

Digitals

by
Ralph Mossman



The "Digital" series is inspired by my interest in perception. Observations of pixelation and geometry have led to a body of work that finds a place within the digital imagery of our current information age. The work uses sequences of mosaics to create patterns at multiple levels using bits of very small, discrete color information, and is similar to the construction of complex fiber optic cables.

The construction of these pieces is dependent on pulling canes numerous times, consistently. To begin, I start with a small bit of a single color, gathering clear glass over it until it is a thin line within a large mass of clear glass. It is then drawn out into a long cane, square in cross section. When cold, it is cut into short lengths and formed into a bundle of hundreds of canes that create a pattern when viewed from the end. This bundle is then heated up, and pulled out into another cane. On some pieces the bundling process is then repeated, the end result being a square cane with from 25 to 625 dots within a clear, square matrix. This cane is cut when cold into many thin cross-sections, resembling small tiles.

At this point the fun begins, as I lay the tiles out as a mosaic. The top photo shows this finished mosaic, which takes hours to set up to produce a tight-fitting sheet of tiles, with subtle patterns contained within.

The plate with the mosaic on it is then slowly warmed up until it is hot enough for the tiles to fuse together into a sheet. Hot glass is gathered onto a blowpipe to produce a collar that is precisely the same circumference as the mosaic's length. The collar is attached to the edge of the mosaic, which is then rolled onto the pipe, the edges connected to each other, and worked till the resulting cylinder has no gaps. From this point, the end of the cylinder is closed off and the resultant bubble is blown and formed in the traditional glassblowing process.

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