

# The GLASS Quarterly Hot Sheet

BY ANDREW PAGE | JANUARY 20, 2010 · 3:20 PM

## 3 Questions For ... April Surgent



April Surgent engraving at the lathe in her studio.

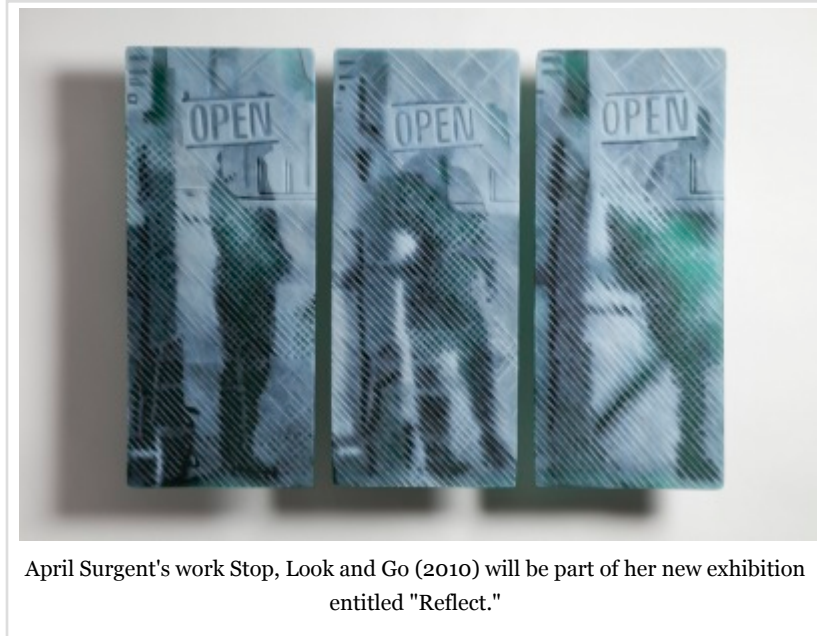
**GLASS Quarterly Hot Sheet:** What are you working on?

**April Surgent:** I'm currently involved in a new body of work that focuses on the inherent link between person and place by looking at the everyday things that make life what it is, here and now. Unlike earlier work that has focused on many different places, this collection of pieces focuses solely on Seattle, and, more specifically, the places that make up my own community.

The decision to make work about my community came from observations of my home and studio neighborhoods. Feeling the effects of the current downturn in the economy, I wanted to take a look at how my community is being affected. With this came the obvious realization that we often see only what we want to see and that everything is not always what it appears to be.

As my engravings are inspired by photography, which I use to materialize these ideas, I started to photograph the reflections I found in glass. A photograph of a storefront window captures a subject (both literally and metaphorically) reflected on his or her surroundings, and the surroundings reflected on him or her. The reflected

image also captures a broader perspective, literally giving the viewer a larger outlook.



*Stop, Look and Go* is an example of a piece that I made about window-shoppers. Catching people contemplating over unobtainable things and recognizing that many go without. Here the figure stops to peer in at the goods in the window, ultimately passing them up. Uncovering the figure through the detailed lines of the wire-glass door was both challenging and rewarding. With so much information, carving reflected images has proven to be a great learning experience into cameo engraving.

**GLASS:** What artwork have you experienced recently that has moved you, and got you thinking about your own work?

**April:** My interests in making art about place and everyday life have led me to the documentary photographs compiled by the historical section of the [Farm Security Administration](#) (FSA) between 1935 and 1942. The intention of the photographs was to document the plight of American farmers during the [Great Depression](#). A look at one of the photographs can take you into the life of a particular family, and looking over a compilation of photographs can take you back to an entire time and place. I'm drawn to and inspired by the emotive qualities of these documentary photographs and their ability to tell vivid stories without words. Some of my favorite FSA photographers include: [Marion Post Wolcott](#), [Jack Delano](#), [Lewis Hine](#) and [Dorthea Lange](#).

An exhibition that I have recently seen and had to go back for is, "[The Old Weird America: Folk Themes in Contemporary Art](#)" at the [Frye Museum](#) in Seattle. The artists in the group exhibition are all inspired by American folklore, from the settlement era to the mid-1900s. What I liked most about the exhibition was how each artist visualized what a personal and or national identity meant to them. I left the exhibition with new perspectives of America imprinted on my mind. The amazingly detailed graphite drawings by [Eric Belz](#) were among some of my favorite works.

Increasingly, I find myself drawn to art that depicts the ordinary and meaningful aspects of everyday life. This artwork exposes and educates me on different perspectives to living and changes the way that I see the world. It also reminds me how powerful and persuasive art can be. Though still learning, I try to record things as they are in my own work to better understand life.

**GLASS:** Do you have any upcoming exhibitions you can talk about?

**April:** I'll have my latest work in a Bullseye Gallery exhibition entitled "Reflect" that will run from February 2nd to March 20th, 2010. Bullseye Gallery will also be taking some of my work to the COLLECT art fair in London from May 15th through 17th.

After "Reflect," I'm planning to start work on my first installation project destined for the Bellevue Arts Museum in Bellevue, Washington. Working with BAM curator Stefano Catalani, I'm excited to be given the opportunity to transform the museum's gallery space with my engravings. That show will run from October 2010 through April 2011.

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