BEAUTY BEYOND NATURE:  
THE GLASS ART OF PAUL STANKARD  
November 2, 2013 – January 5, 2014

CORAL GABLES, FL (October 21, 2013) – Beauty Beyond Nature presents more than 70 of Paul Stankard’s intricately flame-worked still-life sculptures encased in clear crystal from the Robert M. Minkoff Collection, November 2, 2013 – January 5, 2014 at the University of Miami Lowe Art Museum. The collection spans more than 40 years of Stankard’s career, from his earliest attempts at paperweights in 1969 to a monumental eight-inch Honeybee Swarm Orb commissioned for this exhibition in 2010.

With meticulous technical skill, Stankard creates a variety of flora, insects, figurative elements and poetry that demonstrate his acute powers of observation and artistic sense. He references the plant kingdom as his primary inspiration but does not purport to create scientifically accurate representations of individual species. “I think of my work as referential,” states Stankard. “These are not literal flowers, though it is important to make them believable. The point of my work is not to make specimens but to evoke the experience of nature.”

Included in the exhibition are works representing all of Stankard’s design series beginning with his floral Paperweights inspired by the Victorian-age French botanical paperweights of Baccarat, St. Louis, and Clichy. Unsatisfied with the limitations of the form, Stankard expanded his efforts into his Botanicals series. These forms are perpendicular in orientation, providing a multitude of viewing angles. In these pieces, Stankard incorporates a distinct horizon line separating the above and below ground elements of the floral arrangements and also introduced honey bees and mystical root people that live “hidden” in the root structure. He also began to add small words, such as “seed,” “pollen” and “decay” that suggest the life cycle of all growing things.

Furthering his experimentation, Stankard implemented a technique he calls “cloistering” where he laminates a layer of colored glass to filter or absorb light. He introduced this effect in his Columns and Cubes series. His Orbs, similar to his paperweights but larger in scale, are perfectly round spheres that provide uniform magnification of the encased elements from all angles. In his Diptychs, Triptychs and Assemblages, Stankard weaves together color and form into complex arrangements, setting up his elements in grids that intensify the effect of each. These works are a culmination of the techniques he developed in all his previous series.
“I’ve enjoyed more creative freedom by suggesting untamed organic illusions rather than flawless floral arrangements. My artistic point of view takes advantage of the many hours of experimenting with process to discover a fresh beauty that builds on the paperweight aesthetic. It’s all about nature’s fecundity interpreted in glass.”

A new full-color catalog accompanies the Beauty Beyond Nature exhibition and provides context and interpretation through an in-depth essay by critic William Warmus and an artist interview by Glass Quarterly editor Andrew Page. The catalog features high-magnification photographs that reveal new levels of detail of Stankard’s work.

On Thursday, November 14, 2013 at 7 p.m., the Lowe Art Museum will present Andrew Page, Editor-in-Chief of Glass: The UrbanGlass Art Quarterly for a lecture on the special exhibition ‘Beauty Beyond Nature: The Glass Art of Paul Stankard at UM’s new Student Activities Center in Coral Gables. An 8 p.m. reception will follow at the Lowe Art Museum. Information at 305.284.3535 or lowemuseum.org

About the Artist:
Paul Stankard (American, born 1943) was born in North Attleboro, MA. He studied glassmaking at Salem County Vocational Technical Institute in Carneys Point, NJ, and entered the field professionally making glass for laboratories. In the early 1970s, he left the scientific glass industry to pursue his more creative ambitions and is recognized around the world for his intricately detailed objects of nature. He currently lives and works in Mantua, NJ with his wife, Patricia. In 2011, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Robert M. Minkoff Foundation.
www.paulstankard.com

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The Lowe Art Museum is located on the campus of the University of Miami at 1301 Stanford Drive, Coral Gables. Museum gallery and store hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sunday noon - 4 p.m. The Museum is closed Mondays and University holidays. General Admission (not including programs) is $10; senior citizens and non-UM students are $5; and the Museum is free for Lowe members, University of Miami students, faculty and staff, and children under 12. Admission is free on Donation Day, the first Tuesday of every month. Public Program Admission is $10 for non-members and free for Lowe members. For more information, call 305.284.3535 or visit lowemuseum.org.

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