

DREW FRITTS

Springfield, Missouri

Born: 1958

Biography: Drew Fritts was born in Denver, Colorado and grew up in Fairbanks, Alaska. He received a B.A. from North Texas State University where he studied jazz trumpet and computer science. Drew discovered glass in the early 1970s while still in high school. Using a simple propane torch, Drew created small sculptures using surplus Pyrex glass he obtained from his science teacher. But when that glass ran out, and without a source for more, Drew directed his talents toward music, drawing and woodworking for the next 20 years. Finally, in 1994, he returned to glass and began crafting beads and small marbles. In 1998 he started selling his marbles, and over the next several years added larger marbles and paperweights to his works.

Work: Drew produces an extensive array of his own marble designs using a combination of furnace and torchwork techniques. Typically, the center of the marble is gathered from a furnace of molten clear crystal. Each piece is then individually handmade over a torch by applying designs combining glass frits and colored glass rods. When the inner design is complete it is dipped into the furnace of molten crystal to add the clear outer layer. While still molten, the works are then rounded using graphite and cherry wood molds of Drew's own design.

Drew's works are included in museums and private collections around the world as well as numerous books. Drew has written technical articles for several glass magazines on different aspects of his craft, as well as several technical papers that are published on his web site. In March 2004 Drew published a book describing many of his techniques entitled, *"Torchworked Marbles, Volume I – Beginning to Intermediate Techniques."*

Artist's Statement: "I'm thankful to be blessed with talent and perseverance to produce my works, and extremely humbled by their reception in the collector community. The dynamic nature of the medium - molten glass, the almost endless color palette, and the ever-allusive shape - the sphere, make this a wonderful art form. It lends itself to both experimentation and chance, but at the same time requires extraordinary skill and control. Each piece is a challenge - a new adventure; every one is an individual work of art."