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the business magazine for visual artists

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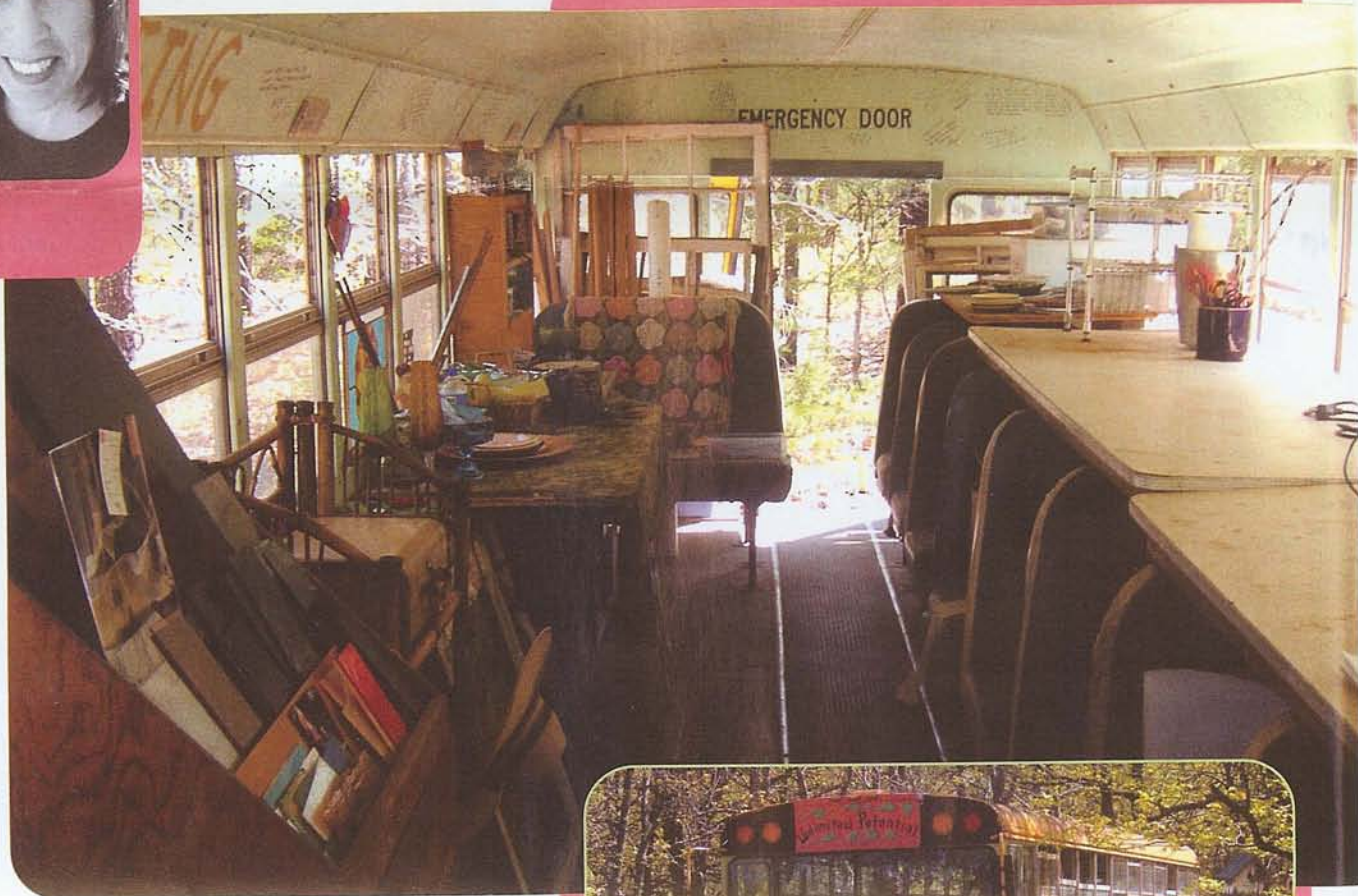
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by Jennifer Lynn Farrar

Jennifer Lynn Farrar, Glass Artist

Tecumseh, OK



Above: The interior of Lynn Farrar's studio
Below: The exterior of Lynn's mobile studio

I have always been described as innovative and resourceful, but when I tell people I create my stained-glass artwork in a renovated school bus, “unconventional” comes to mind.

I live in Oklahoma on ten beautiful acres. I am a single mother, with a daughter heading to college, so every penny counts. I began working with glass seven years ago, and now have my art in two different locations: Maria's Garden, in Ardmore, Oklahoma (www.mariasangarden.net), and In Your Eye Gallery located in the old historic arts district called “Paseo” in Oklahoma City (www.inyoureyegallery.com). I supply these two locations with art and also am available for private commission work.

I started in a small shed next to my house, which lacks a garage. However, the shed became too small for me, so I moved indoors. After several complaints from my daughter

Lynn invites her visitors to write or paint sayings or art onto her bus. These are a couple she posted herself: Unlimited Potential, and Hippies Use Side Door.



about projects being laid out for so long, and a genuine concern over the fumes from melting the hot metal, I began to consider alternate ideas that were affordable.

A friend of mine who works at a nearby high school told me that one of the school buses would soon be up for bid; he asked whether I would consider it as a studio. At first I balked, but then as he talked about the benefits of how I could use it, the idea became more attractive to me. I put in my bid and won

the bus for \$250.

My friend drove the bus to my house and parked it in a special place I had picked out on my land. Since I live on a gentle slope, it took a while to get enough braces underneath the tires so it would sit level. We worked together (one inside and one on the ground below) to remove all the seats from one side of the bus. It took a day to unscrew those bolts; they were quite stubborn, having been there for many years.

The school also was getting ready to discard a bunch of old tables, which I quickly retrieved. I used my drill to get the legs off all of them, then gently lifted and slid them up over the seats on the other side of the bus. I use this area

for my working space. It allows me to focus on several projects at one time or on big commission projects.

I left some seats in the bus for people to sit on, or for me to store my frames and other items. I also use the space under the tables for storage.

The lighting I use varies. If I work in the early evening, I sometimes use a mechanic's light, which brightens up the entire bus. For a more festive look, I use a long string of clear Christmas lights. If I had more money, I could have more extensive wiring to allow me more light, but I don't, so I take advantage of the natural sunlight during the day hours to work.

My furniture and accessories came from places where they no longer were needed or from thrift shops or estate sales. I put the furniture which stores

my glass on the side where the row of seats used to be. This seems to work well by allowing me space to stand, turn, and move around freely. At the end of each day, I sweep the aisles for slivers of glass or trash.

Electricity comes from my nearby wellhouse, so I have heat in the winter and a fan running during the summer. I also have a radio so I can listen to my favorite music or talk show while I cut or solder glass. With windows on both sides, I get a consistent flow of fresh air as well as the pleasure of hearing the wind gently blow and the birds chirp nearby.

When I have visitors, they sign the bus with a special quote, their name or just a random thought. The signature space is getting full, and the sayings are enjoyable to read, over and over.

I have had some classes/workshops in my studio. I offer one-on-one classes or classes for groups of up to four. People seem to enjoy the unique experience of creating art in a school



The larger sheets of glass are neatly stored so they are accessible and visible



bus, especially the younger kids who come in for stained-glass art education.

My daughter and some of her art friends have painted on the bus, including the top of it. In essence, the bus has become an evolving work of art. Right now, I am working with my daughter's high school painting class to coordinate a field trip out to my place. I am hoping the students can finish painting the bus, making it a psychedelic, original piece of art.

The bus has been instrumental in getting attention for my art. Two statewide television shows ("Discover Oklahoma" and Channel Four's "Is This a Great State or What") have come out to interview me and show the bus.



My stained-glass art is nontraditional. I never cut from a pre-set pattern, and I use all kinds of glass that eventually becomes part of an edgy, original piece of work. I shop at thrift stores for unusual vases, plates, or cups to break. I never can determine exactly how the pieces will break; it's almost as if the glass determines its own shapes, and I follow the lead when incorporating the pieces into my art. I also use traditional flat glass of all colors and textures, as well as vintage jewelry if the piece calls for it.



Most of my pieces are multidimensional. Some pieces I build into old antique window frames, and some are sculpted light pieces, sconces or flat panels.

Although this studio has become quite a conversation piece, it has its downsides. The bus can be driven, but every piece of glass would need to be secured before I took off. During the summer, I usually am armed with some sort of wasp or bug spray, and in the frigid winter months, the glass is too brittle to break or cut, so I must move inside for those tasks. Since I live in an isolated area, sometimes small animals move into my studio. A stray cat may wander inside for warmth, and swallows have built their nests in a shelf or above the driver's rear view mirror. Yet as long as I continue to use the bus regularly and keep it clean, most animals rarely stay long.



The art in my life has been a journey, and I believe this studio/bus can be considered an appropriate part of this exciting, unconventional and adventurous journey.

I have included pictures that show all aspects of my studio. Thank you for creating the "Studio Tour" section in Art Calendar. Seeing artists' studios is a further extension of who they are and what they create, and this addition to your magazine has been interesting for me to read. Someday I hope to have something more comfortable, but until then, I make do with what I have, and so far it has allowed me to have a space to do what I love and create beautiful pieces of art. 🍷



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Photo #1: One of Lynn Farrar's window-mounted glass pieces. Photo #2: Glass plates, earmarked for future breaking, are neatly stacked along with other miscellaneous glass pieces. Photo #3: One of Lynn Farrar's intimate glass pieces. Photo #4: Glass scraps and shards are neatly stored, grouped by color. Photo #5: Marbles and other small glass items are neatly shelved