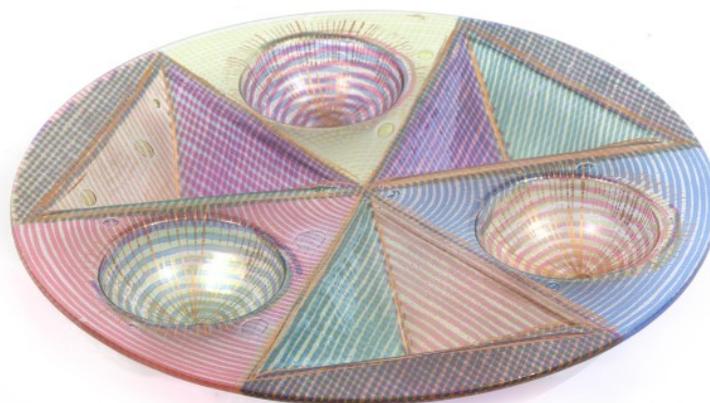


Legends of Glass – Michael and Frances Higgins

Michael and Frances Higgins, who met at the Chicago Institute of Design, and were pioneers in the rediscovery and refinement of the ancient art of glass fusing, founded the Higgins Studio in 1948.

Originally the Studio operated out of the Higgins' Chicago apartment, with kilns set up behind the sofa. Everyday items, such as bowls and plates, were transformed, through an arresting mix of geometric and curved lines, and bold use of colour, into objects still useful, yet also visually vibrant and exciting. Promoted as “an exclamation point in your decorating scheme”, the unique blend of artistry and practicality that Higgins glassware offered quickly attracted buyers. Working round-the-clock in split shifts, Michael and Frances met ever-increasing orders from such major retailers as Marshall Field's, Georg Jensen and Bullock's Wilshire.



Their Studio operation moved to more traditional surroundings in 1957, thanks to a partnership with Dearborn Glass Company of Chicago. The Higgins name received national exposure through Dearborn's extensive, and heavily promoted, line of “Higginsware”. The line included, in addition to a full range of tableware, everything from lamps and ashtrays, to candleholders and Rondelays (fused glass circles and squares designed to attach in sections, for use as room dividers, window treatments, and other décor applications, are still staples of the Higgins Studio today.)

The richly varied output of the Higgins Studio has also included, at one point or another, clocks, bookends, paperweights, glass-topped ceramic dishes, tables, Christmas ornaments, jewellery, “dropout” vases, wall plaques, mobiles, free-standing sculptures, mirrors, church windows, room dividers, and even exterior building ornamentation. Imagine what can be done in glass, and the Higgins Studio has probably done it!



In 1966, following their Dearborn tenure, and a brief stay at Haeger Potteries, Michael and Frances Higgins elected to return to private studio work. Here, they were free to set their own goals, meet their own standards, and design in the direction their hearts and minds led them. Since 1966, the Higgins Glass Studio has been located in Riverside, Illinois.



Michael Higgins died in 1999, Frances Higgins in 2004.

