



## Artist Profile



### Paul Harrie Art Glass

Paul Harrie's *Saturn* weights are perfect — or he breaks them. *Saturn* weights are blown glass spheres with multiple layers of colored and clear glass, faceted and polished, sometimes with tiny canes wrapped around a central core. They have to be perfect. The natural magnification achieved by the many glass layers emphasizes any speck or bubble.

Harrie's studio in Los Angeles is as meticulous as his work. It's an open, bright, California-type place. This is a friendly place. Two fierce-looking dogs try to bluff the daytime

glass, grinding, cutting and polishing glass." He wanted to create a "sense of mystery. I wanted to make something that gave the impression of opening a box, peering into the ice, or looking into a geode."

He moved on to UCLA to work with Richard Posner and Richard Marquis, receiving an MFA in 1980. While there, he met his wife, Holly. Harrie taught at California State University at Long Beach and California State at Northridge. He, Holly, and several friends started an artists' cooperative in Santa Monica



*New Saturn Series weight with gold leaf inclusions. Photo: Staff*

crosswise into thin sections which he uses to create abstract patterns. He does this by laying contrasting squares and rectangles side-by-side on a metal form. Once the pattern is set into place, it is rolled up onto a gather of molten glass on the end of a blowpipe. The glass is heated in the furnace, blown into shape, and finally, cased in clear crystal. This technique was used in his early museum quality work.

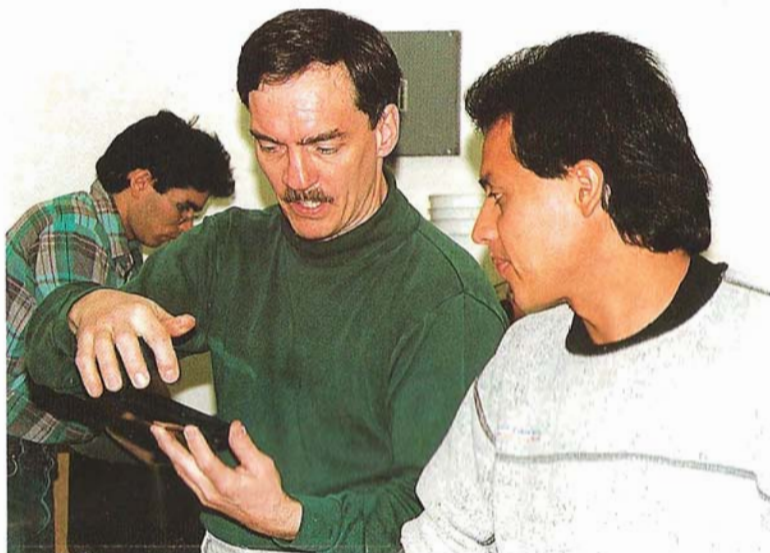
Pushing in new directions, Harrie is working on larger, one-of-a-kind pieces for the discriminating collector. This series includes individual blown sculptures in many layers, in which he extends color into deep crevices carved and shaped to reveal blues like a jay's wing, deep plum purples, ruby, and crimson. "I'm still experimenting," Paul said, "but I'll be ready to show them soon."

Another new venture is a collaboration with an interior designer on blown glass finials for drapery rods. These ornaments resemble flames and add a dramatic flair to window treatments. Paul likes the unusual and collaborations of this type add a unique dimension to his work.

Paul's work has been exhibited at the Nelson Art Museum, Kansas City; Kansas University; Cal Poly State University, San Luis Obispo; and Hastings College, Nebraska. In 1981, the Corning Museum of Glass selected Harrie's work for publication in *New Glass Review* 2.

Paul is a family man. He and Holly have two sons, Michael (14) and Stephen (11). Both sons enjoy music and Paul likes that. It reminds him of his own years playing the drums.

"I love doing this," Paul says, "working with my team, making art, just doing glass every day." Paul Harrie is still striving to capture that clean, cold look of North Dakota, working to encase a surprise in glass, working to "build colors," and determined to perfect his art.



*From left: Richard Bernal (background); Paul Harrie and Martin Garcia discussing progress on a project. Photo: Staff.*

visitor but, once informed that the visitor is harmless, flop down in the shade. Their real work is to guard the place at night.

Every surface is clean. Paul's colors are so important to him that he employs a worker whose job is to inspect color before it is used with the glass, just to remove tiny imperfections. His pulled canes are matched with a wire gauge for size so that multiple canes used in a single piece are exactly the same diameter. When Harrie says "perfect," he means it. Harrie's studio is alive with color. Bright, clear, clean colors have typified Paul's work since the beginning.

Harrie, born in Grand Forks, North Dakota, says that his search to capture the pristine quality of new snow and the clear, icy light of the winter of his childhood have affected his art and his life. He started out studying pre-med, "I was studying bones — I thought, 'I hate this,'" and looked for another profession. He began taking a ceramics course for enjoyment and soon found he was "hooked."

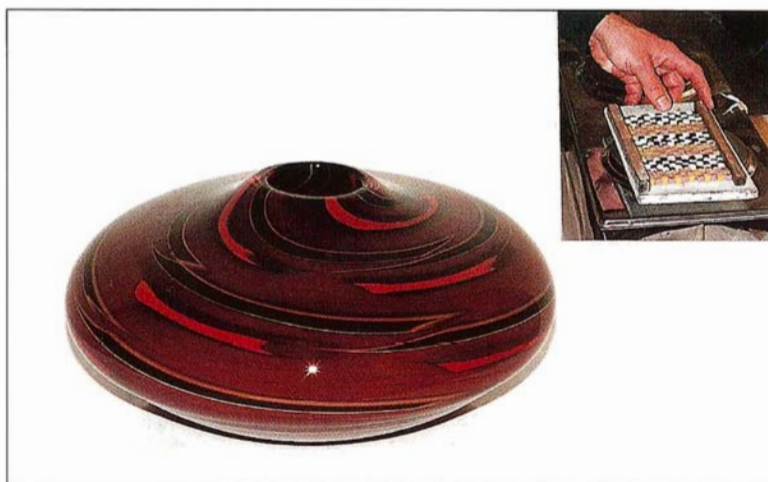
Paul enrolled in ceramics at the University of Kansas in 1972. The art program included glass, under Sheldon Carey. "I picked up the glass for the first time and it was all over," Paul says, "It was incredible. I loved it."

After receiving his BFA (1976) in ceramics, Paul stayed another year to work with Vernon Brejcha, "haunting the place. We worked for hours — all night — hundreds of hours. I was handling glass constantly." The variety of Paul's work then was "tremendous." "We were really pushing the limits, doing design with

and, after he outgrew his space, he opened his current studio. Team members Richard Bernal and Martin Garcia handle the cold work, polishing, grinding and finishing pieces. Harrie blows glass.

Harrie says he wants to create "individual sculpture," and that the *Saturns* have been his way of capturing space in a sphere. This series was inspired by the early photographs of Saturn from the spaceship, Voyager. His perfume bottles, both the *Saturn* series and others, have been featured in specialty gallery shows and exhibitions in every year since 1980. Paul's work is represented by galleries all over North America.

Harrie uses the complex Murrini technique, which originated in 15th century Italy, to complete vases and bowls (*see photo*). Paul pulls individual rods of colored glass into square and rectangular shapes. When the rods are cool, he slices them



*Murrini bowl; thin sections of colored glass used in Murrini work. Photo: Staff.*