

Meet the Maker: Alex Bernstein



TEXT Jasmine Bible + PHOTOGRAPHY [Carrie Turner](#)

In our “Meet the Makers” series, we’ll introduce you to local personalities from each of the towns where Nest offices are located. In our technology driven world, it’s nice to meet people who are still physically making tactile things by hand...these makers enrich our communities and color the landscape of our towns. For this installment, we visit a glass sculptor from Asheville, NC.

+ ALEX BERNSTEIN, GLASS SCULPTOR

Light streams in through large windows, illuminating the colorful glass sculptures displayed throughout Alex Bernstein’s studio. Reflections of emerald, azul, goldenrod, and cayenne red dance on the vast white walls. What was once a dingy pool hall has been transformed into a bright open space north of the River Arts District in Asheville, NC. It’s here that Bernstein creates his one-of-a-kind, award-winning glass sculptures.



“I love what I do. As humans, we’ve lost our physical touch with objects, so I feel lucky to be able to make something,” he said. Bernstein received his undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of North Carolina in Asheville and believes in the direct correlation between physical movement and healthy cognitive abilities, “Mental Health is connected to your hands. Using your body contributes to your overall mental wellbeing.”



This innate desire to work with his hands led him to earning his Master of Fine Arts degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology, teaching art for a while, and then onto pursuing art as a full-time career. He now revels in the gratifying and laborious process of casting, carving, and sculpting beautiful glass works that have earned national critical acclaim. Bernstein explains that other than the tools being motorized, the technique of sculpture hasn't changed since ancient times—chipping and chiseling at an object to create a form. While the art form maybe timeworn, Bernstein is always seeking ways of being innovative. “I want to create something I’ve never seen,” explains Bernstein, “This exploration of new ideas is what drives my fire, my passion.”



Both of Bernstein's parents are also glass artists, and his latest technique was discovered by accident while visiting his father's glass studio. Bernstein was using a welding torch a little too close to one of his father's creations, when the sparks from the hot steel stuck to the glass, and created an intriguing rough texture. After exploring and refining the process, his metal-spark technique was born.



Preferring to work in series, his latest body of work was inspired by the Dolomites, the jagged and awe-inspiring mountain range in northeastern Italy. He encountered their beauty from the seat of his bicycle—he's an avid cyclist who races with the DARC ([Downtown Asheville Racing Club](#)). The series features pillars of glass that resemble smooth crystals, emerging from rough, metallic feathers, utilizing his new metal-spark technique.



Bernstein laughs when we say they look like they would be found in Superman's sparkling home on the planet Krypton. For now, he's happy creating in his own lair overlooking the French Broad River.

To learn more about Alex, visit AlexBernsteinGlass.com.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We ask each of our makers to share what's in their toolbox—the five things they can't live without:

1. Orbital Sander



2. Various Grinder Blades



3. Glass Frit



4. Glass Billets



5. Concept Sketches



We shared this story with you in our Spring/Summer 2018 Issue of [NEST Magazine](#). To view the full issue, [click here](#).

Written by Jasmine Bible on May 30, 2018

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