

Embers: Meng Du glassmaker creates unique pieces of art from personal memories and nostalgia

Meng Du is a storyteller artist that uses glass to draw the traces of memory

By [Dominique Musorrafiti](#) - December 17, 2019



Featured image: Meng Du, *How are you*, 2019. glass, copper foil. 7.5 x 0.2 x 6.9 inch.
Photograph by Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

From 30 November 2019 until 16 February 2020, Meng Du: Embers, at the Fou Gallery in New York will allow exploring the wonderful world of the art glass of Meng Du.

The artist's second solo show presents a collection of glassworks and installations that combine glass and fabric materials. Despite the cold winter, the viewer will be warmed by the warmth of the Fou Gallery team and wrapped in the warm embrace of Meng Du's works, which will make the audience dream and inspire and reflect.

[Official site](#) | [Meng Du](#)



Meng Du is blowing glass at Shanghai Museum of Glass, 2019.
Photograph by Xinglin Yi ©Meng Du, courtesy Shanghai Museum of Glass

The artist is an alchemist. From the glowing crucibles, spit out of the fire, she gives shape to her ideas. Glass is a highly ductile material and suitable for expressing artistic creativity. Her exhibition expresses of matter and light, of experience and awareness. The young artist gave life from the furnace to her ideas, fantasies, and feelings that become living and incandescent material and that even after the transformation, when the artworks become cold and solid, but at the same time fragile, they forever enclose the strength and soul of the fire. At the exposition, we can see her love and passion for her work and the spontaneous desire to communicate it. Behind her lively gaze, we can find the firm hand of a professional who knows exactly how to enchant and amaze.



Meng Du, Place, 2019. Klin-formed glass, silver foil.
Photograph by Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

“Embers” was born in the summer of 2018, during the artist’s participation in the Glass Nexus Forum at the Creative Norths Land of Lybster, in the United Kingdom. Embers, although they may be as small as ash, are combustion catalysts. Their strength has a destructive power, when a fire spreads, but also rebirth generating new life from death, thanks to the chemical transformation that has created new substances that serve as food. Like on the embers, from the ash, the decay, the sadness, the fear can be transformed. As happens in the process of making glass, where sand, silicon, and other materials merge, Mend Du who knows her material, which from liquid and incandescent, subsequently becomes hard and cold, as if by magic, manipulated with mastery, her material, which manages to respect and maintain the most important features that the artist has decided to create.



Meng Du: Embers opening, Fou Gallery Echo He and Meng Du
Photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

The creation of her series Letter and Ripple, are linked to unexpected deaths in Du's life and in that of a precious friend. She made the series to express her feelings and reflections on life and death. The nine small pieces, two long Stain / Tiffany glasses and four circular mirrors in Stain / Tiffany glass where Du combines the colored mosaic glass with the mirror and engraves them with some drawings and phrases, transmitting and indicating her deep spirit and feeling. Stain / Tiffany glass is often used for its translucency. From one side, the viewer can only see the patterns and not the inside. From the other side, the viewer can benefit from the magnificent refraction of light through the glass. The mirror has exactly the opposite optical effect: people can only see themselves. Between the glass and the mirror, there is a line like a crease in a letter.



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin. A table that allows the visitor to sit down and write a letter to oneself or others in the future or in the past
©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

The artwork is the space where the vital quivers of light and memories meet. In this specific point between space and time, parallel universes are meet, which can be seen but cannot be touched. They perceive each other but do not cross the same paths. Writing a letter is always an introspective journey that concerns the writer. The letter is a piece of us, we find it in our

reflection, it becomes a message for the future, it is something we can recover from the past, from the glass container of memories and light experiences. The artwork is not the end, the result of experience: it's rather the beginning of a journey, a metaphor for elsewhere. Du transforms the invisible into visible. With this spirit and consciousness, Fou Gallery offers visitors some postcards to write to friends and/or loved ones.



Meng Du: Embers opening, a visitor writes a letter to herself in the future,
photograph by Jingxin Hu ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

Her experience in a residence at the Glass program of the Aichi University of Education in Japan led Meng Du to create works that combine glass and fabric. Inspired by her visit to Chiharu Shiota's solo show in Tokyo, she began to rethink her artistic technique. For Embers the artist has decided to present some *murrine* canes, wrapped in a thin white outer layer, with a trace of red thread in the middle and embroidered on a mosaic fabric dyed with tea – with sharp sections perforated in the soft fabric. The suspended series floats in the air of the gallery space letting the public relate emotionally with the environment of the exhibition. Du's new works at the north and south ends of the gallery are an opportunity for the viewers to travel metaphorically and physically through an intertwined journey.



Meng Du, Drop – 1, 2019. glass, found objectl. 8 x 2 inch.
Photograph by Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

Through her artworks, Meng Du represents the invisible emotions that permeate deep into our hearts. She recreates the path of fleeting memories and those present, between dreams and reality, merging them into her artwork of glass and thus stopping and holding back those moments of emotion and life. Her artworks convey the magic, of the moment in which one is catapulted into a memory time machine, to relive the feelings and those unrepeatable crystallized moments. Transitory memories take on permanence in our minds. We find ourselves beyond existence and non-existence: beyond any state that could be expressed with words. We are enveloped in the mystery of being, of the knowledge we can access through meditation, savoring again the variety of experiences.



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin
©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

Fully enlightened in a bodily and mental phenomenon, which leads to the most intimate nature of the existing as well as the apparent, the corporeality and the conceptuality of being. Meng Du with her pieces of art materializes an inexpressible language that is eternal in the mind. Immersing ourselves and renewing our mind and our spirit we can reach borders so far, but so close that they allow us to touch the aura of the human being. Like glass, memories can be malleable, fragile, confused, profound, transformable. All the contrary and opposite characteristics are elements of harmony that enrich with further values and details. In this journey, the mind and the spirit find a feeling of union with the whole, thanks to the thread of art, which with its aesthetic beauty turns into a poem capable of shaping the soul.



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin
©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

Du invites us to pay attention to the small details to reach an awareness. Her glass creations are not hard and rigid, but delicate and nostalgic unique pieces patiently designed and worked. Nostalgia finds permanence in glass and the art of glass is her language. Her art shows precision, and love for details, that only if observed closely can make us understand her ability, fascinate us, bewitch us and tell us magic and secrets. Meng Du expresses clear, vivid and lucid feelings with her personality-rich artworks. Every single piece is significant and each piece contains a memory, a thought, a piece of information to create and complete a puzzle, which is personal for each viewer. Recreating this puzzle implies a meditation, an inner exploration, a journey to find self and own harmony, own music, and melody, to progress in knowing and understanding ourselves.



Meng Du: Embers opening, Fou Gallery team photo, Lin Jing, Yilan Wang, Meng Du, Jingxin Hu, Sybil Peng and Echo He ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

Du also displays at Mind the Gap, till January 30, 2020. The show is a **collective exhibition at the Delaware Contemporary** with artworks by contemporary Chinese women of different generations. With her installation “Everywhere, Nowhere No.2”, she expresses the concerns, confusion, and changes in modern society, using the bodies of birds. Her artistic language wants to focus on contemporary immigration trends in this moment of globalization.



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Jingxin Hu
©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

The history of glass art is ancient, it is a heritage of life and technique, able to amaze, able to reach new places full of surprises and novelties, encompassing feelings to be revealed. This art surrounds us every day and is part of us, to the point that many times we don't even realize it, we forget about its value, and we consider it a foregone element of our life like the air we breathe and the water we drink. Meng Du with great tenacity and professionalism gives body to the emotions and with imagination, brings to life the originality of the art of glassmaking, showing its elegance of forms and nobility. Meng Du gives birth to her images from a crucible of hot magma and with ancient instruments, she can give shape to the fiery mass.



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin
©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery

The art of glass creates surprise wonder, feelings linked to the unexpected new moment, but also to the memory that suddenly resurfaces and precious. A precious glass-dream is delicate, fragile ethereal, so beautiful to scare: if you touch it, it could vanish, break, cease to exist, then make you suffer. But fragility can be the strength. The emotional side that seems weak and fragile can become the vulnerable human point of the advantage as a point of understanding and communication.



Meng Du, Embers, 2019. Fabric, Glass, found object. 108.5 x 58 inch.
Photograph by Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery



Meng Du: Embers installation view, photograph by Nadia Peichao Lin ©Meng Du, courtesy Fou Gallery
*Photos by Nadia Peichao Lin, Jingxin Hu, Xinglin Yi ©Meng Du, Courtesy of **Fou Gallery***

<https://china-underground.com/2019/12/17/embers-meng-du-glassmaker-creates-unique-pieces-of-art-from-personal-memories-and-nostalgia/>