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# KEVIN LOCKAU

## 2009 SAIDYE BRONFMAN AWARD

By Dorota Kozinska

THE SAIDYE BRONFMAN AWARD IS CANADA'S FOREMOST DISTINCTION FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE FINE CRAFTS. THE \$25,000 PRIZE IS AWARDED ANNUALLY TO AN EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSPERSON, AND WORKS BY THE RECIPIENT ARE ACQUIRED BY THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION FOR ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION. FINDING HIS PLACE AMONG THE MANY LUMINARIES OF ARTISTIC CRAFTSMANSHIP IS THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT, GLASS ARTIST KEVIN LOCKAU.

To say that Lockau has 'transformed the landscape of Canadian glass art' is not an overstatement. Looking at his sculptural creations, it is evident to what un-chartered dimensions he has taken the medium. Lockau has invented three hot glass casting techniques, producing a unique material from which he creates his fascinating sculptures that combine animal, natural and human forms.

Born in 1956, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, he is linked closely with the glass studio at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario, which he is credited with developing and where he has taught for 20 years. He is also founding member of "10 North," a group of Canada's pre-eminent glass artists.

But what sets Lockau apart from the others, is his profound connection to nature, and to the Canadian landscape in particular, and his innate ability to commune with it, resulting in works of art of the most unique kind. Tactile, born of sand and rock, transformed into glazed mirrors by the artist's alchemic touch, his pieces are as raw as they are stylized.

"I have no romantic view of nature...", Lockau is quoted as saying, and that is a good thing. For applying a medium as seductive, as sensual as glass to his visceral vision without the understanding of its true nature, could prove artistically fatal. But Lockau's

vision is as contemporary as it is classical in its adherence to the demands of 3-dimensional art. Imbued with myriad connotations, from the sexual to the environmental, his pieces are an eclectic combination of material and form. In *Trickster meets the great mechanic*, a stylized, female jackal is composed mainly of natural materials with strategically incorporated mechanical pieces. Whimsical, comical, it is also textured and seductive, both in its frivolous stance and rich, if tonally subdued surface.

But it is in works like *Breathe Exhale* that Lockau truly shows his forte. This massive - 29" x 26" x 16" - sandcast glass and concrete sculpture is art excised straight from the earth, an organic manifestation of nature's beauty transformed into layers, ribbons of glass like waves that fold, pile up, lean on each other, glide over rough stones imbedded in translucent glass. As they merge and meld, they create crevices and mysterious shimmering interiors, petrifying into a unique, new form. Lockau seems to freeze the flow of nature, to capture it, encase it in his own image, suspend time and movement.



Kevin Lockau: *Do Unto Others*  
Photo: Tracy Wall  
Curtesy: Galerie Elena Lee

*Do unto Others* made of sandcast glass, forged steel, and spruce root, is yet another of Lockau's amazing sculptural pieces. With impressive dimensions of 65.5" x 31" x 31", it is a larger-than-life creation not only in its format, but also in its powerful expression. Bold and intimidating, it holds its ground with staunch vulnerability, split in half, suspended on fragile steel 'legs', strangely organic, even alive.

Recipient of numerous bursaries and awards, the Bancroft, Ontario-based Lockau is represented in Montreal by Galerie Elena Lee ([www.galerieelenalee.com](http://www.galerieelenalee.com)). His works have been exhibited in Canada, the United States and Europe.