

Urquhart Glass



HAND CRAFTED GLASS FROM COMRIE, PERTHSHIRE

WWW.URQUHARTGLASS.COM

Meet the maker

Mairi Urquhart works with glass because she loves creating something unique and surprising. Her favourite part of the process involves seeing the finished piece for the first time, either when opening the kiln for a piece of fused glass, or when holding a piece of finished stained glass up to the light. The excitement of not quite being able to predict the exact finish and the play of colours that are revealed is a thrilling combination. Making beautiful pieces for other people and the joy for both Mairi and her clients on presentation of the finished piece is a hugely rewarding and important part of Mairi's work.

Mairi works on both stained glass and fused glass projects creating a variety of unique pieces of all shapes and sizes including homewares, gifts, and jewellery. All her work is hand crafted in a cosy studio shop in the village of Comrie in Perthshire.



**MAIRI URQUHART IN HER STUDIO SHOP
IN COMRIE, PERTHSHIRE**

True love



“
The intensity of the colours
and the joy involved in
creating something that looks
beautiful in all qualities of light
- day and night - has long
appealed to me and renews
with every project. Fused and
stained glass are both
incredible mediums to
showcase my true love of
colour.”

Painting & leading

There are three stages to the firing of painted glass projects: tracing, shading, and colouring, each adding a different layer of detail to the piece.

The process begins with creating a template for the design known as a cartoon. Once this is done there is a flat firing in an electric kiln at around 675 degrees to create the dark outlines of a design. Working at this temperature will give a shiny quality to the finished design while a matt finish can be achieved at a slightly lower temperature.

The second firing at around 600 degrees adds shading and highlights. The final firing is all about adding colour to the piece which is achieved using different glass powders and enamels, some of which use pure gold.





Stained glass

Painted pieces are then incorporated into a panel, along with other pieces of coloured glass using lead came (a length of lead with a channel either side that the glass sits within). After soldering the joints and cementing the panel all that's left is a final clean and the finished piece is ready to be hung in front of an existing window or to replace it entirely.

Stained glass pieces are created using both copper foil (Tiffany Technique) and lead came methods that join pieces of glass, depending upon the style of project and eventual purpose. Copper foiling is very fine and works best for intricate pieces of indoor work. Lead lining is ideal for outdoor projects as it is wind and watertight.

**There is very little margin for
“ error when joining pieces of ”
glass.**

Fusing glass

Fused glass, sometimes known as 'kiln-formed glass' or 'warm glass', is a technique where clear and/or coloured glass is melted and bonded or fused together in a kiln at very high temperatures. This method can be used to produce a wide range of decorative and functional glass pieces including jewellery, bowls, sculptures, panels and ornaments.

Fused glass projects typically involve temperatures of up to 840 degrees, and sometimes even hotter. Different ranges of fusing glass are tested to ensure they can be used together, avoiding costly breakages in the kiln. These range in type from frits, stringers, confetti, powder and sheet glass.





Firing

Like with stained and painted glass projects, different temperatures in the kiln achieve different results, creating raised rounded or flat surfaces. A basic firing of glass to create a fully fused piece will require a full 24 hours to heat, melt, anneal (the period of time where the glass gets to relax at a certain temperature so there are no stresses in it that can lead to future fractures) and cool. Some pieces will go through this process numerous times, others may have to be left for a number of days to cool depending on size and thickness of the glass.

Precision matters.
“ Glass likes to be 6mm ”
when fired.

Decisions

The decisions that need to be made at each stage of the process are fascinating and showcase how much skill is involved in designing and then bringing to life beautiful glass creations. For every piece Mairi must decide not only what the finished piece should look like, but also how thick the glass is and therefore how long it will take to fire and at what temperature, what method of joining the pieces to use and which types of glass to use to achieve the desired effect.

To some extent much of the process with glass projects of all kinds involves working blind and having faith in the process. When making a piece Mairi will know the shape, colours, and effects she wants but can never predict the exact finish, the piece must necessarily evolve throughout the process.





Materials

There are many types of glass that can be used to achieve transparency or opaqueness, vivid colour, or more subtle effects, and even glitter or iridescence. Glass frit, art clay, stringers, gold mica and confetti glass are just some of the materials Mairi can choose from.

For example, confetti glass is very thin coloured glass made from the gather from the furnace. The gather is blown into, resulting in a very thin glass that is deliberately shattered to create the confetti effect.



“Glass hates glue
so jewellery can be tricky.”

Glorious surprises

“

Sometimes when you open the kiln or hold the glass up to the light you uncover glorious surprises. Happy accidents can happen during the process that transform the work and I love that constant possibility.

”



Joyful creations



Mairi loves making things for other people. Witnessing their enjoyment of finished pieces is part of what makes her so skilled at bespoke commissions. Some of Mairi's work begins with a very specific vision of the desired outcome, while other projects have more vague beginnings and are left to evolve from an inspirational catalyst. A recent commission underway is a 1m x 1.2m piece of intricately floral, intensely colourful stained glass.

The way Mairi talks of the glass, with respect and warmth, displays the depth of connection she has with her work. It is abundantly clear when looking at any of the pieces Mairi has made, whether fused glass, stained glass, or jewellery, that they have been created with love and joy at the heart of the process. That joy is exactly what you will feel when you find the perfect piece of Urquhart Glass for you.

Urquhart Glass

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