



LISABETH STERLING

Residence - Washington

Lisabeth Sterling studied drawing and painting in the late 1970s at the University of the Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, both in Philadelphia. She began her glassmaking studies in 1985, attending classes at the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington and the Pratt Fine Arts Center in Seattle.

Renowned as one of America's finest glass engravers, Sterling creates cameo vessels using an intricate technique with diamond tipped engraving tools. The vessels are luminous jewel-toned forms featuring her distinctive narrative imagery. Drawings of people often grace the surface of her vessels and they intertwine and interact telling a story that is as much created by the viewer as intended by the artist. Sterling aptly describes this narrative aspect of her work saying, "*The images in my engravings are much like lucid dreams on glass.*"

In her wall piece "Men with Ties", Sterling creates a cameo piece with white flashed glass (a thin coating of white glass layered on clear glass.) She carves her design in the glass revealing, by degrees, more colorless translucent areas. The piece is mounted on a dark colored steel base which shows through slightly in these translucent areas. Sterling describes this subtle etching technique saying, "*The effect is much like graphite on paper but with the luminosity of glass (I always enjoyed pencil drawing!)*"

The narrative portrayed in "Men with Ties" exemplifies Sterling's unique vision. A man, woman and child are in the foreground, depicting a close family unit. In the background a group of mysterious, faceless men wearing ties, add an odd presence that could be interpreted as either ominous or simply unexplainable. Either way, Sterling encourages us to tell our own story of this family and their adventure with these strange, robot-like men.

James Yood, noted professor of art history and contributing editor of GLASS magazine, describes Sterling's work saying, "*The element that always intrigues me most about Lisabeth Sterling's work is her ceaseless repertoire of human incident. They seem to know something, the many figures she drills into existence, absorbed in their own thoughts, ruminating on some interior drama, self contained, with a kind of hard-won and brooding wisdom that always leaves me wishing I knew more about them. But Sterling doesn't just create these compelling figures as separate individuals, she arranges them in groups that hint at interrelationships, perhaps even narrative, that makes them function somehow (just like us!) as both alone and together.*"

Collections:

Glass Museum, Ebeltoft, Denmark

Wheaton Museum of American Glass, Wheaton Village, NJ

American Interfaith Institute, Philadelphia, PA

Dupage County Courthouse, Wheaton, IL