

About Rick Ayotte

Born and raised in New Hampshire, Rick Ayotte was always drawn to nature exploring the woods and waterways, and studying the animals. In 1978, he began to marry his passion for nature with his skills as a glassblower as he created wildlife art with glass.

After graduating high school in 1962, Ayotte began a ten-year career as a scientific glassblower, working for the Macalaster Scientific Corporation. He became masterful with glass and its malleable properties, and created small lampwork figurines to sell at giftshops. Paul Stankard, a colleague from Macalaster, who had already begun his auspicious career as a paperweight artist, encouraged Ayotte's talent. "There was something pleasing and intimate about the spherical shape of paperweights that really appealed to me," Ayotte said. "It opened a lot of doors for me artistically."

Being an admirer of the antique paperweight makers, Ayotte's work was influenced by the French glasshouses of Baccarat, Saint Louis, and Clichy: the spherical presentation, the optical qualities of crystal, and the use of color to seduce the eye.

In the late 70s and early 80s, Ayotte began to create his world in glass. Among his first editions were his beloved eastern bluebirds and tropical keel-billed toucans. Ayotte worked very intensively, and developed a technique where he used glass rods, like a brush, to create subtle color blends, allowing for smoother transitions, creating a series of paperweights entitled Glasscapes, where imagery appeared painted and encased in glass.

This style propelled him to explore other non-traditional presentations, and he began to incorporate more scenery and flora into his compositions. These designs led Ayotte to create upright, three-dimensional paperweight presentations, as well as glass bouquets, which he began to exhibit in the 1990s. He brings the flowers to vivid, full-bloom life with his trademark eye for detail and the same authenticity he bestows on his birds and creatures.

For over two decades, Ayotte has studied glass, lived in a glassworker's habitat, and mastered the fluid medium's character. He has created some of the most vivid paperweight designs, in motifs all his own. When he is not in his art studio, Rick Ayotte continues to investigate ponds, and birdwatches in the New Hampshire wilderness.

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS:

Art Institute of Chicago, IL

Bergstrom-Mahler Museum, Neenah, WI

Corning Museum of Glass, New York

The Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH

The Royal Ontario Museum, Canada

The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS:

2003, McIninch Gallery, Southern New Hampshire University

2001 Featured Paperweight Artist, The Glass Gallery, L. H. Selman Ltd., Santa Cruz, CA

1998 - 2001 Songs Without Words, The Art of the Paperweight--Rick Ayotte, museum exhibition, various cities, US

1997 Contemporary Frameworked Glass Exhibition, Wheaton Village, Millville, NJ; New Glass Review 18, Corning Museum of Glass, New York

1993-'95 The Art of the Paperweight--Challenging Tradition, traveling exhibition, various cities, US

1993 Paperweights from the Henry Melville Fuller Collection, The Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, NH