

# Coral Gables news

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## Artist draws parallels between honeybees and Murano glass

BY ELIZA GONZALEZ

**T**he Coral Gables Museum is featuring artist Judi Harvest in its International Artist Series.

This solo exhibition, titled *Cross-Pollination: Honeybees and Murano Glass*, features a series of works previously exhibited at the Venice Biennale. Having worked with seven Murano glass masters, Harvest draws parallels between the fragility of two communities affected by encroaching urbanism and growing industrial economies — the honeybees and the Murano glass-making families.

The exhibition is on view through May 20.

For this exhibition, Harvest created over 1,500 different glass seeds, plants and flowers.

“I created these seed and plant works in Murano glass to further emphasize the sense of the fragility of life and the search for beauty that underlies all my work.”

*Cross-Pollination: Honeybees and Murano Glass* is a rumination on seeds, bee pollination and plants as metaphors for life and renewal. Most of the seeds are rendered in luscious colored Venetian glass, while clear glass “frozen” seeds are inspired by seed banks, like the world’s largest, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway.

Harvest worked with seven Murano glass masters, employing three ancient and challenging Murano glass techniques: *cera persa* (lost wax), *lume* (flame work), and *soffiato* (blown). The Murano glass artists’ community and their complex glass art is an elemental part of Harvest’s work.



Judi Harvest is pictured with one of her artworks, *Monumental Hive*.

(Photo by Francesco Allegretto)

But the Murano glass factory that she worked in for over 28 years, owned by Giorgio Giuman and his family, has gone from employing 75 people to four. She began to see parallels between the disappearing bees, victims of Colony Collapse Disorder, and the declining populations of Murano islanders and glass-making families.

Her work began to focus on the frailness and strengths of the two communities, making connections between the Murano glass artists and the bees. This exhibition will include a selection of this work.

The Coral Gables Museum is inviting international visual artists to present a three-month solo exhibition in a way that most accurately represents the artist and his or her work. During the artists' stay in Coral Gables they will have the opportunity to explore all that the City Beautiful has to offer, participate in various public events, and engage with the community.

The objective of the International Artist Series is to promote cultural exchange, not only with Coral Gables’ sister cities, but with other international cities that may be under-represented in our own community.