

Artist's Statement – David L. Smith, Ph.D.

Jazz With Magma

I am a scientist-artist, inspired by the stories told by texture, color, and form in the natural world. I am a geologist, working to understand the stories told by rocks. And I am a hot glass artist, working to tell stories in glass. I thrive on the interaction of material science, creativity, and aesthetics that happens in the hot glass studio.

The glass I use in the studio is composed largely of silica, as is the magma in many volcanoes. The formation of bubbles in molten silicates drives the spectacle of volcanic eruptions. I have spent years working to understand systems shaped in part by the formation of huge piles of glass and glass fragments in massive eruptions driven by the formation and bursting of uncountable bubbles. Now, I work on a much more intimate scale to control the formation and form of single bubbles. I love the fluid nature of hot glass and the flexibility it allows, combined with the immediacy of the transition from fluid to solid, and the focus it requires. Resolving that tension requires skill and improvisation to support each other and is a tremendous source of challenge and joy. Jazz with magma.

My glass work focuses on functional vessels and expands on centuries-old traditional methods, especially in the use of twisted, “zanfirico” cane and patterned glass pieces (murine). I prefer to use color and pattern that is more highly gestured, freer, and less symmetrical than traditional Venetian work. Designs and forms that create upward motion provide visual echoes of the turbulent magma chambers from which the ingredients of my work were ultimately derived.

You can follow and purchase my work on Facebook, Instagram, and Etsy under my personal studio name, Hyaline Expressions Glass Art.