



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Days before we were set to publish this issue of GASnews, we received a letter from Nate Watson, Executive Director of Public Glass. Not only do we whole-heartedly support Nate in his statement, we also believe that his impactful words cannot wait for our next issue. We are therefore honored to feature his letter in its entirety below.

In this moment when all communities must ask, "how did we get here?" I think that it's a meaningful statement in itself to say that I am one of two African Americans leading nonprofit glass organizations, and one of three helping to guide University glass programs in the entire United States. After sitting back and watching "our" glass community respond to the lynchings of Brown people and observing the social media-based processing of our complicity through inaction and a pervasive lack of inclusion, I've decided to put my heartache aside to share what it feels like from my perspective. With all of the wealth, privilege, and supposed progressive elements within our arts community, how could we let ourselves fall so far behind when it comes to supporting equity and opening doors for everyone?

Even when compared to the lack of representation across the Art World as a whole, the glass community looks really bad. No words, propping up of black faces, or sudden unburying of works by black artists will solve this. We were wrong all along to be content amongst ourselves, content to peddle in shiny things with little connection to the realities of the world that is burning our eyes open now. We as artists, who are tasked with interpreting our collective condition, did not do our jobs, and the industry that supports us did not do theirs. The glass galleries did not look toward and support our futures, and our institutions looked to the past and the same sources for self-congratulation again and again until last week.

In the last few days my projects, my body, and the images of my Black and Brown colleagues have become all too popular in the social media posts of the many glass companies and organizations around the country who are trying to make a statement about how "woke" they are. If you use our bodies in your catalogues, in your posts, and in your applications for larger grants, YOU are responsible for helping to create a way forward for the many who have not been offered a seat at your table.

The leading nonprofit glass organizations from coast to coast who have been working on issues of access and diversity, lifting new voices, and supporting emerging artists for years with little to no contribution from our industry's biggest donors and institutions have joined together to create the [Give to Glass Campaign](#). We've united due to the devastating financial impacts of COVID-19 on our programs and studios, but also because our own glass community has never fully appreciated the value of what we've been working for all along. In this moment when everyone has something to say about social justice, I ask....Do you see us now?!

If you as an individual or an institution have made a declaration about where you stand, then it's your moral obligation to support change in our glass community. Words raise awareness, but contributions provide the resources for REAL CHANGE! Donate to [Give to Glass](#), to [Crafting the Future](#), or to any organization that is versed in fighting for those whose lives are compromised and voices muted, and for God's sake, please VOTE!

If there is no action behind your statements, then please stop using our names, our black bodies, those of our youth, and the objects made from our alienation and pain, and step aside to let us build our own house.



Nate Watson
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