

2007 Carlisle School of Glass Art

Marble Flameoff

by Barry Laffler

The 2007 Marble Flameoff at the Carlisle School of Glass Art was a great success. Over the past few years the school has developed into one of the premier lampworking facilities in the country, hosting classes with Larry Brickman, Shane Fero, Loren Stump, Matt Eskuche, and many others.

I have worked with Carlisle Machine Works for many years, and after one of my classes a number of us were relaxing in the lounge when I suggested a flameoff in conjunction with the Wheaton Marble Weekend, an annual event at WheatonArts in Millville, New Jersey. It attracts marble aficionados of all types with its exhibits, vendors, and demonstrations. It seemed like a natural to have a flameoff when you have some of the best marble makers and most fanatic collectors in the country in town for the weekend. The featured artist in 2007 was Gateson Recko, and demonstrations were provided by several well-known marble makers. You can learn more about Marble Weekend and the WheatonArts and Cultural Center at www.wheatonarts.org.

The Carlisle glass shop was designed with hexagonal tables that would give a clear view of all the artists, and with the stadium seating arrangement, the audience would be able to see all the action. The next day I received a call from Carlisle announcing that I had been volunteered to run the Flameoff. I took the challenge with the condition that every artist could use any torch in the Flameoff. This was an important point to me, since I didn't want the fact that Carlisle manufactures its own line of torches to limit artist participation. As you can see from the photos, there are a variety of torches that were used.



Paul Katherman



Travis Weber



John Bridges



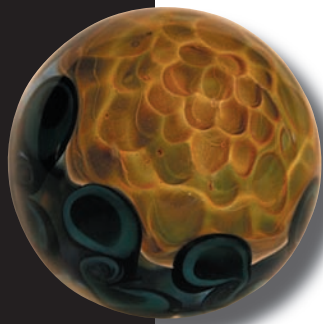
James Yaun



Kaj Beck



Mike Gong



Kevin **Smolark**



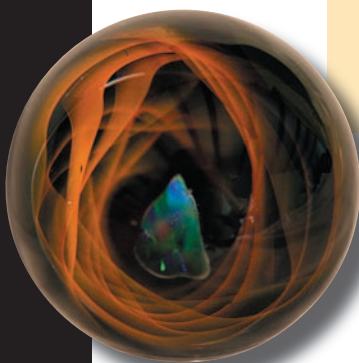
Amy **Ruopp**



Josh **Mazet**



Michael **Mills**



Chad **Trent**



Since this Flameoff was the first to be held in conjunction with Wheaton's Marble Weekend, most of the marble artists at the Wheaton Village show did not grasp the fun and excitement to come. I tried to encourage them and invited everyone I saw to stop by after the marble show ended on Saturday night. Ten contestants initially signed up, and six more arrived and just had to jump into the mix despite losing some working time due to their indecision about participating in the competition. That didn't matter because everyone was having so much fun. Most of these artists don't often have a chance to work with their peers, so this gave them the opportunity for some good-natured, friendly banter and harassment.



In the end, the sixteen artists competed in four different categories for eight prizes that were donated by glass suppliers and torch manufacturers. The first-place prizes ranged in value from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and included a Carlisle CC torch, a \$1,000 gift certificate from Winship, an M-15 oxygen concentrator, and a combination package consisting of a small torch from Wale and glass from Origin. The runner-up prizes were valued from \$400 to \$600 and consisted of a huge glass sample pack from Glass Alchemy, a combination package of soft glass from Glass Brokers, a Carlisle gift certificate, and two sets of gift certificates from Northstar and ABR. All of the marbles created for the Flameoff were auctioned off on eBay with the proceeds split between Carlisle School of Glass Art, WheatonArts and Cultural Center, and Millville's Glasstown Arts District.

The 2008 Flameoff will likely host even more contestants, so whether you are a new marble artist or a pro you may want to sign up early to reserve your bench space. There is also the possibility of additional or different categories for the competition this year, with even more spectacular prizes. I hope to see many of you there.

I'd like to thank Carlisle for the great hospitality and Friedrich and Dimmick, Inc; Glass Alchemy; and Northstar Glassworks for their sponsorship of the Flameoff. For additional information on the Carlisle School of Glass Art, you can check out the school's website. You'll likely recognize some of the faces.

www.carliseschoolofglassart.com

FLOW



The winners and runners up in the four categories were:

Best Use of Color

1st place: Brett Christian, Fairplay, Colorado

Runner-up: Josh Mazet, Eugene, Oregon

Best Inclusion

1st place: Raj Kommineni, Florence, Massachusetts

Runner-up: Travis Weber, Palo Alto, California

Best Vortex

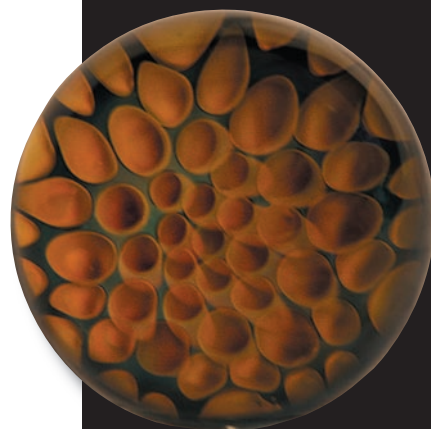
1st place: Chad Trent, Roanoke, Virginia

Runner-up: James Yaun, Asheville, North Carolina

People's Choice

1st place: Mike Gong, Venice, California

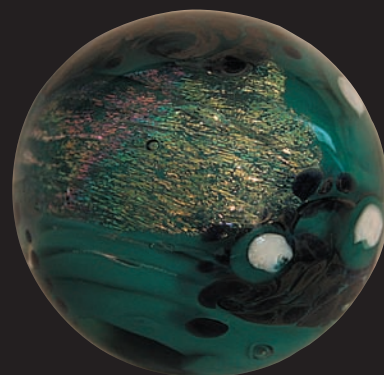
Runner-up: Amy Ruopp, Traverse City, Michigan



Raj Kommineni



Aaron Slater



Meredeth Dougherty



Brett Christian