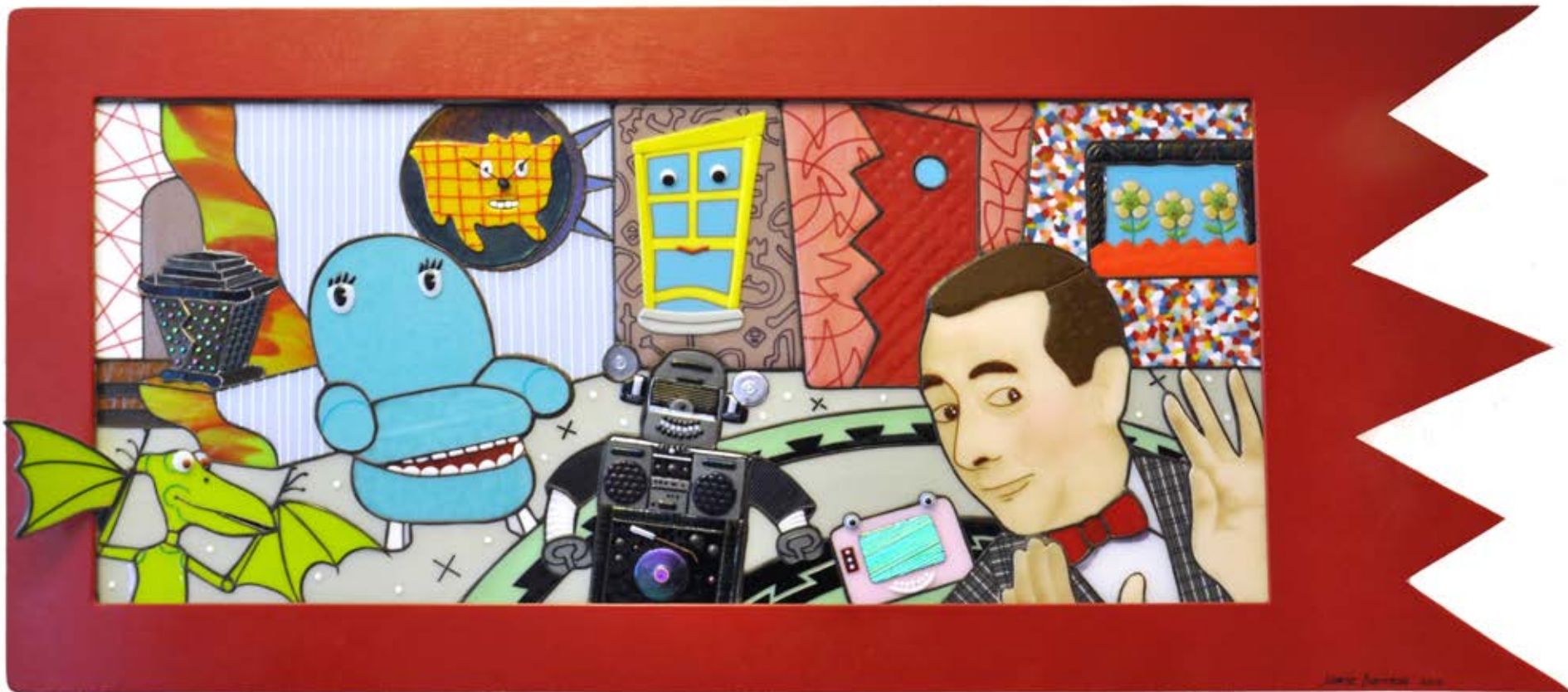




PEE-WEE'S PLAYHOUSE IS A REGULAR MUSE FOR THE ARTIST

HAPPY GLASS

Jamie Burress' glass art bursts with pop culture | BY WILLIAM KENNEDY

The world can feel like a pretty nasty place. Local glass artist Jamie Burress is here to help.

"I'm talking to my friend, who's also a glass artist, about putting on a show that's focused on desserts," Burress says of a tentative upcoming exhibit with fellow glass artist Renee Patula. "There's so much bad stuff going on in the world. We thought: Let's just make a happy show!"

Burress' work is undeniably happy, bursting with a pop-art aesthetic and continuously flirting with the zeitgeist of nostalgia, or flipping it on its head. Scroll through her Instagram feed (where she has almost 17,000 followers) and see ice cream cones with sprinkles, Dr. Zoidberg from *Futurama*, David Bowie as the Goblin King from *Labyrinth* or even inventor Nikola Tesla — all floating in glass. She's fused President W. Bush as the illuminati and tweaked the iconic MTV logo upside-down to read "WTF."

"I'm kind of stuck in the '80s," Burress admits. "Cassette tapes, video games, cartoons, '80s pop stars. I want to do a series on Madonna, Michael Jackson and David Bowie."

Burress works in fused glass from her home studio in Thurston. Fused glass must be fired in a kiln at temperatures ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit. Different techniques add shape, color and depth.

The process is typically used to create art glass, glass tiles, jewelry and beads. The candy-colored strips of glass she uses as building blocks are made to fuse and melt into each other.

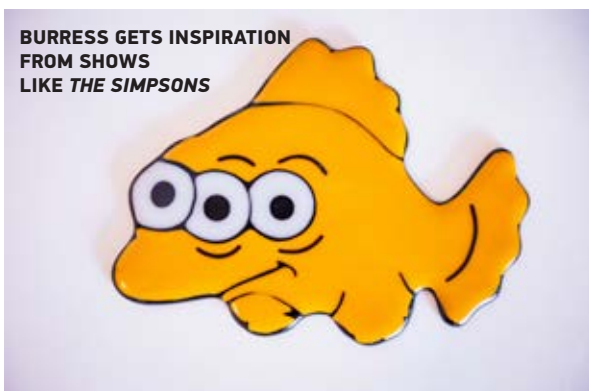
Burress usually sketches out her vision first, but says, "sometimes I just take colors and put them in front of me and just kind of go for it."

An interest in stained glass is what initially got Burress started in glass art. "I grew up in Southern California," Burress says, "so going to Disneyland — where they have stained glass everywhere — that's what got me into it."

"And then at the Winchester mansion," Burress says of San Jose's infamous Winchester Mystery House, "Sarah Winchester had a whole bunch of Tiffany stained-glass windows. I thought: I want to do this."



JAMIE BURESS AT HER HOME STUDIO



BURESS GETS INSPIRATION FROM SHOWS LIKE THE SIMPSONS

"I tried to move out of working in stained glass," Burress recalls, "because you're working with lead — you're touching it and breathing it. I like glass fusing better because you're just working with nothing but glass without any toxic chemicals."

Burress studied architecture in college and cites films like *Beetlejuice* and TV shows like *Pee-wee's Playhouse* as visual inspiration.

"Glass fusers typically don't make that much money," Burress admits. "You think of little old ladies in church making crafty things. I wanted to do something artistic."

Burress moved to the Eugene area in 2003, the only place, she says, that's ever "felt like home." She now has her own kiln and works mainly in the wee hours of the morning. Through strategic use of social media like Facebook and Instagram, Burress has turned glass fusing into a full-time job.

"I usually run auctions on Instagram," Burress says. "People will bid on it and pay through PayPal." She adds, "I do more shipping out than I do selling things in town."

People from all over the world bid on Burress' work, but she says many well-known glass artists live in the Eugene area — a fact lost on local residents.

"I moved here and met all kind of glass blowers and saw how much money they were making," Burress says. "I got to know them, got to be good friends with them" and "just through Facebook I would see who was bidding on all those big pieces — spending, like, thousands of dollars — and I would click 'add friend, add friend.'"

Burress says responding to emails, building online exposure and simply packaging and shipping her work take up a lot of her time. She calls this side of her business her least favorite part, but isn't willing yet to give up complete control of the process.

"I do this full-time for a living," Burress continues. "I don't have that extra side job. So I kind of have to do that, and then when I have the bills paid and have extra money, then I can work on what I want to work on." ■

Burress and Patula will host the dessert show in Eugene in upcoming months; the date is TBA. To see more of Burress' work, find her on Instagram @jamieburress or Facebook.