



A CLEAR DESTINY

Verity Pulford creates breathtakingly beautiful glass art from her home studio in Coedpoeth, near Wrexham.

Words by Kate Houghton. Photography by Kirsty Thompson



Glass artist, Verity Pulford in her workshop

COED Poeth means 'burnt wood' in old Welsh and it's believed that there was a charcoal industry there in ancient times. Now the trees in this same woodland provide inspiration for glass artist Verity Pulford, who uses a different form of controlled heat to make her very beautiful work.

Verity grew up in Pen-y-Ffordd and came slightly later than most to her chosen career, after a few years of odd jobs and travelling.

'I realised in my late 20s that I needed to focus on something I really loved. I got a place on the Applied Art course at NEWI, specialising in architectural glass, and got a First Class Honours degree. I started selling my work immediately, through the Blue Coat Display Centre in Liverpool, where I also found a job working in the craft centre. Looking back, I don't think I was quite ready for being an independent artist at that point though and I soon decided to pursue a teaching career.'

Verity taught applied arts at Liverpool Community College, before moving to The Church of England Academy, where she took the role of ceramics teacher. Despite finding the work both challenging and satisfying, a new challenge - in the form of children of her own - came along and set her back on the path of working artist.

Verity tells me: 'I had two children very close together, so ended up with an extended maternity leave, during which I worked and worked at my own first love, glass art. I had bought a kiln after graduating from my degree course, which I set up in a shed at the bottom of my garden. My earlier work had been much more abstract, but the location, the views and my new life as a mother took me to a different place, artistically.'

'I'm so inspired by my surroundings here. My studio has a view of the forest and the mountain. I love the woodland and we spend a lot of time there. There are bluebells and wild garlic and other wild flowers, as well as the trees, of course. My current body of work is inspired by the light that flickers through the trees, the very qualities of that light.'





PHOTO BY DAVID JONES PHOTOGRAPHY

Verity works in fused glass, where she takes layers of glass and uses coloured ground glass and enamels to create her designs. Verity also uses sandblasting, hand etching ‘and lots of other things’ in her work, often using seven or eight layers of glass. Add watercolour and mixed media mounts, and you’re left with wholly unique creations that require some considerable, and repeat, examination.

Like every artist, Verity spent a great deal of time sending pictures of her work to galleries and shops, seeking sales. Despite receiving many knockbacks, she received sufficient interest to keep her going and soon started to develop an audience for her work.

‘There’s not a lot of fused glass art in galleries,’ she says. ‘Over the last two years I’ve started to be sought out by lots of top quality galleries across the UK and now my work is actually starting to pay me a wage.’

‘Last year I bravely took a stand at the British Craft Trade Fair in Harrogate, wondering all the time if my work was good enough. It’s purely for galleries to come and see you and place orders. I was really apprehensive, but I got so many orders!’

‘I’ve also just had a solo exhibition in the Community Gallery at Theatre Clwyd, which is a wonderful place to show. I get a lot of calls from people who want to come and see me in my studio and commission their own pieces whenever I have shows there.’

‘Perhaps my favourite though is the Helfa Gelf Open Studio Event, each September. It’s North Wales’s biggest open studio event and invites people to visit artists of all kinds in the studios, to see their work and how they create it. It’s a charity but so professionally run; they involve all kinds of artists including painters, sculptors, photographers, jewellery makers, woodworkers, potters, textile workers, glass makers, printers...it’s a wonderful event.’

‘I have a larger studio now – built for me by my father-in-law - and last year invested in a larger kiln. Lots of local people come and see me and because they know and love this area too they totally get what I do.’

Verity’s passion for her work is so apparent in everything she says it’s impossible not to be swept along with her; I shall definitely be heading her way for Helfa Gelf in September 2016!

‘It’s such a passion; I don’t think I’ll ever retire... it’s such a buzz, such a love for me, every day. My work is constantly evolving; I’ll never run out of ideas – only time!’ ♦

www.veritypulford.com | www.helfagelf.co.uk



Verity Pulford taking inspiration from the countryside

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