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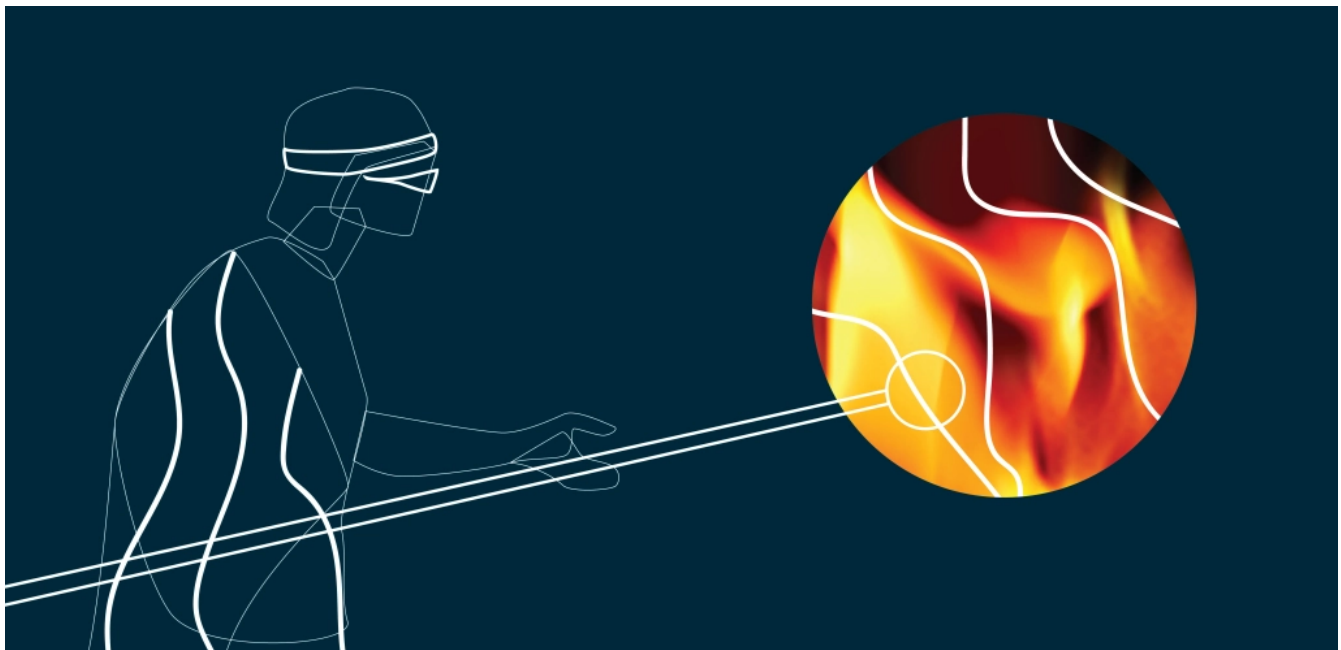
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Art & Lifestyle, General Content, Peyton Cabaniss, Student Life

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# Hot Takes from the Hot Shop



**Written by Peyton Cabaniss.**

*Graphic by Peyton Cabaniss.*

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As ten glass blowers don their safety goggles and sweat bands to enter a dark industrial warehouse, *Blown Away* introduces the Netflix peruser to the fine art of glass blowing. Unlike some forms of art that can be undertaken with a quick trip to Michael's, glass blowing isn't accessible to the masses. The equipment is sharp and dangerous, and you'll need frequent access to a 2000-degree oven termed the "glory hole" to keep your glass from cracking as you work in what industry insiders call the "hot shop." As the artists on *Blown Away* shape, twist, and stretch molten glass, they literally play with fire.

Sent off with a design challenge, the glass blowers begin by dipping a long metal rod, called a "punty", into the crucible to pick up molten glass. From then on, the viewer watches the contestants work with the indistinguishable orange fluid material, forced to wait for the glass to cool in order to fully realize what the artists have made.

Throughout their time in the hot shop, each glass blower's creative inspiration becomes evident. For Deborah, her throughline is fighting the gender gap in the glass blowing field. Glass blowing, with its open flames and harsh metal tools, exudes stereotypical masculine values, and Deborah has often been the only woman in the work room during her 30 years of experience. Each of her pieces offers her uniquely feminist perspective on the given challenge. For example, in the futuristic "2050" challenge, she creates an external womb. This invention would allow men to participate in pregnancy with an eye towards freeing reproduction and parenting from societal gender roles.

Though exceedingly tongue-in-cheek, Deborah's final project makes the strongest statement on her identity as a female glass blower. Tasked with using glass to represent what she stands for, Deborah fills her gallery space with breakfast food. Sausage links drip from the ceiling and across the floor, seeping from a cast iron

skillet suspended in midair. In the middle of the installation, an egg is elevated on a pedestal, all alone.

In her artist's statement, Deborah elaborates on the symbolism the viewer innately senses. In her always innovative style, Deborah's over easy egg is a symbol of a female reproductive egg. She is that egg sat high upon a pedestal, surrounded by men. Though not the most technically perfect, Deborah's work is the most effective of all the artist's in communicating her deep passion. In examining her final project, the viewer is left with the smallest detail of eggs attached to the perimeter gallery walls: the budding female glass blowers Deborah has been paving the way for all along.



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