

# Jam Factory

## RENATO PEREZ

### Second year Glass Studio Associate

*Bottom of the sea, pride of place.*

Inspiration comes from many places and re-emerges in many forms. From the bottom of the sea to a horizon line across a busy city, the glass objects produced by Renato Perez are informed by the varied landscapes of places he has lived.

Originally from Puebla in Mexico, Perez started his creative path in interior design and architecture. Although he values the design skills he gained when studying, the course didn't completely satisfy his creative needs. Undertaking a course in fused glass offered in the nearby city of Oaxaca, Perez began a passionate career that has since opened up a world of travel.

In 2009 he began honing his skills at the Italian glass school Vetroricerca Glass & Modern, Bolzano, a place he describes like living in a fairy tale, amongst snow-capped mountains and rolling green hills. He then went on to refine a more personal style at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, graduating from a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 2016. He lived right by Bondi Beach, a completely different scene from Bolzano and he soon became interested in the sea.

Perez's working bench today looks a bit like a coral reef; curly forms, urchin-shaped things, a sea of blues and purples. 'I don't work with reds and yellows' Renato says. 'They are quite difficult and can be unpredictable, turning quickly into brown. I think I've really found my palette in blues and purples. The chemistry of the material, for what I do, is also much easier to manipulate and handle.' Blown forms, sandblasted smooth with protrusions of barnacles or anemones, are Perez Sanchez's prized pieces right now. He has perfected a gradation of colour to look like the lapping of waves or a sunset rippled across water. He uses Italian techniques and pulled cane to make the barnacles, fusing them on skilfully.

Alongside these pieces are some different abstract forms. They could be nebulous clouds or rolling hills. Perez says this is a new project he is playing with and something that combines function



with form. It's not always the sea that inspires Perez, but landscapes in general, and these shapes are actually mountain forms that will become lights. 'It's a constant subject in my work. I think we can all relate to landscape, whether it's the sea, mountains, plant life or even the city. Even growing up in a big city like Puebla I was surrounded by Volcanoes'.

Since coming to JamFactory last year, highlights include exhibiting in Benchmark at Fisher Jefferies, Adelaide and Australia Now at Benhadj&Djilali Galerie, Berlin. The best thing for Perez though has been the support he's found from others around him at JamFactory, as well as having the opportunity to work with such talented people on a daily basis. 'Blowing glass, being creative everyday was always a dream, and now I am living it,' he says.

This year Perez travelled to Corning Museum of Glass, New York, USA on a JamFactory supported residency where he worked alongside Martin Janecky in a workshop focused on sculpting inside

the bubble. 'It was mind-blowing to sculpt with different tools and techniques and it has really changed the way I work,' explains Perez.

For the remainder of his time in JamFactory's Associate Training Program, he will develop large forms with barnacles and experiment with some new forms like cacti. 'I think I feel the need to connect myself to my own culture again, to get back to my roots,' he openly confides. 'Mexico is so immersed in food and culture and has an inherent connection with land. One of my own favourite pieces I've ever made linked in with that pre-Hispanic focus on craft and patterning. After all this time away, the global connection with wherever I am and whatever I do in glass, is still the landscape'.

*Words by Lara Merrington.*



Photo: Courtesy of Renato Perez.