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gGOLD LIST 2021





PHOTOS BY ERIN WILLIAMS.

MEET THE MAKER

CONRAD WILLIAMS

Conrad Williams' fascination with glassblowing began at a young age. After watching a demonstration, he was determined to pursue the craft, going so far as to convince his high school to allow him to spend a semester doing a glassblowing internship for credit. His interest led to high-profile internships with Benjamin Moore and Dale Chihuly before he eventually opened a studio in Naples. Aside from creating his own work, which is exhibited at Judith Liegeois Designs, Williams places a heavy emphasis on teaching, both at his studio and at the Ritz-Carlton. *Luxe* talked with the artist about the driving force behind his art. conradwilliamsglass.com

Tell us about your studio. When we moved to Naples, we took two directions with the studio. First, we wanted to be able to perform and teach, so we created a mobile glassblowing studio to demonstrate for people who wouldn't otherwise see glass in motion. Getting into a glass studio is difficult because there is such a learning curve, so we want to provide opportunities to people to try it out. Then, of course, the other purpose was having a space for me to create my own artwork.

Where do you draw your inspiration? I tend to get my ideas from observing the things in my life that strike me as interesting and visually stimulating. This could be something as simple as the way a tree branch bends. I dissect what

I like about it and then translate that into my work. It's not about recreating literally, but rather in more of an emotional sense.

What are you working on now? On the fine-art end, I've been exploring working in reverse. Instead of continually adding to my glass to create a final piece, I've been building up a large piece of glass and then grinding and cutting away material to expose different layers. You can see multiple layers of color, and it really tells an interesting story. I've also been teaching my kids how to make components in glass, like marbles. Then I'll put what they've created into a larger component I've made. You can really see how that dual relationships plays out in the final piece.

