

## LYDIA ANN PIPER - ARTIST STATEMENT

I am a designer. Not just in my art, but in everything I do. I approach life with an eye toward organization and purpose. When I write, I am constantly re-reading and editing my words so I am sure they express what I want to say. When I arrange furniture, I look at how it works with the space and interacts with my movements. My bedroom is designed so that it serves its purpose: relaxation and sleep. When I pick out clothes, every piece has a coordinated companion. Things have to fit together, go together, work together, and flow together, or I get anxious.

Okay, yes, I'm a control freak. Designing for me is the way I take control and organize my world. Everything has its place and purpose. I can't cook in a dirty kitchen and I can't focus on work if my house is a mess. There has to be order. And when I achieve that order, that purposeful design, I feel joy and satisfaction.

My art is a reflection of this need for purposeful design and order. When I create my glass art, I start out with disorder. I work with a stack of cut up glass, with no specific purpose other than to create a pattern bar design from which to start. I choose colors instinctively, creating a palette that makes sense to me. Sometimes I organize and stack the glass to help achieve a certain look, but other times, I just stir the pot. Either way, I really never know what I'm going to get. But when I open the kiln, and see what I created from a box of scrap glass, it is like opening a present. This is the beginning of restoring the order and giving the glass a purpose.

As I continue through the process of creating my glass art, all of my design instincts influence the piece. Graphic design, color theory, movement, flow and energy all come into play as I cut glass and lay out the pieces. I like the technique of on-edge-construction (the process of cutting strips of glass and placing them on their edge to form a design), which gives me more control over the look of the final piece. I usually don't have a plan when I start, allowing the pattern bar that was created to dictate how the piece will look. I will play with the pieces, rearranging them until something connects. (Did I mention I like jigsaw puzzles?) There are times that the piece comes together quickly, the colors and design jumping out at me. However, there are other times when it doesn't come so easily and I will spend hours working on a piece to find a combination that "works" and satisfies my design aesthetic. It can be frustrating, but for the most part, is very fulfilling.

I have often questioned my attraction to design and need for order, even trying a few times to "let go." (It didn't work.) However, a few years ago, I read "*Man's Search for Meaning*," by Viktor Frankl. In the book, Frankl talks about his experiences as an inmate at Auschwitz during World War II. As a psychiatrist, he was interested in why some people survived the horrific conditions, while others did not. He concluded that love sustained those that survived: love for another such as a wife or child; love for a vocation or artistic endeavor; and finally, the love of beauty, whether it is enjoying art or observing the natural design of things, such as a tree or flower. This love gave them a purpose and the strength to endure.

The idea that the love of beauty could sustain a person resonated with me. I realized that I found beauty in the simple order of things and it had sustained me throughout my life. And now, when others see beauty in the design of one of my pieces, I am honored and humbled.