

Jam Factory

AUBREY BARNETT

Second year Glass Studio Associate

Gooley. Syrupy. Layered. Speaking of Baklava...

When second year Glass Studio Associate Aubrey Barnett isn't blowing glass, she's cooking. Lately it has been Baklava. Ironically, there are a lot of similarities between glass and this sweet delicate pastry.

Coming from a fairly conceptual background, Barnett studied a Bachelor of Fine Arts in glassblowing from the University of Texas, Arlington, United States. Her works have ranged from exploring co-dependent relationships, disintegration of memory and ruminations on the human condition in general, to reminiscing about childhood play in installations of mixed media in glass, concrete and everyday materials. From fun to serious, Barnett embodies the same perplexity as her craft. 'People are weird, amazing and cool,' she deduces.

With bright blue eyes and a blue bird feather tattoo on her arm there is something intriguingly inquisitive about Barnett. If she didn't move to Australia for the glass, she would have ended up here anyway for the birds. She was fascinated at an early age especially by the Kookaburra, 'Such a beautiful, mysterious and carnivorous creature!' She laughs.

It was Barnett's third visit to Pilchuck Glass School, United States where she first met Australian JamFactory representatives. She learned from Liam Fleming (Technical Assistant at the time for the Grant Calimpong workshop) and studied alongside JamFactory Alumni Emma Young and Alice Mahoney. 'We all got along like a house on fire, and they convinced me JamFactory was the ultimate place to do glass.' One year later, Barnett arrived in Adelaide. 'I've grown so much and I'm having the time of my life,' she says.

So far, developing a new technique blending different colours has been her biggest achievement, 'I was trying for a weird reaction between colours and this kind of happy accident appeared.' The marble technique she has created is in a beautiful palette of greys, blues, white and black. That love of birds has possibly informed the



feathery, fluid effect she creates. While there is some element of control to it, the fun for her has been picking out the forms and figures that appear on their own.

Barnett says the time spent working on JamFactory product has seen her become much better at her craft, and projects she has always imagined doing, are now accessible to achieve. 'Liam has been such an instrumental help in the studio. I have really changed the whole perspective and set-up of my work. It has also been pretty amazing to watch people here work together. I've loved watching Madeline Prowd (JamFactory Glass Technician), Liam Fleming (JamFactory Production Manager) and Lewis Batchelar (JamFactory Alumnus), assisting for Clare Belfrage'.

'It's pretty obvious, but by doing, you learn,' she says. Having attended Pilchuck Glass School three times, obtaining a scholarship to Corning Museum of Glass, New York, USA and now a Glass

Studio Associate at JamFactory, Barnett is a stellar example of a person with true passion for learning. After JamFactory, she expects she will continue to learn in a different environment; by giving back. With no hot shops open for public use in her home town of Houston, Texas, where she intends to return, she has a plan of setting up a studio with one of her best mates, also a fellow glass blower. With the city of Austin nearby – an artistic hub filled with galleries – she is sure it will be a hit. And for Barnett's own practice? 'I want to blow glass forever, every day; it's all I want to do.'

Words by Lara Merrington.



Can-I-Store. Photo: Courtesy of JamFactory.