

A Colorful New Studio in Lucca

Jill Casty Glass Art – Grapevine Editions

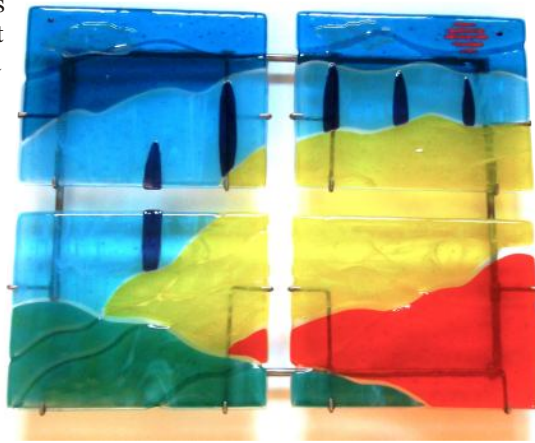
The international artist Jill Casty is returning to Lucca. Well, not quite. Her *art* is. After more than a decade of living and working much of the time in Tuscany, at this time she is in California, in the U.S. But a collection of her unique glass and metal sculptures remains in Italy, and so ***Grapevine Editions*** is celebrating her work and the opening of their new space with an exhibition of these sculptures at Via Santa Gemma Galgani 6 in Lucca's Centro Storico (just off Via Fillungo at Porta dei Borghi). The Vernissage is planned for Friday, 30 July from 5 pm to 8 pm. The exhibition will continue indefinitely.

During her years in Italy, Jill's sculptures were presented in numerous cities: Pietrasanta, Prato, Pisa, Milano, Forte dei Marmi, Lucca, Bagni di Lucca, Rovereto, Livorno, Cascina, Cenaia....

This exhibition is particularly attuned and responsive to the mood of the times, as we move out of and beyond the isolation and crisis of the year of Covid. Recently Jill came upon a statement by the noted drama coach and theorist Stella Adler that she thinks gets right to the heart of the matter of her own belief in the role of art, its ability, its wonder in re-energizing our spirits: *Life beats us down and crushes the soul, and art reminds you that you have one.*

These sculptures, combining brilliantly colored glass fusions in a myriad of flowing shapes with a variety of metals, call out this kind of affirmation. As she put it in a recent interview, she wants them to be a celebration, a kind of Toast: To Life!

Jill's collection has pieces that are wall-hanging, floor-standing, and table-top. At the core of the vitality of all of the work is her use of color. Brilliant or serene, vibrant or gentle, luxuriant – color as it is transformed in glass, with its special qualities of transparency – catching light, reflecting it, changing as it changes. Jill finds no greater guide to these wonders of color than Henri Matisse and his inspiring quest to see ... *how to make my colors sing.*



Jill's own special quest in her art is to *affirm the possibilities of the harmony that can still be maintained in our important continuing connection, threatened as it is, to the natural world.* In this quest her sculptures are explorations in abstraction. They create impressions in abstracted form of the essences of the beauty of nature, its wonders; or they convey abstract expressions of her emotional responses to moments shared with this beauty.

In her ***Manifesto in Defense of Beauty***, Jill enthusiastically follows the banner of Pierre August Renoir in his call for the place of beauty in art and the world: *To my mind, a picture should be something pleasant, cheerful, and pretty, yes pretty! There are many unpleasant things in life as it is without creating still more of them.*

She comments, *Renoir was right. We may live in a world of chaos and turmoil, turbulence and confusions, of constant change and disarray, a world of violence and betrayal, so much pain and suffering. Yet there is now even more need to find peace and pleasure. There is a place for a modern art of unabashed beauty, an art that finds a harmony even within the chaos, that can refresh, energize, bring a moment of pleasure, of a kind of grace, even joy, beyond all that assaults our spirit.*

– by Alan Howard

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