



Light Minded

Glass artist Sydney Cash sculpts the light fantastic

Above: Sydney Cash's *Butterfly* wall piece. Right: *Copper/Silver Thread Weaving*, a corner piece.

"**ONE DAY**, when I was working in the studio, I noticed the way light was reflected on the wall," says Sydney Cash. "And suddenly I saw light as an object. I realized it was a form I could manipulate."

It is not that Cash had never noticed light before. An accomplished artist whose primary material is most often glass, light has always played an integral part in his work. The way Cash treats the surface of glass, polishing or etching it, and the way he layers, cuts, colors or fuses it, affects the way light moves through and around each piece, alternately diffusing, reflecting or enhancing its luminosity. But what happened in that instant that shifted light from supporting cast to central player? "I realized I could fabricate materials so that the light itself had shape," explains the upstate New York artist.

Cash began experimenting with fusing together clear and mirrored glass, cutting it in various shapes, attaching it to the wall and, finally, illuminating it in ways that created complex patterns and forms. Light hitting the mirrored areas reflects upward or downward, while light encountering clear sections passes through. The patterns are puzzled out using computer software, but the final piece—which can cost between \$3,000 and \$12,000—requires Cash's careful fine-tuning.

"With the light, the angle of attack is really important," says the artist. "The sculptures themselves change as the placement of light changes." **JORGE S. ARANGO**

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