



South Africa/ West Coast USA Glass Exchange
and

Art Residency 2025

Sept. 7-30, 2025

By Kgomo Mtsweni

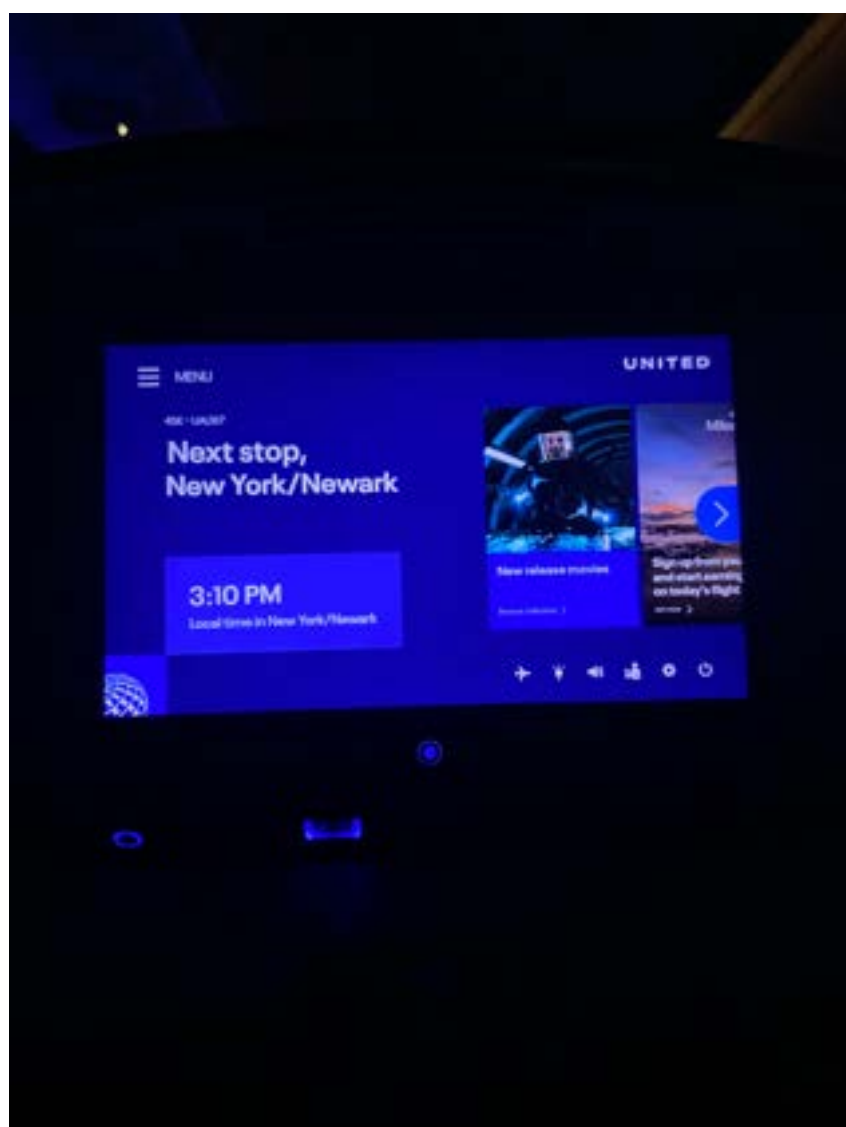
This journey began when Mrs Caitlin Greenberg invited seven international artists to TUT, leading to collaborations in Eswatini and at our university. I joined Mrs Katrina Hude's glassblowing group, where I met Katrina and Ms Mary White. Through continued collaboration between Thato Kokwana, Malebogo Molokoane, and the international artists, a cultural exchange and residency were envisioned. We all fundraised to make it possible. I'm deeply grateful to Prof. Pfundo Sidogi and our department for assisting me with the flight tickets. I proudly represented TUT in the USA through artist talks and I am so proud to be a product of TUT arts campus. This residency has transformed my perspective on glass art and expanded my network. Thank you so much.

Thank you to my department, and everyone who made this Trip possible.

K. Mtsweni

Sep 6 Saturday

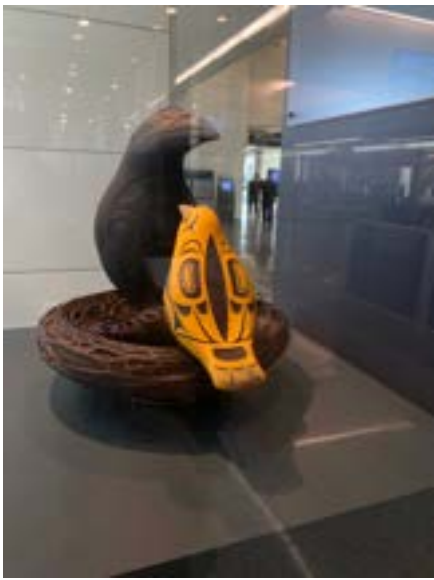
Thato Kokwana and I, Kgomotso Mtsweni, flew from Johannesburg's O. R. Tambo International Airport with a connection flight in Newark to San Francisco.



Sep 7 Sunday

Thato United 1:54 1 pm P7WHXV
Kgomo tso United 16.19 7KKGNU

When we arrived, we made our way through the international terminal toward the BART station, where we came across the Preston Singletary glass exhibition, an inspiring introduction to the city and its rich glass art culture.



Sep 8 Monday

At 9 am, we made a quick stop at Sawtooth Studios (near Mary White's house) to visit Bill Birch's Pinzetta Glass studio, where we watched Bill and Patty Garrett blowing glass.



10:30 am arrived at Public Glass, San Francisco



Tour with Marti Gorski, Director and met staff members Matt and Mega . Marti offered us a blow slot on Tuesday and David Patchen was blowing .



Gallego, Rijul Soan, Thato, Mary and I went to an Ethiopian restaurant. William is grad student in engineering focusing on ocean underwater research knows Eric and owns a pink boat. Lisa just finished MFA at UCB and works with criminology. We had huge, delicious meat plate and a veggie plates!



William gave me a peach as a token of appreciation, since California is known for its large, sweet peaches.



September 9 Tuesday

8:20 am UCB Optics lab and Rijul's office

<https://optometry.berkeley.edu/>

Tour of UC Berkeley <https://www.berkeley.edu/>

Great views of campus and looking down on the Bay. A few parent/children teams looking at UC Berkeley. We signed up for the campus tour including bear sculptures, buildings and students.



Left at 10 am for Public Glass in SF to the glass studio. <https://www.publicglass.org/>
Blew with wonderful PG blowers Megan and Matt and they even offered us colour to work with.



Finished around 6 pm.

7 pm Drove back to Berkeley via the foggy Golden Gate Bridge and Costco

9 pm home.

Sep 10 Wednesday

11 am Alex Abajian Glow Glass Studio in Oakland to see a demo with collaborator Rafi ,
blowing into wood moulds.



Tried tacos and burritos at a delicious Taco truck and the owner showed us her coin collection. I gave her a SA note, R10 and she gave me 50 Peso.
alexander-abajian.squarespace.com

Glow Glass Studio
Alex Abajian
950 57th Street
Oakland, CA, 94608
(575)779-0163iu
info@glowglassstudio.com



Mexician Food Truck

2 pm visit Michael Cohn of Cohn Stone Studio Michael and he gave us a great tour of his new exciting work, and their whole studio. Mary used to share a studio with Michael in the 1970s and he and his wife Molly Stone later built the Richmond studio.

They did both production and sculpture for over 50 years. Michael makes all his parts for the sculptures. Michael and Molly were the first to make pumpkins in CA in the late 1980s.

Later, many other studios began making pumpkins popular. Michael is amazing technician, using many gluing and fitting processes in his sculptures and building his glass furnaces and glory holes. He and Molly are selling the building soon and have stopped production.



<http://cohnstone.com>

Richmond, CA.

3:30 pm Visit to East Bay Batch and Color near Michael in Richmond and met owner Jim Meyers and two of his staff members Liz Strickland, Lance and

Lance's

new puppy

Liz and Lance both studied glass at California College of the Arts

<https://cca.edu/> .

Lance will be going to the Glass Safari in TUT next year.
Jim generously gifted us with the most expensive colour rods and colour powder we

used at Katrina to make work.

East Bay Batch and Color

169 S 1st St, Richmond, CA 94804

(800) 322-6567



Sep 11 Thursday

Left at 9:45 am for Public Glass to look at the work blown on Tuesday

<https://www.publicglass.org/>

11 am. Talked to Marti, Megan and Matt. The piece cracked at the mid line where opaque yellow stopped but we got some good photos



Kgomotso Mtsweni and Thato Kokwana, *untitled*, Blown glass, 2025



At 1 p.m., we visited Bruce Pizzichillo and Dari Gordon's studio in Oakland. Bruce gave us a tour, showing their customised 500 lb furnace and demonstrating photo transfer techniques using Golden Clear Gel. He also shared how they began creat his glass jewellery line



2:30 Crucible tour with Caroline Landau.

Saw studios: hot furnace glass, flame working, slumping and fusing, casting, ceramic, black smithing, foundry, jewellery, enamels, artists' studios

It started in 1990s, and they bought an old huge cardboard making factory and

divided it into spaces. Mary White helped them develop the glass area by bring in a donation of

an entire hot glass studio from Joan Reeps studio in Boulder, Colorado. It was two

semi-trucks full of equipment including furnace, annealers, glory holes, anvil.

The

Crucible just started a new wood lathe area.



7 pm, We visited Literature professor Edda Brunner's house. We practiced their our presentations and timed them. The goal was to prepare for 15 minute presentations each for BAGI and SJSU.

We had a toast with delicious German chocolate bottles and Japanese cookies.



SEPT 12 Friday

Morning worked on presentations and social media.

Left around 12:45pm for downtown San Jose and saw exhibit at the San Jose Museum of Art. Got tacos and burritos to fuel up for presentation at BAGI.

<https://sjmusart.org/about-us>

110 South Market Street

San José, CA 95113



5 pm Arrived at BAGI to be ready for 6 pm presentation

<https://bagi.org/>

635 Phelan Ave,

San Jose, CA 95112

6-8 pm presentation. Started with delicious Vietnamese or Thai dumplings and rolls.

Audience included BAGI Board member Steven Aldrich and his wife Allison and Director Sarah Cornielle. Volunteer Ryan was very helpful with the set up. We met Sam Drumgoole and his partner Laryan from Auburn and Moze and his health practitioner partner from Santa Cruz. Steven and Allison invited us to their home on Sunday to see their collection. Sam was thrilled to meet me and Thato. He gave Thato a brand-new pair of Jason's jacks. Successful presentation. Sam had a blow slot, we got to try out the glass shop

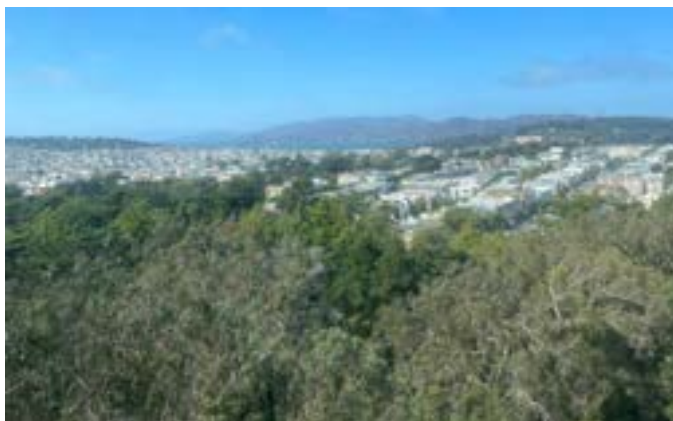


Sarah offered us a blow slot on Thursday night. 3 pm-10 pm.

Sep 13 Saturday

Thato and I worked at home on presentations and I worked on my visual theory assignment. I had to catch up on my school work while I was still in US.

1 pm left for Golden Gate Park and DeYoung Museum SF. Started out at observation tower with 360 view .

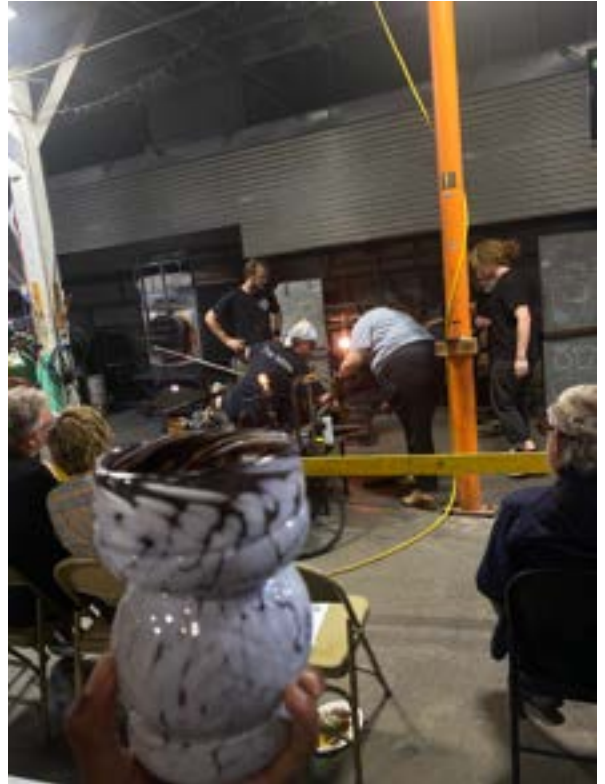


Attended lecture by Rose Simpson from Santa Fe area and saw painted cars that reminded us of Ester from SA. Got photo with Rose. Saw John Lennon from the Beatles photo exhibit of his own photos



<https://sfrecpark.org> > 770 > Golden-Gate-Park San Francisco
<https://www.famsf.org/> San Francisco

6 pm Public Glass HOt glass, cold beer, demo with Alex Abajian of Glow Glass Studio in the Hot Shop and Elias Hansen in the flameshop. Everyone invited can select a glass to drink out of. Alex blew two pieces, The second one that got so big that it would not fit in the annealer



Sep 14 Sunday

9- Gas at Costco

In the morning, we worked on photos and transparencies and videos. Mary went to Strawberry Creek Meeting

3 pm leave for Steven and Allison Aldridge on BAGI Board in Los Altos

Fantastic tour of their collection including Harvey Littleton, Joel Phillip Meyers, Jay Musler, Jaime Guerre

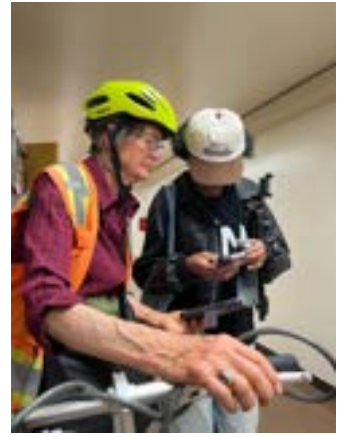


Sep 15 Monday

6:45 am left the house

9 am San Jose State University SJSU. Got there just in time. Lots of traffic. Second story glass shop but very spacious. 15 minute presentations for each: Cassandra Straubling's Glass class presentation. About 20 students from many majors. A big case of glass blown by visiting artists in the classroom.

11am Walked thru SJSU Art Department ceramics building. Met ceramics head Adam Shiverdecker <https://www.adamshiverdecker.com/>
Talked to Tim, Cassandra's husband who is the glass and ceramics shop tech



Walked through art building Talked to Lydia Black who runs wood shop and Jewelry professor

Saw the Design Department Materials lab and the student galleries that can be scheduled for one week with Tuesday night opening. Only one had an exhibit because it is the beginning of the semester.

Walked through campus, through Cesar Chavez arch of glass mosaics.



2:30 pm . Cassandra gave their lectures to another glass class. 15 min each artist
3-4 pm watched Cassandra and James, her former student, blow organic pieces,
using beach log as mold



Called Thermon Statom for advice on applying to go to Pilchuck next summer

Sep 16 Tuesday

Morning worked in Mary's studio. Cut glass, printed decals, prepared for firing some decals. We edited the pictures on photoshop and printed on decal paper and we transferred to window glass..



1 pm left for Elin Christopherson's studio on 98th and Pearmain.

<https://elinchristopherson.com> > about

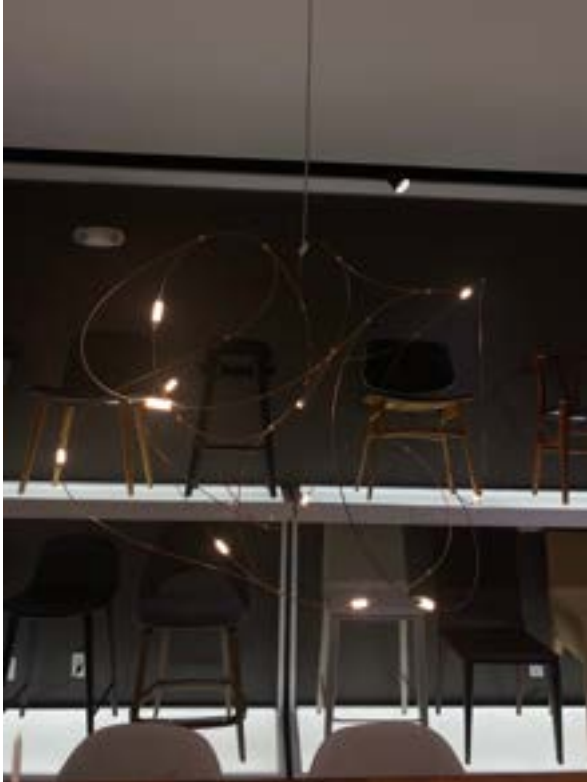
Visited her studio and lamp, lighting project and special glow lights.



Elin walked us down the street to John Lewis's old studio, now www.christisonlewis.com and we met the new director Kevin Christison.. and got a wonderful tour by Juan j2. Juan 2 is a smart young man who has extraordinary skill with glass casting. His father who basically runs the furnace. They now mix their own batch. They are trying new table design and international clients.



4 pm Design Within Reach <https://www.dwr.com> > Modern > Design
and Vernon showed us around and we got to sit in and test out an Ames chair and
other designer seating. Many Italian designs.



Sep 17 Wednesday

Morning at house. School work.

1 pm-3 pm Recorded a Public Glass Presentation with Marti on zoom.

She is going to post it on the Public Glass website.

Worked on photos and prepared drawings for pieces to blow at BAGI Thursday

Sep 18 Thursday

3-9 pm . Sam Drumgoold, his partner and daughter drove down from Auburn. Sam taught mei how to make a black glass crown with black braids since I work with African hair and a large urn, sugar cane inspired piece for Thato. Sam gave me a brand new fruit wood paddle, which is my first tool.



SEPT 19 Whidbey Island

Got int a flight at 6am from San Francisco to Seattle for an art residency and stayed until the 29th of September at Katrina Hude's Studio. I got to practice how to make glass crowns with Katrina and Thato using brown twisted canes, clear as the ring of the crown and black Frits got bantu knots hair.



Katrina gave me eye glasses when she saw that I was squinting my eyes when I was using my phone. Started to wear them.



She gave us a twisted cane demo and basic glass blowing training demo which was really helpful.



This is the work I did when I started practicing for 4 consecutive days



Katrina helped us blow forms and continued making twisted canes, murrine, and blown forms. She also invited Brian Pike to give us a hotshop sculpting demonstration.



She provided us with the entire day to focus on our work, taking the time to prepare both lunch and dinner. These are the pieces I was able to create during that time



She also invited Scott Darlington, an expert in solid work, to provide a sculpting demonstration. I was even able to ask for advice on sculpt my glass hair combs.



Attending Pilchuck Glass School was the absolute highlight of the trip. It is every glassblower's dream destination. Katrina had her husband look after the studio so we could visit Pilchuck, the biggest glass center in Washington. We learned about the programs offered, saw the impressive equipment, and had an amazing experience, especially since I plan to apply to for the fellowship program.



SE 4.06	Lino Tagliapietra: Making glass and Cooking in the Pilchuck
PRE 4.04	PreSession Staff Slide, Kelly O'Dell
PRE 3.04	Pole Turners Slideshow Part 2
PRE 2.04	Pole Turners Slideshow
PRE 1.04	Haidberg Fellows Presentation 2004
SS 8.03	Margo Manning Slideshow
SS 7.03	Dino Fosin Demonstration
SS 6.03	Mary White and T.A's slideshow
SS 5.03	Tim O'Neil, Liz Pool, Greta Taylor, and Michael Schinner's
SS 4.03	Ken Rushina and T.A's slideshow
SS 3.03	Dino Rosin and T.A's slideshow
SS 3.01	Elio Quarisa Slideshow
SS 2.03	Cox Marchesich and T.A's slideshow
SS 1.03	Michael Gaudier and T.A's Slideshow

John N. de Wit also gave an incredible glassblowing demonstration. He then invited us to his gallery, Cultus Bay Glass and home to view more of his work, and we received T-shirts as well.



Katrina 's Punti instructions for my Hand bags



pictures taken for an article for Whidbey island arts council while blowing my glass handbags



Invitations were sent out for Potluck BBQ which in South Africa is what we call “Braai” for us to give an artist talk presentation and for other artists to meet and know more about us and South Africa. It was such a lovely experience, for the first time presenting about who I am , The Tshwane University of Technology and my work . Thanks to Katrina for organising this event. The event was a success.



29 and 30th of September : Packaging and getting ready for our flight back to SA. Also wrote letters to all the artists we visited and Mary White and Katrina Hude before we left.

