

Impact 2030 Helen Burish Faculty Fellow

2020-2021 Annual Update (Year 1)

Helen Lee // June 2021

EXHIBITIONS

Translucency: Tallinn Applied Art Triennial, Kai Art Center, Tallinn, Estonia, May-August, 2021

River of Shadows, Heller Gallery, New York, NY, November 2020-January 2021

On Neon, Ken Saunders Gallery, Chicago, IL, Sept.-Dec. 2020

HONORS

Momentum Intersection Awardee, 2020-2021

Ruth and Harold Chenven Foundation Grantee, 2020

SERVICE

GEEX: Glass Education Exchange, Founder and Director

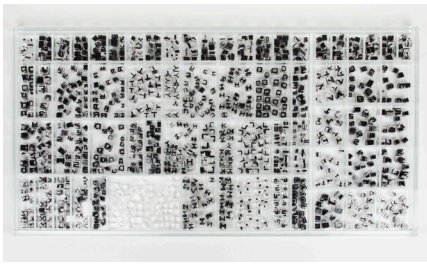
2020-2021 was a memorable year for all, and I am grateful to say in my case it was also memorable because of the support of the Impact 2030 Helen Burish Faculty Fellowship. With this support, I was able to sustain an active exhibition record, garner some external honors, and found a 501(c)(3) that supports glass education.

Exhibitions

On Neon was an exhibition of neon artists at Ken Saunders Gallery. Saunders writes, "Artists seeking to leverage this heritage, both timeless and time-warped have been using neon and other gas filled glass tubes to create a commentary in that vast and fertile ground where timelessness, kitsch, nostalgia, irony and literalness breed new strategies and new meanings. The seven artists featured in *On Neon* are part of a wave of interest that is transforming the medium in exciting and unexpected ways." This exhibition featured three of my neon works, *OMG*, *Wonder*, and *Infinitive*.

River of Shadows was an exhibition of glass photography curated by Kim Harty and shown at Heller Gallery. Harty writes, "*River of Shadows* is an inquiry into the material properties of glass and the themes and metaphors that accompany them. Through photography, the artists explore the mechanics of state changes, fracturing, distortion, and the incremental development of skill. The 18 photographs in the exhibition ... reveal the desire to capture the fleeting magic of glass and draw on insight gained by a sustained practice working with the material. Glass is iterated again through the lens of the camera, the technology allowing us to expand human perception, finding ways to freeze, slow down, and layer time. If seeing and knowing are inexorably linked, this exhibition demonstrates an urgency to understand the material of glass more deeply." *River of Shadows* featured my work *Quiver*, *Shiver*, *Shimmer*.

Lastly, my work, *Alphabit* is currently in *Translucency: Tallinn Applied Art Triennial* at the Kai Art Center in Tallinn, Estonia. The curator, Stine Bidstrup writes of the exhibition, "The 2021 Tallinn Applied Art Triennial highlights the creative and critical potential of translucency. Depending on the context, translucency can reveal what is hidden or conceal what is seemingly visible. It is neither one nor the other, but can be approached as a metastable state, full of potential energy from which



Alphabet



Scale drawing of Momentum Intersection Project Proposal. See [Full Project Proposal for Obverse / Reverse here.](#)



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a structured process can arise. It is not dichotomous; it is a chiastic movement through pluralities and nuances of visibility and lack thereof. It is becoming rather than being.” The Impact 2030 funds enabled me to re-create a lighter version of this hyper-fragile piece for international travel. (Not an easy feat.)

Honors

I was thrilled to be selected as one of three finalists for Momentum Intersection—a collaboration of industry, design, and art inspired by the studio glass movement. Supported by The Arts Commission of Toledo, this opportunity grants me access to industrially manufactured architectural coated float glasses in the creation of a new art project. I am collaborating with the graphic designer Alice Chau in making four glass gold coins, which will be woven together and exhibited at the Toledo Museum of Art in September 2021. The majority of my Impact 2030 funds have gone to supporting this project. Full project details are linked beneath the illustration (left).

It was also a goal of mine to earn an external grant, having been nearly entirely dependent on UW funding in the past eight years. I’m pleased to report I’ve succeeded on that goal, however small! I was awarded a 2020 Ruth and Howard Chenven Foundation Grant and am very proud of this accomplishment.

Service

From March-August of 2020, I was unable to make use of the Glass Lab facilities due to the pandemic, and found myself with ample administrative time at my home office. I took this opportunity to found a 501(c)(3). GEEX, the Glass Education Exchange, is an online platform that serves the immediate and future needs of those interested in glass, education, and exchange through programming, resource-sharing, and communication. In our pilot year, we were able to pool monetary resources from 26 academic glass programs to support greater honorariums for a shared virtual visiting artist lecture series that centered BIPOC and LGBTQIA voices. I hired an all BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA staff and the board is also 100% BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA. I am extremely proud of GEEX as my most ambitious endeavor of material scholarship to date. My goal for the second year of GEEX is to make this organization financially sustainable. I invite you to browse the website (linked in left column) to explore what we were able to accomplish in our pilot year. The Impact 2030 funds were not used to support this, but a considerable amount of my time was put into GEEX this year, and I consider it an extension of my research practice in how the field is shaped.