

CROSS BAYOU POINT

*Opportunity Zones
Create Window of
Opportunity for Project*

THE RED RIVER FLOODING PROBLEM

*Expensive flooding damage
becoming a recurring issue*

318 FORUM

SANCTUARY GLASS
STUDIO HAS A VISION

BLOWN

A SAFE HAVEN FOR ALL PEOPLE
TO COME AND WORK IN THE ARTS

AWAY

OUTREACH PROGRAMS, EDUCATION
AND HANDS-ON PARTICIPATION
ARE JUST THE BEGINNING

SHOW YOUR LOVE *Focus on locally owned
companies that go above and beyond to earn your
business ... and they REALLY appreciate you!*

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Michelle Pennington and Eric Hess created Sanctuary Glass Studio, where anyone can create glass art. Their plans are about inclusiveness and bringing attention to the region through glass and other art.

Photo by Casey Jones

Sanctuary Glass Studio

A creative safe haven is born at the Twelve Hundred Marshall Building

Joe Todaro

Two entrepreneurs are attempting to bring national and international attention to Shreveport-Bossier City with glass. They call their venture Sanctuary Glass Studio, and Eric Hess and Michelle Pennington have been plying their trade as glass artists at the Red River Brewing Co. for several months. The two met while they were graduate students at the University of Texas at Arlington. “Michelle [Pennington] was a senior there, and I was a freshman. So I became her assistant, and we became friends,” Hess said.

It’s called Sanctuary because “the whole idea of sanctuary is that this is a safe place. This is a place where you can do your artwork, and you are going to be accepted,” he said. “But it’s not only a sanctuary for artists, it’s a sanctuary for people with disabilities, it’s a sanctuary for all races, all religions ... for anybody who just wants to be a human being and come and work in the arts.”

“We came here because Shreveport didn’t have a lot of glass [art], and I have family here,” Hess explained.

Out of their friendship grew the idea of creating an art glass studio to continue their collaboration. “The planning [for an art glass studio] really began at that time, Hess said. “We started researching all the other studios around the country.”

Pennington and Hess have also been busy at their craft. Both have numerous examples displayed on their websites, and Hess has recently received international recognition for his work. He was the only U.S. artist to be selected for an exhibit at the Prague Gallery of Czech Glass in 2018, where he received a third-place award.

Meanwhile, Sanctuary Glass has been creating visibility locally through demonstrations at the brewery, where they have a built-in audience. “A woman who came to Red River Brewery and saw a demonstration with friends commented, ‘Glass seems to bring people together.’ That’s exactly why we do this,” she said.

If handling glass fresh from a 2,500-degree kiln isn’t currently on your bucket list, Pennington and Hess are determined to convince you. “We’re doing Create Your Own; for \$35 people can come

and sit at the bench and actually create glass art,” Hess said. “Once they do it, they’re like, ‘This is something I can do. I’m not afraid anymore.’ People just need to try it.”

The facility at 1200 Market Street is nestled amongst the brewing paraphernalia and is visible through large windows through which brewery patrons can watch the process of glass art in comfort and safety and try their hand at glass arts.

Sanctuary offers outreach programs through local schools. They’ve gone to affordable housing developments to with children and brought programs to nursing homes and to Providence House.

“We started to work with a psychologist so that people with PTSD can utilize glass as a therapeutic process,” Hess added. “We’re trying to think of different ways the glass arts can be utilized in the community for people who don’t necessarily do art.” Another goal is to take kids who have gotten themselves in trouble out of the juvenile justice system and teach them a trade.

While the two were researching studios, they also became intrigued by the artistic and community impacts of art schools around the country, and that has helped fuel the idea of a school located in Shreveport Commons to bring students and faculty

Photo by M.C. Rolfe



Photo by M.C. Rollo

Visiting artist Charlyn Reynolds with her amazing blown glass burger.

from all over the world to the only such school in the central U.S.

“We’ve researched other schools to make sure it’s something we can do here,” Hess said. “One of the reasons we can be successful here is that we’re not depending solely on the local area financially. You’re looking at foundations from all over the country and the world that would support something like this.”

Once we start with glass and printmaking and that’s successful, then we start adding woods and metals, painting, photography, digital arts, jewelry. You can google Penland School of Craft and see what we intend to do. We’re going to do something similar to that here. Once we have that kind of school, artists from all over the world are going to want to come live here, do artist in residencies, become a part of the program, and it’s going to create lots of jobs. There are all sorts of benefits to developing an international school in the Shreveport area.”



The public is encouraged to create their own glass flowers or other works of art at the studio.

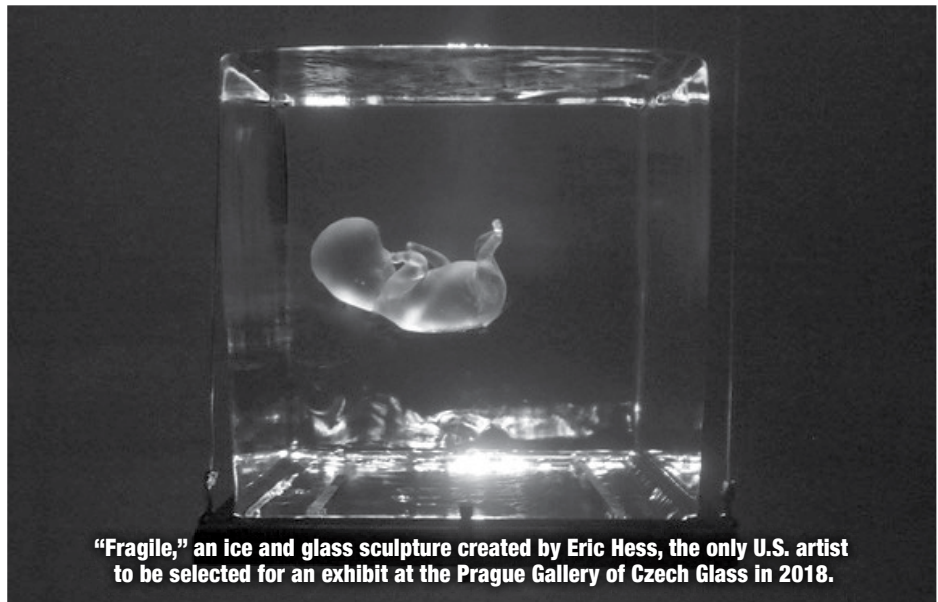


Photo by Eric Hess

“Fragile,” an ice and glass sculpture created by Eric Hess, the only U.S. artist to be selected for an exhibit at the Prague Gallery of Czech Glass in 2018.

bizScene



Sanctuary Glass Studio and Sanctuary Arts School held their grand opening and ribbon cutting at Red River Brewery in their location at Twelve Hundred Marshall Street Building. Fat Calf Boucherie provided a spread accompanied by beer and music. Visiting glass artists did live demonstrations.

– Photos by M.C. Rollo

Sanctuary Glass Studio

- 1) Eric Hess, Tristen Hebert and Mayor Adrian Perkins
- 2) Michael Wilhite, Charlyn Reynolds and Blake Boles
- 3) Parkman Bailey, Jake Bailey, Amy Bailey, Jack Bailey and Eric Hess
- 4) Chad Hebert, Eric Hess, Marilyn Bourene and Shelly Hebert

