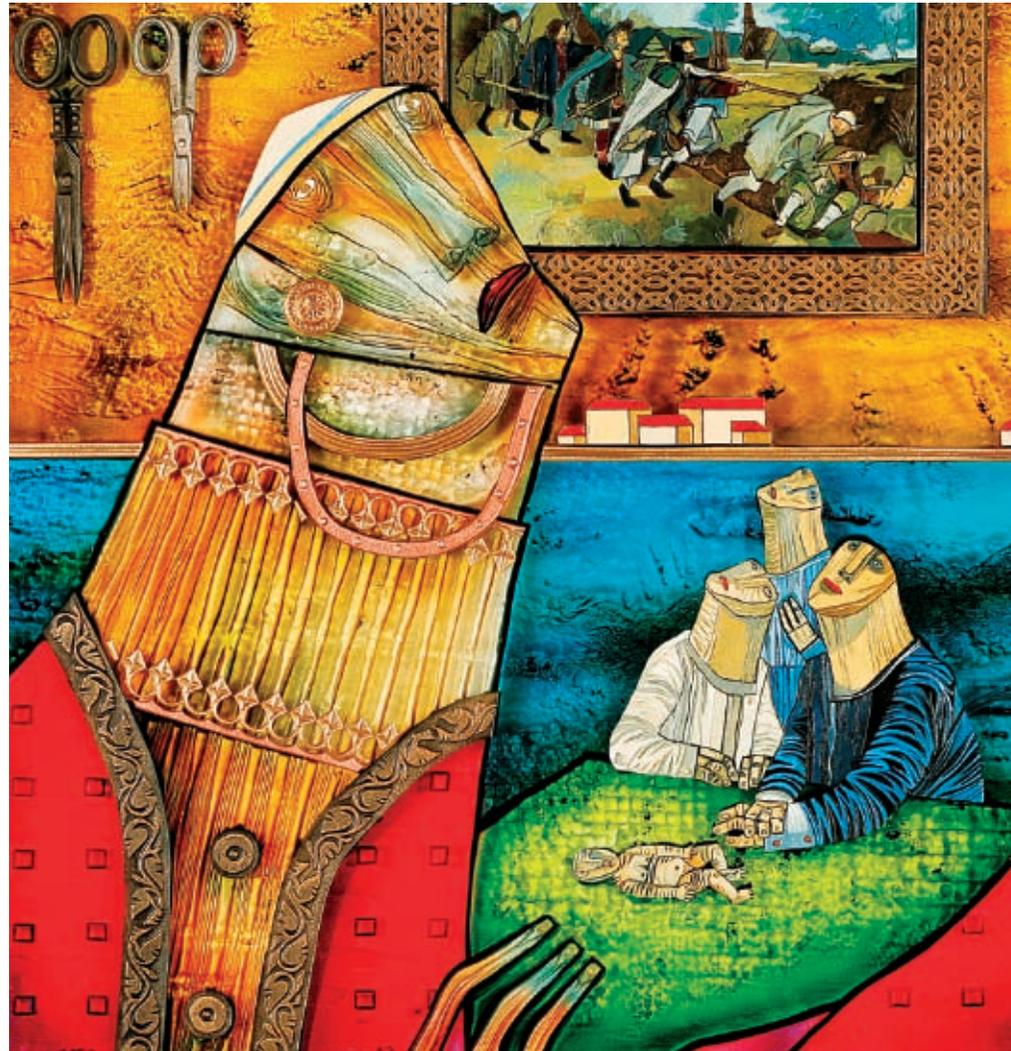
It has become increasingly apparent that education and learning is key to advancing the Israeli glass movement. In May 2007, AIDA sponsored its first glass workshop in Israel. Seattle-based artists and members of Lino Tagliapietra's team, John Kiley and Jennifer Elek, were funded to travel to Israel to conduct workshops and demonstrations at Bezalel Academy and G Studio. The workshops offered students and instructors a learning opportunity; as John mentioned at the conclusion of the workshop, "It is a very exciting time for the glass movement in Israel. The artists we are working with are really the pioneers of a new generation of artists." In February 2008, AIDA provided support for Bill Gudenrath, Resident Advisor of the Studio at the Corning Museum of Glass, to present a workshop at G Studio. Following these successful workshops, in June 2008, AIDA supported a two-day frameworking workshop at the Bezalel Academy led by Minnesota-based artist Chris McElroy.

As the glass movement in Israel awakens and artists seek high-level training, AIDA continues to encourage and support emerging glass programs. AIDA aspires to influence the future of glass art in Israel, spreading the word of its artists' considerable talents into global markets.

Erika Vogel, director, AIDA  
Doug Anderson, co-founder, AIDA

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For more information please visit [www.AIDAarts.org](http://www.AIDAarts.org).





C.



D.

C.  
Sergey Bunkov  
Six Blind Men, 2008  
sand-blasted glass  
23.6 x 31.5

D.  
Sergey Bunkov  
Six New Israeli Shekels, 2008  
sand-blasted glass  
31.5 x 23.6