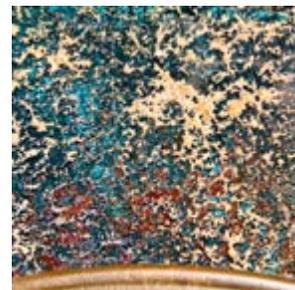


CIRCULAR OBSESSIONS



Aeon

Mixed Media Series
In Glass, Metal & Wood
by Jim Boles



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metal objects often play a central focal role and point of contrast yet complementing the glass.

In the end the various media must obtain a coherency, self-consistency and integrity. After rough sketching Jim turned to the lathe to spin out his visions in three dimensions. Turned wood designs sometimes become parts of the finished work, but were often turned into originals for molds in both glass and bronze castings.

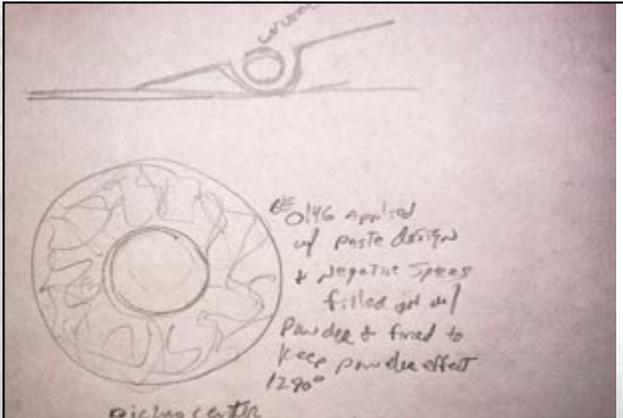
It took Jim more than ten years to gain a sufficient expertise level in woodworking, glass fusing, glass casting and torch-work, and also bronze casting to accomplish his goals. For Jim the test of success was the achievement of an integrated form where the glass, metal and wood elements melded into a visual singularity.

Circular Obsessions is a sculpture series focusing on media in-the-round. From lathe turned objects to torch-worked glass spheres to cast bronze hemispheres, the circle and the sphere are the central motif revealed in continuously changing form, texture, color, and media.

A visual integration of metal, glass, and wood is the aesthetic goal of Jim Boles working out of his studio in Savage, Minnesota. An interplay exists between the elements: metals are fired into glass as a colorant; wood is used as a mold in glass forming; wood is also copper plated and becomes part of the final form; and found



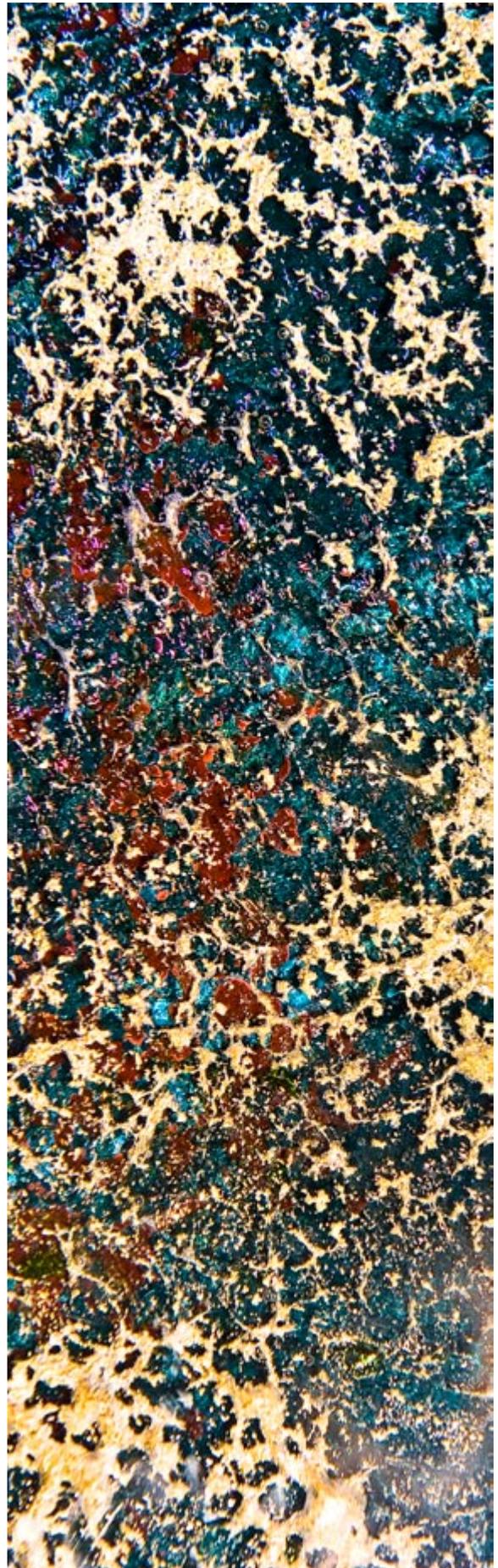
While Jim has had some formal art training the ten year journey to produce this series was mostly a sojourn. It was a slow process for the visual vocabulary to be formed. Much of the time was dedicated to simply understand the technical aspects of learning to control the various media.



What is it called when someone spends tens of thousands of dollars equipping a studio, and years playing with simple shapes not ever really understanding where it is all going?
Circular Obsessions.

It was not until Jim purchased a wood lathe that he realized it represented how his interest in glass, metal and wood would be solidified. The lathe spun out molds for casting, fast prototypes of form, and enabled experimentation with newer media such Corian and Avonite.

Detail of Aeon's ring >



Aeon

I acknowledge one great invisible God, unrevealable, unmarked, ageless and unproclaimable; the unknown Father, the Aeon of the aeons, who brought forth in the silence with his providence: the Father, the Mother, and the Son.. (Gnostic text)

Mix Media Sculpture

Size & Weight - 21 inch diameter by 9 height., 19 lbs.

Metal Marble - The two spherical objects at the center of Aeaon are Metal Marbles. Metal Marbles are torch-worked glass which has metal oxides added to it and then run through multiple cycles of oxidation and reduction the the torch.

Cast Iron Ring - The center ring is an antique cast iron heating registrar manufactured by the Adams company whose patent stamp on the piece dates 1897.

Copper bowl - The central housing for the marbles is a copper bowl which has gold leaf applied on the interior and patinae on the outside.

Glass Disk - The outer glass ring is fused glass with a solid copper sheet sandwiched by glass on both sides. Gold mica and chromium based frit glass add gold and green detailing. The outer glass has an iridescent side which was fired inwards, adding sparkle to the deep blue of the copper.



This work is named Aeon because in Gnostic theology aeons were primal emanations of God such as power, truth, mind, and slience etc. In this work two of these primal forces are represented within the golden place of orgin with the spinning cosmos surrounding them.

The cast iron found object is an example of the visual vocabulary growing unconsciously over time. It was collected 15 years prior to finding its way into this work. It was purchased at that point in time simply because of its attraction.

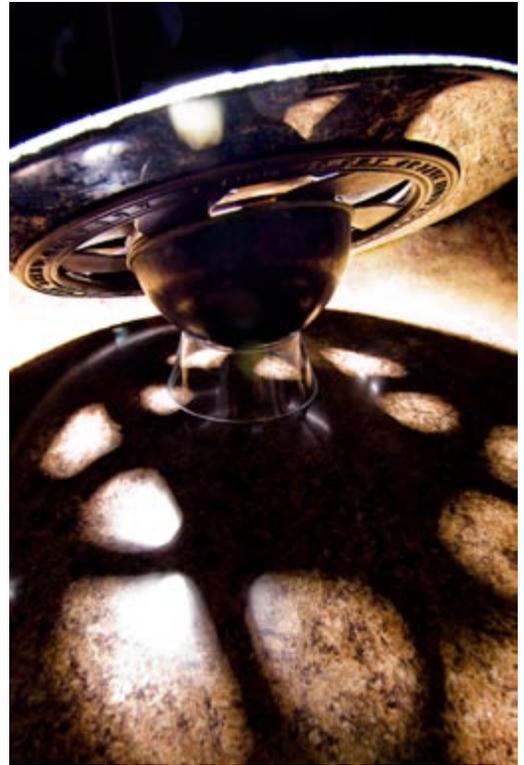
In order to achieve its integration it had to be sand blasted, copper plated using a plating solution, then patinae applied and finally waxed and buffed.

The copper bowl has the same story, and originally the intention was to have one on top also. The sculpture took on an over-the-

top comical quality, looking very much like a flying saucer for space artist. Consequently, it reentered a design phase and new visual elements were added.

This iterative process is common where additions and subtractions occur until the work achieves a visual balance.

This work showcases the use of copper sheets as a glass inclusion in the ring. A large amount of color in Jim's work come from metals and other elements added to the glass, and not from factory supplied colors.



macro photograph



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Focus On ...

Kilnformed Glass

This Focus On section outlines how the glass rings or disks were created for this series.

The process starts as a series of tests where 4 by 4 inch square sheets of glass are arranged in the kiln as seen in figure 1. Different treatments are applied to each blank. Some



figure 1

of the elements that are applied are: mica, copper, gold, brass, various glass frit, glass lace, enamels, glass powders, powdered raw oxides and others.

Each element can be applied in different ways, sizes, and on different layers above or below other elements. For example, mica can be applied by sifting it on a top layer, or glued directly onto frit, or as a base on which other elements rest. The possible combination of layering, elements, and application type is basically endless.

Additionally, these elements react not only differently to each other, but also to variations in the firing schedule which has a very significant effect for better or worse on the final look.

Many series of test firings are done. The process is admittedly tedious. However there are strong reasons for its necessity. Firstly, through these exercises you expand your vocabulary beyond the use of stock colors provided by a manufacture. Secondly, an original look is archived and more importantly, the look is integral to the whole of a sculpture. For example, using metal in the glass integrates the glass with other metal parts of the work.

In kilnformed glass is not easy to obtain naturalistic flowing detail as is found in agates and polished marble. By utilizing raw elements such as copper and mica instead of manufactured stock glass colors you can come very close to achieving a naturalistic look.

A third reason in avoiding stock colors is that glass is often too alluring to be taken seriously. Forgive the expression - like a dumb blonde. Creating your own textures, patterns and colors helps take glass from craft to art form.

In figure 2 a non-fired section of a glass ring is shown with what will be copper inclusions.



figure 2



figure 3

Heavy copper foil was oxidized in a previous firing and broken into bits. This oxidized copper will yield the blue that is found in Aeon's ring. Aeon's blue however comes from a copper sheet and not bits of copper as in the illustration.

Both the base glass type and the firing temperature influence the final colors which can range from rich to muddy reds and oranges, to green, blue-green, blues and blacks. Knowing what causes these colors and how to control them takes considerable effort.

In figure 3 gold mica has been shifted onto frit (small glass bits). The clear frit is sitting on top of a copper foil sheet. These are then covered with a layer of glass encasing the whole.

Understanding how the mica moves when heated, and how to control the color of the copper and orchestrating them together was one of the challenges of producing Aeon..

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