



Linda Steider next to a display case of items she and her teachers made. She holds a fragile and translucent glass shell.

Exploring a New World of Birds

*Glass artist
Linda Steider
expands her
portfolio*

By Jeanie Senior

Linda Steider started out as a fiber artist, making bed quilts, art quilts, miniature doll quilts and fanciful dolls.

"I showed my work internationally and won many awards," she says. "Just when I was starting to get recognition and acclaim, I met glass and fell in love with it."

Linda's romance with glass has lasted for two decades. It is now how she makes a living. She has won numerous competitions with her kiln-formed glass, displayed her work in juried shows, and seen it go to private and public collections around the world. She sells online and through galleries.

Linda's initial foray in glass was torch work, which involves using an open flame to melt glass. A bit concerned about the possible conflict between flame and fiber art, her husband, Sam, bought her a kiln. Her specific medium is kiln-formed glass, which takes shape in the heat of the kiln, as opposed to blown glass, which is melted in the kiln, but formed outside.

Working in her studio, Linda creates a sparkling procession of glass art: bowls, whimsical ornaments, masks, buttons, beads, bracelets, earrings and more.

A growing enthusiasm for photographing birds and wildlife adds a new dimension to the White Salmon artist's work.

"At first it was for reference material," Linda says. "I did a series of birds in glass that I shaped into bowls."

In the past few years, however, "it's become a passion, trying to capture birds in flight, or wildlife where they live," she says. "The last year I spent more time in the field photographing them than I did in my (glass) studio. I think I'll have all winter to stay in the studio, but that's when the eagles are here, so I'll be down on the Columbia again."

Linda shares her bird and wildlife photos through her blog at www.steiderstudios.wordpress.com.

Her interest in birds grew after she put out feeders after a huge snowfall.



“It became so joyful for me and my husband to look out and watch them,” she explains.

Linda bought books to help identify the birds they were seeing. During her daily hikes, she watched for woodpeckers and hawks. She started carrying her camera.

She moved on to photographing the big birds along the Columbia River, chiefly osprey and bald eagles. Wanting to get closer to her subjects, she saved to buy better camera gear, most notably a long telephoto lens.

With more educated eyes, “I’m seeing all these birds I had never seen before,” she says.

Last summer, Linda monitored osprey nests and watched the families grow from hatched eggs to fledglings ready to leave the nest. She also has watched eagles raise their young.

“When the parents are there, you don’t know if you’re going to have one second or 15 minutes to take photos,” Linda says.

She is part of a group of birdwatchers who take morning field trips around the Gorge. She makes regular visits to Conboy National Wildlife Refuge near Glenwood, where she has photographed sandhill cranes, elk, otters and waterfowl.

Linda says people like to share their interest in birds.



“They see me taking pictures so they stop and tell me their stories,” she says.

In early November, a pair of local birders invited her to document and photograph a northern water thrush, a rare bird sighting for this area.

Linda prints her bird photos on all-occasion greeting cards, and they are available in larger format printed on canvas or metal.

With Robin Panzer, she is curating a show in March at the Columbia Art Gallery in Hood River. Called “Fine Feathered Friends,” it will include the work of 16 artists who work in a variety of media.

Linda, a co-founder of the Gorge chapter of the Oregon Glass Guild, is involved with local art endeavors, including the Gorge Artists Studio Tour.

She was part of the White Salmon Fall Art Tour last October and The Snow Show at Columbia Art Gallery in November. She has studied with several master glass artists, and also taught classes herself.

Next summer, Linda will teach what she calls her signature course, “Powderology, the study of powdered glass,” at the Red Deer Visual Arts College in Red Deer, Alberta. ■

Linda sells her glasswork at Artisans in White Salmon and Columbia Arts in Hood River, as well as online at www.zibbet.com/SteiderStudios and www.artfire.com/users/SteiderStudios.

Above, a swan bowl Linda made.

Above left, a heron she photographed since her interest in birds has grown.