

## Proposal:

History, whether studying or creating it, is something that I find meaningful and important, and as a glass art student, I find inspiration in history and try to create art that exhibits this meaning and importance. Industrial and art glass have roots in my hometown Toledo, Ohio and this may begin to explain how I am able to link my glass with ideas about history. Growing up in Toledo, Ohio, USA is what initially introduced and connected me to glass, but I believe that in order to really become acquainted with glass as an art I need to understand how it has evolved in other parts of the world.

BGSU's art history classes have given me a broad overview of western art, and I know much about western glass history in Europe and how it has influenced American glassmaking. As an aspiring American artist I feel the need to travel away from the western world and tour Japan to learn about its own rich history, especially in glass, and the way it has shaped their contemporary life. I want to be inspired in ways I would never be able to be inspired anywhere but in Japan. The experience I have planned will allow me to achieve just that.

*Bunka* is the Japanese word that means what we mean when we say culture – as in a nation's arts, customs, and ways of life. History is important to Japanese bunka and I want to visit Japan to realize just how important it is. I know it is evident in their architecture, which in many cases is inspired by two ancient Japanese civilizations the Jomon and the Yayoi. The fact that contemporary architecture can use ideas that local ancients used is amazing to me because I cannot think of any aspect of our American lives that are influenced by local ancient cultures.

My professor, Scott Darlington, spent four years teaching glass at the Toyama Institute of Glass Art (TIGA) in Toyama, Japan, and inspires me everyday to be a better artist and a better

man. Scott has laid out stepping stones and helped me make connections in Japan that will allow the vision of my project to become a reality and a success.

I will travel to Japan on June 15, 2010, and come back two months later on August 15. I will fly roundtrip to Tokyo via Narita International Airport. I have been connected to Shunji Omura, one of the three most prolific Japanese glass artists, through Scott and will be living and working with him at his studio in Narita until the 20<sup>th</sup>.

After becoming acquainted with Japanese glass blowing, I will take a plane to Kyoto where I will spend the next two weeks in the heart of Japanese culture. Kyoto was once the Imperial capital of Japan, and is today one of the best preserved cities in the country. There are countless Shinto and Buddhist sights as well as Imperial Palaces in Kyoto. The Katsura Imperial Villa is one piece of architecture that I must see. It is a perfect example of how history is still prevalent in Japan, because though it was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was a huge inspiration to modernist architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While staying in Kyoto I will take a day trip to the Ise Shrine – about a three-hour ride. This is a Shinto shrine dedicated to the Sun Goddess. It was established in 4 BC, and since it is made of mainly cypress it is rebuilt every 20 years using the same initial structural design. Since the Emperor is said to be descendant from the Sun Goddess he is allowed in the Shrine. It is said to host the most important piece of regalia of the Sun Goddess which was her mirror. While in Kyoto (and all my destinations where I have no free place to stay) I will be staying at hostels and traditional Japanese guest houses, or traveler's stops called ryokans.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July I will pack up and take a two-hour train ride to Hiroshima where I will spend the next few days. Hiroshima is a must because of its historical influence on all aspects of life; western and eastern. There I will visit the Hiroshima Memorial Museum which is also an

example of great modern Japanese architecture. Hiroshima is also a place where I will be staying in a hostel.

On July 7<sup>th</sup> I will take the Bullet Train or Shinkansen to Kanazawa to the studio and school of arguably the most well known Japanese glass artists world wide, Hiroshi Yamano. I will stay there for a week visiting the school and seeing how a true Japanese glass master works. Located in Kanazawa is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art. Interestingly enough, the architects of the museum also deigned the new Glass Pavilion, my place of employment, at the Toledo Museum of Art. These contemporary architects use a lot of sheet glass in their designs, and I am looking forward to being inspired by this new museum.

On July 14<sup>th</sup> I will ride to Toyama where I want to spend a week at TIGA where I will stay with friends of Scott's. By the time I get to Toyama I will have ideas for some pieces inspired by my experience so far; so I hope to be able to make something in the school's studio. I also want to see Toyama and the Glass Institute because they have a graduate program that I may be interested in enrolling in once I graduate from Bowling Green.

After Five weeks of traveling on the main island of Honshu, I will make my way to the North Island of Hokkaido on the 21<sup>st</sup> to visit Sapporo and especially Otaru which has as rich a glass history as any glass town in the world. It is a city much like Venice in that it has a large canal system and is a port city. There are numerous glass shops that make all kinds of glass including cheap souvenir glass, which in my mind gets too little attention globally. Also in Otaru is the Kitaichi Venetian Art Museum. This museum contains many Venetian works as its name suggests, and a large percent of the collection contains work of the greatest Italian glass sculptor Pino Signoretto. I have never been able to see one of Pino's pieces in person, but he has been an enormous inspiration in my work

Lastly I will make my way into the largest metropolis on Earth and spend the rest of my trip in Tokyo. Although most of the places I am going are considered rural, they are still more populated than many cities in the United States, and Tokyo is home to over twenty eight million people. While there I plan to visit the following glass related places: Tokyo Glass Art Institute, Glasshouse, and Tama Art University. I want to go to all of these glass studios to see how true contemporary glass is a part of the biggest city in the world. I want to go to Shinjuku, the Japanese equivalent to Times Square. I want to see roppongi and its famous nightlife and clubs. I want to make a connection between the history I learned about during my experience and how it can still play a role even in today's metropolis. I also want to tour the Yoyogi National Gymnasium, which was constructed for the 1964 summer Olympics, because it is directly related in design to ancient Jomon and Yayoi architecture. I think it is important for me to hike up and around Mt. Fuji while there. This will be a great way to reflect on my experiences and think about ways to utilize what I have learned in my artwork and life.

This project will significantly affect my future as an artist. I don't know if that means my art will start to contain Japanese motifs and calligraphy, or symbolize ancient Japanese tales or fables, or resemble current Japanese popular culture. What I do know is that I will be inspired to make art that pays homage to all these things. Aside from the fact that I will create art directly inspired by my Japanese tour, there are other more important outcomes. This experience will help me forge priceless connections to artists and graduate schools on the other side of the globe, and it will help me get jobs or gallery shows here in America in my near future.

Over the past five years I have befriended many well-known glass artists and I have excelled in making glass art. To develop my work even further my next step is without a doubt to travel to Japan.

Budget for travel:

Airfare: \$1,300

Hostel/Ryokan: \$2,100

Food: \$1,200

Local travel/ Museum admission: \$1,400

Total: \$6,000