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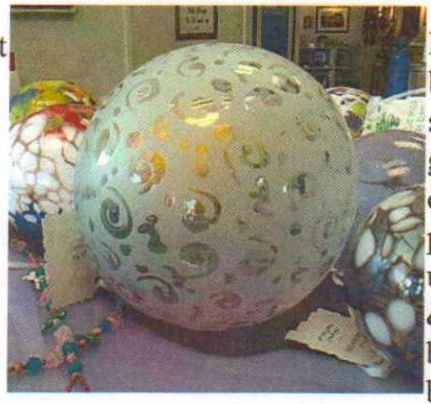
Dana Laird Robbins

Glassblower, Metalsmith, Designer

Dana Robbins, a glass artist from San Jose, CA, moved to New Mexico in 1996 to experiment with hot glass in a natural environment. Robbins Ranch Art Glass is situated on Robbins' Great Grandfather's old cattle ranch, 35 miles east of ABQ, in the town of Stanley, NM.



Robbins began his art career at an early age. He began by painting with oils at the age of eight. Although he enjoyed painting, Dana's natural talents were more in the 3-dimensional arts. He worked in ceramics during his teens, spending five years as a production potter. Shortly after he entered the ceramic program, at San Jose State, he was introduced to the glass department at the university & was hooked on glass. Dana spent 3 years in Undergraduate & 2 years in the Graduate Glass program & went on to study with master glass artists at the Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, WA.

As Dana learned to manipulate glass in his art, he discovered the art of sandblasting on glass. Robbins developed his glass etching/carving techniques in a business partnership in California, where he became successful at rendering designs for architectural applications in commercial & residential use.

Dana Robbins has received national recognition from the Corning Museum of Glass in the publication "The New Glass Review #11" (1989) & "The New Glass Review #12" (1990). Robbins has shown his glass art nationally in New York, Maryland, Ohio, California & now in New Mexico.

About the process…

In creating a Christmas ornament, one of the most basic glass shapes, Robbins starts by dipping a steel pipe into a 2100 degree molten pot of clear glass. After a small amount of glass is gathered onto the end of the pipe, color is then added to the piece. Different, powders, or chunks, are picked up with several rolls & melted into the clear glass & is then blown & shaped into a round bubble. A bit of clear hot glass is dripped on the top of the bubble & shaped into a hook with a pair of small tweezers. The piece is then carefully placed in a 900 degree oven to slowly cool, overnight, to room temperature. Each glass shape, whether it's a Christmas ornament, paperweight, goblet or vase, requires a different technique to render the final product.

Why is the overhead of making blown glass more expensive than many other art forms? One reason is that the raw material, a powder made of sand, soda, lime & potash, "the batch," must be melted in a furnace that remains at 2100 degrees, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This art form requires an enormous amount of fuel (natural gas &/or electricity) to melt & cool the material. Also, the tools & equipment required for glassblowing are very specialized & expensive to purchase, build & maintain.

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