



[News](#) ▾

[Sports](#) ▾

[County Budget Stories](#) ▾

[Cappies -- High School Theater](#) ▾

[Faith](#) ▾

[Health](#) ▾

[E-Section](#) ▾

[Real Estate](#) ▾

[Alexandria Schools](#) ▾

[Crime](#) ▾

[Alexandria Opinion](#) ▾

[Election 2007](#) ▾

[Newcomers' Guide](#) ▾

[Pain Doctor's Trial](#) ▾

[Pigskin Preview 2007](#) ▾

[101 Ways to Have Fun](#) ▾

[Community](#) ▾

[Living Legends](#) ▾

[Keeping Shop](#) ▾

[September 11th](#) ▾

[Top 100 Athletes](#) ▾

[2006-2007 Hoops Scouting Report](#) ▾

[VA. Tech: Close to Home](#) ▾

[Classified Advertising](#) ▾

[Alexandria Gazette Packet](#) ▾

[Arlington Connection](#) ▾

[Burke Connection](#) ▾

[Centre View](#) ▾

[Election Guide 2007](#) ▾

[Fairfax Connection](#) ▾

[Fairfax Station-Clifton](#) ▾

[Great Falls Connection](#) ▾

[Herndon Connection](#) ▾

[Laurel Hill Connection](#) ▾

One Glassy Gentleman

Artist Brian Costner's 'kilnformed' creations in Del Ray.

By Greg Wyshynski
October 11, 2007

Like so many other great men, Brian Costner's inspiration came to him in the bathroom.

Costner wanted to renovate a bathroom in his home, and began searching around for the right custom-made tiles for the job – taking him from the big box stores to the small tile makers.

"They were inspiring me, but they weren't giving me what I wanted," he said, "so I convinced myself that I needed to make them."

That's how Costner's artistic adventures with fused glass began six years ago. They continue today as the featured artist for October at A Show of Hands gallery (2204 Mount Vernon Ave., 703-683-2905) in Del Ray. His colorful "Kilnformed Glass" is on display and available for purchase throughout the month.

"And lo and behold, I have now spent much more than the cost of tiles," he said with a laugh.

A resident of Capitol Hill who works for the Department of Energy, Costner has a studio in the basement of his home where he creates some stunning work: Bowls that swirl with the color of tiny glass beads fused together with heat; as well as more polished, seemingly Asian-inspired pieces.

Some of the bowls, which retail between \$35-\$250, are what Costner calls "Gotas del Sol," or "drops of the sun" in the literal translation. "It's the idea that I was making these little glass pieces that were droplets of light."

For other pieces, sometimes the inspiration for the work is in the eye of the beholder. One piece bears a resemblance to Finland's national flag, with blue lines on a stark white background; others see a stylized peace symbol. Costner claims he hadn't intended to make either. "But I like it...we can run with that."

Costner answered a few questions about his work during his artist's reception at A Show of Hands last Thursday:

What's the basic process for creating these pieces?

You start with this crushed glass, which is called frit – randomly shaped and sized, about a quarter-of-an-inch. They go onto a kiln shelf and I make the design using whatever color combination I have in mind. They get fused together at 1,300 and some odd degrees Fahrenheit, it caused the pieces to round up, and then they go into a mold and become a bowl.

The color variation is different types of glass or changes through the heating process?

No, it's all different types of glass, in different colors. I have a palette of about 40 different colors that I work with.

How do you approach creating a design for a piece?

The pieces that are here are just playing around with basic color combinations and geometric shapes. Many of them are circles, or circles within circles. Something like that is steps removed from the concept of sun-in-sky or moon-in-sky, or something like that.

Are the larger pieces harder to keep together?

There's not a lot of difference. The glass fuses together. It's a little more work as far as the amount of material involves, and the extra weight can make it a little more fragile. Once it's done, it's actually surprisingly strong.

Brian Costner's "Kilnformed Glass" will be on display and available for purchase at A Show of Hands gallery, 2204 Mount Vernon Ave., throughout October. Call 703-683-2905 or visit www.ashowofhands.biz.



[Loudoun Connection](#) ▪

[McLean Connection](#) ▪

[Mount Vernon Gazette](#) ▪

[Potomac Almanac](#) ▪

[Reston Connection](#) ▪

[Springfield Connection](#) ▪

[Vienna/Oakton Connection](#) ▪

When folks purchase these pieces, what do you envision them using them for?

They should be pretty enough to display around the house. But I think it'd be great if they had a piece like [the larger one] and they took it around the house and put their fruit or their salad around, or even if they put a bunch of flower petals in there. And they can be hand-washed. I wouldn't recommend putting them in dishwasher, but you can certainly handle them in normal use.

What's next for you with this medium?

I also do some ceramic stuff. What I usually do is concentrate on a few styles during a particular year. I really enjoy doing this, so I imagine it will carry over to next year. But I have a few other ideas, and over the winter I imagine I might have a different focus and technique for next year.

So, is this a good release from your Department of Energy job?

Oh, it's a great, great release. Deskwork all day...which is interesting in its own way. But to get to play with colors and shapes is a great change of pace.



© 2003 Connection Newspapers. All Rights Reserved.

[Contact Us — Editorial](#) | [Employment Advertising](#) | [Contact Us — Advertising](#) | [Classified Advertising](#)