

JustArt Newspaper Club

Catherine O’Sullivan is a UK-based glass artist, oil painter, metalsmith, teacher, and author whose practice explores light, landscape, and atmosphere through kiln-formed glass and painting. Her work is rooted in observations of moorlands and expansive skies, capturing moments of stillness, movement, and shifting weather.

Working primarily with layered coloured glass, Catherine employs precision cutting, multiple long kiln firings, and extensive cold-working to create works that subtly transform with changes in light and viewpoint. Alongside her glass practice, she produces oil paintings of stormy skies and moorland landscapes, allowing for a more intuitive and expressive engagement with mood and atmosphere.

Across both mediums, her work investigates how light alters perception and how landscapes can be felt as much as they are seen. Catherine has exhibited widely in galleries and art fairs and continues to teach and write alongside maintaining a research-led studio practice.

Instagram: @catherinejaneglass
Website: www.picklepotjewelleryandglassdesign.co.uk
Email: catherinejaneglass@gmail.com

Howarth Moorland



Q&A WITH THE ARTIST

● **Can you describe a time when you felt that your perspective or artistic expression was overlooked? How did that experience influence your work?**

There have been times when I felt my perspective was overlooked, particularly when my work didn't sit comfortably within expected boundaries. Early on, my painting practice had become quite tight and controlled, and I sensed that this way of working was limiting both my expression and how the work was received. I was searching for something that allowed more freedom and risk.

Discovering glass became a turning point. The material forced me to loosen up and work more intuitively, embracing chance, heat, and transformation in ways that painting alone hadn't demanded. My pastel work, with its softness and sense of atmosphere, strongly influenced how I began to see and build imagery in glass ... layering colour, light, and texture in a painterly way rather than a decorative one. I realised that while I was technically capable, I had become bored and needed something new and exciting to reignite my curiosity.

That shift reshaped my practice. It gave me permission to trust my instincts, move between disciplines, and develop a visual language that felt genuinely my own. Being overlooked, in that sense, became a catalyst, and it pushed me towards materials and processes that re-energised my work and helped me articulate a more confident, unique voice.

● **How do you define success for your art, considering the importance of visibility and recognition for artists like yourself?**

For me, success is closely tied to staying active, visible, and creatively engaged. I take part in fairs and exhibitions, and social media plays an important role in sharing the work and reaching a wider audience. Those platforms help the work exist beyond the studio and allow people to follow its evolution over time.

Equally important is staying fresh creatively. I continue to paint and sketch alongside my glass work, which helps keep my ideas fluid and prevents the work from becoming too fixed. I see art as a continuous process of learning and evolving, and introducing new techniques keeps the practice stimulating, for me and for the viewer.

Working in themed series helps me maintain focus while exploring particular materials or processes in depth. Within those themes, I often incorporate silver and glass jewellery to complement the paintings, showing different ways of working with the same ideas across scale and form. Success, for me, lies in that balance: maintaining visibility and connection while continuing to grow, experiment, and produce work that feels alive and purposeful. I cannot deny that feedback from buyers and viewers of my work is valuable. Meeting other artists is such a valuable and enjoyable experience.

● **In what ways do you engage with audiences to create dialogue around the subjects you explore in your art?**

Much of my engagement with audiences happens through direct, face-to-face conversations at fairs and exhibitions. Being present with the work allows people to ask questions, share their own interpretations, and talk about what they feel rather than what they think they 'should' see. Those exchanges often reveal how differently each person connects with the same piece, which I find invaluable.

I also use social media as an extension of that dialogue, sharing works in progress, materials, and fragments of the making process. Showing how a piece evolves from sketch or painting through to layered glass helps demystify the work and invites people into the journey rather than presenting only a finished object.

Ultimately, I try to leave space for the viewer. I don't aim to over-explain the work; instead, I want it to encourage slow looking and personal reflection. When someone feels comfortable responding emotionally or relating the work to their own experience, that's where a genuine dialogue begins.

● **What unique stories or experiences do you aim to convey through your work that you feel are often missed in the broader art discourse?**

What I aim to convey through my work is a balance between control and spontaneity, something that is often overlooked when glass is discussed primarily as craft rather than as a fine art medium. While my process requires a high level of skill and discipline, I'm interested in achieving a sense of freedom and immediacy within that structure: the kind of spontaneity you find when painting from life, which can never be fully captured from a photograph.

My work is rooted in experience rather than replication. I want the pieces to feel lived in, as though they carry the memory of weather, movement, and passing light. I use different types of glass, such as reactive, translucent, opaque, opal and I incorporate inclusions such as copper and silver, as well as glass I make myself. These materials create subtle shifts in depth and atmosphere, rewarding slow looking and encouraging an emotional response rather than instant consumption.

What I feel is often missed in broader art discourse is how material, process, and intuition work together. Glass allows me to hold both precision and risk at once, creating work that is controlled yet open, structured yet responsive, inviting the viewer not just to look, but to experience.