

[The Ideas](#)[The Goods](#)[The Places](#)[The Rituals](#)[The Creators](#)[The Team](#)*A guide to the well-crafted life.*

# HANDFUL OF SALT

A PINCH OF NEWS | The best event listings + arts coverage around

## Glass Artists Alex Abajian and Jerry Lin-Hsien Kung

Share:

We're big fans of Lonnie Lee's Oakland-based [Vessel Gallery](#). Why? Other than [Lonnie's sparkling personality and the gallery's serious coolness as a space](#), it's her unerring taste, obviously. She has a way of finding great artists, and nurturing them to even further greatness. The other thing we love is her commitment to process: she understands how great art gets made in a profound way, and better yet, exposes that process to the community.

So few (if any) do this, and we can't figure out why. But there you have it: Vessel's the only place to go for this kind of thing.



Her current show (opening on Friday, August 3) is a case in point. Called [Creatures](#), it features the work of glass artists [Alex Abajian](#) and [J \(Jerry\) Lin-Hsien Kung](#). The show actually began with an [Artist Talk and Demonstration at Public Glass in San Francisco](#) a couple of weeks back (there's that "exposing the process" piece again).

What are you looking for?

### OUR NEWSLETTER

Our round up of uncommon finds, singular obsessions, and big ideas.

Email Address

Follow us:

### Recent Articles

[DxV: Silvia Song](#)[DxV: Misa Kumabuchi](#)[Lee & Lou: Olive Oil-Fried Eggs + Labneh](#)[Lee & Lou: Sunchoke Caponata](#)[Lee & Lou: Garlicky + Spicy](#)[Broccoli Rabe](#)



But the main event (for most people) will be at her gallery where the “creatures” will be on glorious display. “Unforgettable” is one of those wildly overused words, but it applies here. *Creatures* is about the visual punch of 79 individual sculptures and the exhilaration of glowing, gracious, edgy, intense beauty. The work is as emotional as it is visually stimulating: in these creatures you see our own fragility, and the power and meaning of connection.



You'll want to spend some time with this work to discover it fully. Pictures – however pretty – don't do justice to the sheer physicality of the work. And then you'll want to learn more about the way these creatures were made because behind all that gorgeousness is extreme craft, serious thought.



We managed to catch some time with Alex, Jerry, and Lonnie during the installation process.

**We start with the obvious question – how do you all work together?** *Alex:* I've been working with Jerry for a while: we each design and then help each other fabricate our respective works. But in working together we've been able to experiment and started to develop our own process, which resulted in *Creatures*. We didn't realize we'd developed something weird and unusual! It wasn't until we went into the residency at the Tacoma Museum of Glass that we realized what we had.

*Jerry:* We work together well because we're so different. There needs to be tension in creation.

*Alex:* What drives me insane is that he's really cerebral. I'm physical. Those two come together, but we have to trust each other. The material demands that you meet each other half way.

*Jerry:* Yeah there's only one truth, and that's glass.

*Alex:* And there's Lonnie.



**Yeah but who does what?**

*Alex:* It's Jerry's breath and my pulling legs. It's a gesture drawing in a moment of time.

*Jerry:* Alex is bending time and space.

*Lonnie:* I started working with Jerry and then met Alex...it's been about 7 years now. I watched what they were doing independently and then together, and really saw them develop their skills as artists, designers and artisans.

*Alex:* It's great to work with someone like Lonnie, who takes a risk, and invests all that time and effort. She does everything.

*Jerry:* Except build pedestals (he points to a fifty foot long catwalk on which the creatures will "parade".)

*Alex:* Lonnie's been great in keeping us going, and pushing us. We've all grown.



**How do you keep that balance between craft and design going?**

**Jerry:** You know, making things like this is an escape. The more you do craft you're governed by material and process. If you're governed by process, things become indiscernible except to craftsmen who see the tiny differences. My designs are informed by process, but I don't want to ride that process wave till it crashes. I want to ride it for now, just far enough.

**Lonnie:** That's what sets their work apart.

**So at the beginning of the installation of a show, especially where the pieces need to fit together intricately, how do you decide what to show, and how?**

**Lonnie:** It started out with 100 plus creatures, but we've edited for the show.

**Alex:** We did a mock set up in our studio, and then did a video.

**Jerry:** But we'll still be editing and adjusting. It's space dependent. It's about how the light hits things, how it feels in the space.

**What is it about this show that packs such a punch?**

**Lonnie:** They're multiples but it's not about production: the effect is extraordinary. And there's such an extreme refinement in the technique. I've watched these become more and more refined and elegant since their inception. They've gotten more graceful, lighter.

**Jerry:** It's like the pudgy baby growing up to become a supermodel. (Laughs all around but you can absolutely see this.)

**Lonnie:** What I like about these guys is that they're having fun and seeing where this goes. It's all a part of our editorial process.

**Jerry:** You know what the most common comment is about this? "Holy Shit."

We'd agree.



### Details

Creatures is up through September 1, 2012

Vessel Gallery

471 25th Street

Oakland, CA 94612

Also in the show are videos of Alex and Jerry at work, and process drawings by Beili Liu and jewelry by Paola Mirai.

Posted on August 3, 2012 by Regina Connell

This entry was posted in [ART+INSTALLATIONS](#), [Box 1](#), [Galleries + Museums](#), [GLASS+RESIN](#), [THE CREATORS](#), [THE PLACES](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

[← Fresh Talent: CCA at ACC 2012](#)

[The Big Picture: Bullseye Glass →](#)