

Report of International Cultural Exchange Grant
spring 2014
by Mafune Gonjo

Introduction:

22nd October- 3rd December 2014, I participated to six week Artist in Residency Program at Creative Glass Center of America in Millville, New Jersey USA. Other participating artists were sculptor Joan Harmon from NYC USA and glass artist Tanja Pak from Slovenia. The main purpose of the program is providing resources to artists to develop and refine their work, while experimenting with both traditional and innovative processes involving glass as a medium. I was selected with the proposal to continue my series of glass dress.

Economy:

Budget-Grant from Konstnärnsämnden 25000 SEK

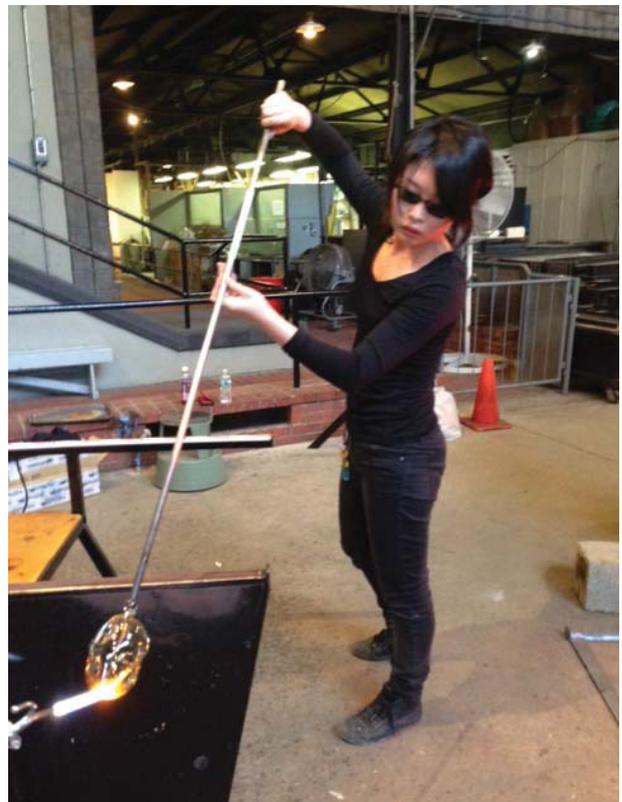
Expenses- Flight between Stockholm and NYC 4600 SEK

Travel in USA 1900 SEK

Shipping 7200 SEK

Material 4200 SEK

Living expenses 12000 SEK Total 29900 SEK

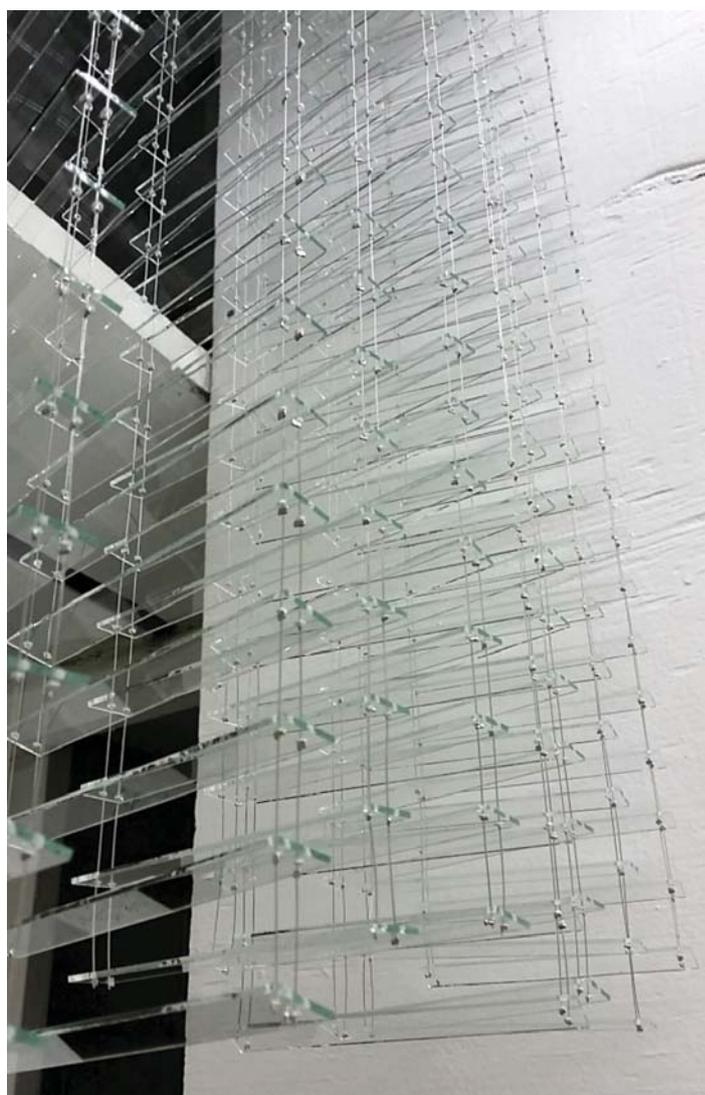


Working result:

Creative Glass Center of America is located in the countryside in southern part of New Jersey and during those six weeks, I could concentrate on my work without being bothered by anything else. It was just great. I got private studio in huge glass workshop with fantastic facility- hot shop with two furnaces, mould room, cold workshop and many big kilns- and had access to there 24 hours 7 days in a week. I started working with my proposal, glass dress which I estimated to take minimum 4 weeks, but because of the great environment I could complete it in 2.5 weeks. Then I expand this female belongings series to glass lingerie which I was inspired by an exhibition "History of the lingerie" at FIT museum in NYC. I made three different models of glass lingerie and one of them was included to collections of their Museum of American Glass in the end of fellowship program.

Aside from those works, I made one casting piece with the shape of my shoulder. It was a nice experience to watch and assist process of a great kiln cast artist Tanja Pak and I started to feel that I wanted to try this technique. I never tried this size of casting before and she helped me a lot, from which I learned a lot about casting technique. It was also nice to have talks with Joan Harmon who is working with installation combining different materials. I also made a series of glass ladders which I plan to install in the nature and take photos experimentally.

Although I don't work so much with hot glass for my works, I got opportunities to assist co-fellow artists and work with blowing, sand casting and hot casting. Since I always get inspiration from materials and processes, I am happy to have got opportunity to work with different technique and I am sure that it will affect to my future creation.





Swedish konsthantverk and American studio glass:

Apart from co-fellows, I met two other established glass artists Jocelyn Prince and Deborah Czeresco who visited Creative Glass Center of America for their work. Jocelyn is a conceptual glass artist who is teaching at Rhode Island school of Design. At CGCA, she worked with the project to put the hot glass to a printing press. The finished pieces were actually not so beautiful visually, but it was very interesting how she pushes the limit of the way we relate to glass, and find conceptual potential both in material and process. Deborah is also a well known studio glass artist who has taught many glass schools in USA . She had a demonstration to make world's biggest glass fruits cake with her Glass Blast team during the weekend after thanksgiving. I never seen this big blowing by many people. It was spectacular.

I have been educated and working in Swedish konsthantverk culture which I understand is very much relating to everyday life and questioning to concept of function/shape. And I found that the tradition of American studio glass is more connecting to relation between maker and material. Process, technique and craftsmanship play important roles in both cultures, but maybe in slightly different way. In American glass culture, people often see concept in technically new challenge and in Swedish glass, more often in new way of seeing and interpreting processes.

Of course just generalizing American glass art and Swedish glass art doesn't lead me to any good creation and I'm not interested in categorizing my art to either of them, but it was very interesting and nice experience to watch and be in different tradition. It makes my sight broader and helps me to keep good balance.

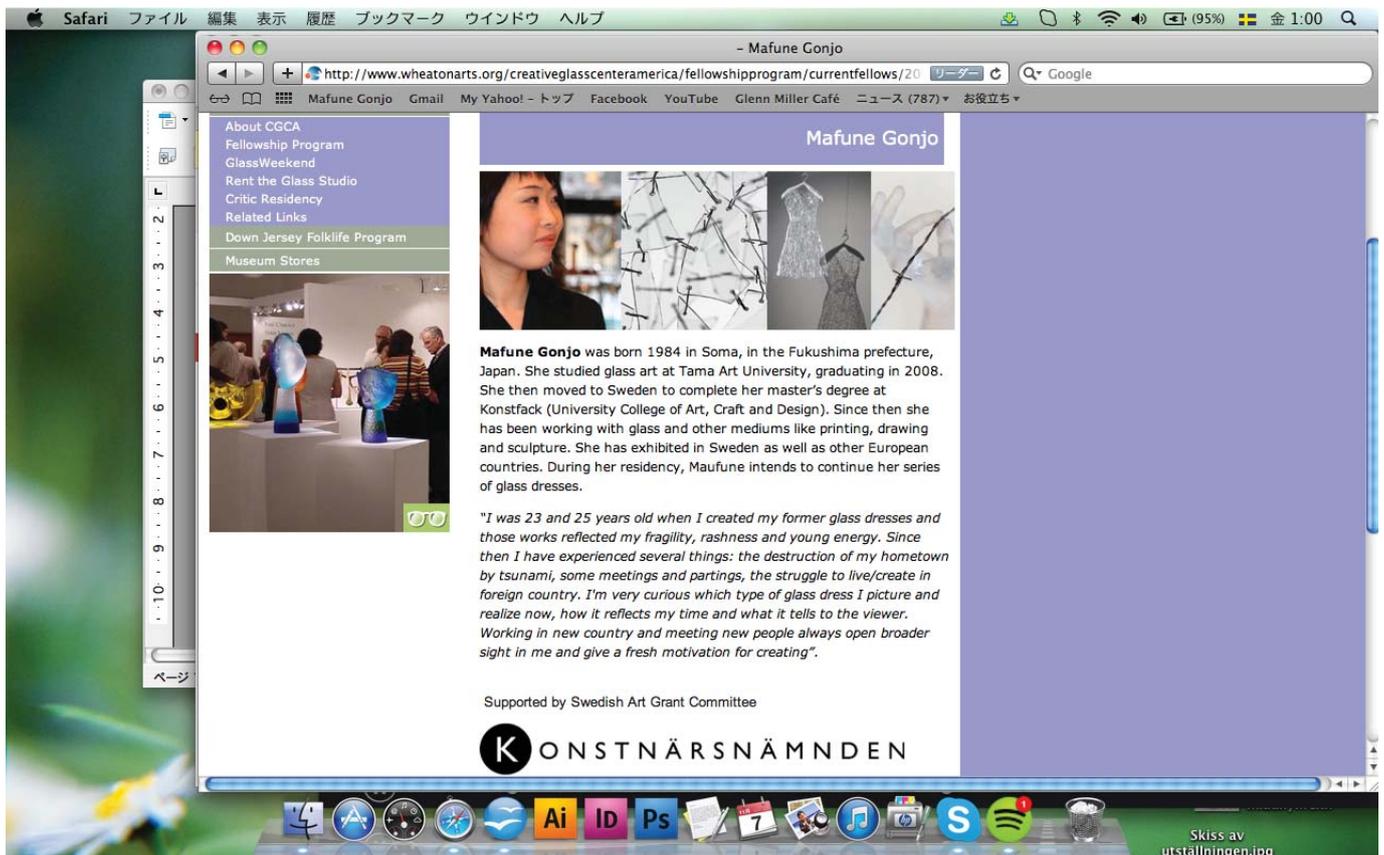


Further collaboration:

Above all I'm very happy to get contact to kiln cast artist Tanja Pak in this residency. Her technique and way of making space with her objects, I have always admired. She liked my work too and saw me as an hard working young artist. We are talking about getting some opportunity to work together before her big solo show 2016. Another fellow Joan Hermon was also fascinated by my work and she will try to let me participate to group show organized by Art Shape Mammoth in NY which she is a member. I also got a contact to an artist/curator Laura Donefer who organizes glass fashion show at Glass Art Society Conference at Corning USA 2016 through the staff of CGCA. And hope to get more opportunity to show my art in USA and other countries.

The support from Konstnärnsämnden and its logo is clearly shown on WheatonArt's web site in current fellow page. <http://www.wheatonarts.org/creativeglasscenteramerica/fellowshipprogram/currentfellows/2014fellows/MafuneGonjo>

And also in my website.



I would like to thank Konstnärnsämnden for supporting this artist in residency program and helped me to develop my career.

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