

SAMUEL F. SPEES

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ARTIST BIO

Samuel Spees is an artist, designer, and craftsman from Dayton Ohio. While pursuing football at Centre College in Kentucky he was drawn to the process of glassmaking, which became his new favorite 'sport.' As a previous team captain, Sam has always had the drive to better himself and the world around him. He is always looking for an opportunity in which he can bring a fresh perspective, new ideas, seasoned experience, natural skill, and solid leadership to any community he finds himself in. Sam's practice embodies the mental process and physical techniques of glassmaking to make work that is playful, experimental, intentional, and technical. In turn he creates a wide array of both functional and sculptural objects through a lens perceiving the world through color, memories, and sensory experiences.

As an accomplished craftsperson, Sam has been very fortunate to work with many amazing artists and glassmakers in various environments across the nation, which greatly shaped my knowledge, craft, and skill set to be versatile, reliable, technical and creative. Earning a Bachelor's Degree in studio art and a math minor in college, Sam apprenticed with Stephen Powell, who was irreplaceable in his journey through the world of glassmaking. During that time, and the time before his passing, he aided Steve in the creation of his work, assisted in rebuilding furnaces and kilns, and maintenance of Centre's glass studio. After graduation, Sam was employed at the Chrysler Museum Glass Studio becoming a crucial member to the studio team. During his time in Norfolk, he developed deep technical glassblowing skills as well as responsibilities in maintaining and running a facility. Throughout Sam's time in Norfolk, he also organized and executed public glass blowing demonstrations, aided in teaching of both public and private (K-12) classes in all of the studio's, and fabricated equipment to help better organize the studio.

Prior to moving to Pittsburgh, the fall of 2017 was spent as the TA for DH McNabb during Penland School of Craft's 2 month fall concentration. This was an amazing journey of knowledge working with DH in the studio and with Nick Fruin on the technical side. These skills and sense of community continued to flourish at the Pittsburgh Glass Center while working as a studio technician. This opportunity proved invaluable in allowing Sam to implement and master skills in a practical studio setting. Additionally, it was another opportunity to learn alternative approaches to building and maintaining vital studio equipment as he helped rebuild one of the studio's furnaces with Eddie Bernard from Wet Dog Glass. It also brought the experience of working with great glassmakers such as Nancy Callan, Kathy Gray, and Chuck Savoie among others.

After a year in Pittsburgh Sam then moved to the Penland area of North Carolina, predominantly working for Nate Cotterman who was the resident artist at the Penland School of Craft. Sam assisted Nate, his wife, Toni, and their four-year-old helper, Arlo, in every facet of their glass making business. For those almost 3 years, he has truly flourished and continued to expand his craft through working so intimately with this amazing family. As an added strength, Sam had the freedom to work more on personal projects with others in the area, creating a variety of work in lighting design, patented glassware, and one of a kind pieces of art. This opportunity only continued to build upon not only talents as a glassmaker and technician, but plant a deeper footprint in the glass and art communities

Helping the Cotterman's move back north to the Cleveland area, Sam decided to move back to Pittsburgh assuming the role of the hot glass coordinator. This role wore many hats as he managed multiple facets of the studio and people. These included Pittsburgh Glass Center's mobile unit in both administrative and technical facets, training and scheduling of the studio instructors, as well as assisting/gaffing PGC's production line, custom commissions, demonstrations, and resident artist's. He was able to work with the likes of Natalia Arbelaez, Janusz Posniak, Nick Daniels, and Robert Lewis. Additionally Sam would assist with technical studio needs as the studio required.

Currently, Sam is the Director of Glass Operations at a brand new studio project called the Nashville Glasshaus, located in Nashville, TN. This role will come with many hats, truly allowing him to put all of his previous skills to the test. Additionally he will continue to create his own body of both glassware and sculptural objects.