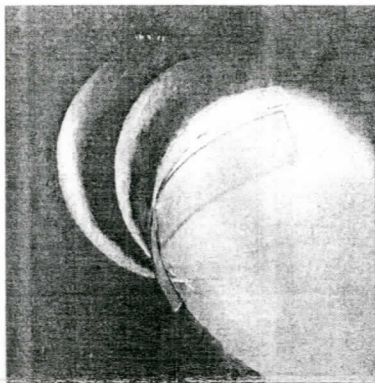




ENTERTAINMENT

Finding beauty in light

A world-renowned Italian artist has spent the past month enlightening Guernsey students in the broad scope of glass. Having launched the International Artist-in-Residence Programme in 1996, Renato Santarossa was invited back to mark its 25th residency. Reporter **Tom Bradshaw** found out more



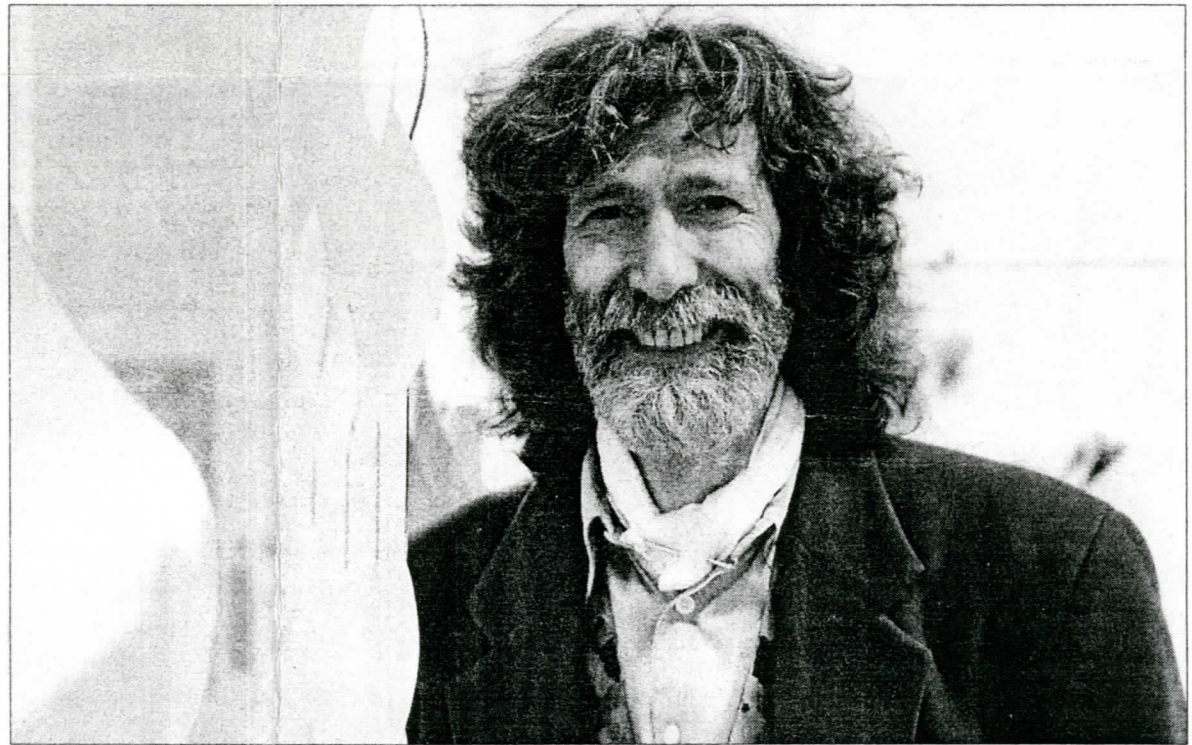
RENATO SANTAROSSA, an Italian artist currently based in Dusseldorf, has been working with glass for 45 years. His work takes the form of beautiful and dramatic sculptures used as mediums to reflect light. 'I saw glass as a vehicle to deal with light and began experimenting with cut glass in 1969,' he said.

He visualised every cut in glass as providing different interpretations of filtering light. An important step in developing his ideas came in 1980 when he became involved with a leading German industrial glass company. 'I had use of a studio in the factory and had access to all the latest cutting-edge glass technology - it was an incredible opportunity.'

The 10-year partnership led to an increased use of colour in laminated glass, just as it was being developed.

Some of his more recent works use dichroic glass, a very expensive material coated with a minute film of metal of varying thickness. 'My work is living with light and the colour of this incredible material changes depending on the direction of the light and how you present the work. It is beautiful and the possibilities are endless.'

His unique form of sculpture has taken him all over Europe and to Japan and he is represented in



■ **INSPIRED:** Italian artist Renato Santarossa uses glass as a vehicle to deal with light. (Picture by Adrian Miller, 0151363)

many public collections. As his career developed, Mr Santarossa became involved in realising a number of large public commissions alongside his busy exhibition schedule.

In these projects, he is both the artist and designer. He has completed architectural projects in Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands. 'For each of these, I challenge the inherent quality of glass and the unique dimensions of the public space to bring about distinctive transformations of light.'

Often the work is combined with water to heighten the luminosity, transparency and reflection of his vitreous material. Recently he completed an outside installation, as part of his exhibition at the Coal Museum in Oberhausen, Germany. It combines waves of

horizontally within a black sea of coal. A line of red glows along the uppermost crest of each wave. 'I wanted to epitomise the coal-mining industry of the Ruhr region. The light refracted by the glass symbolises the energy of the material and the red reminds of the blood and toil of the miners,' he explained. He has spent a month in the island working with students and developing an exhibition at Grange House.

'I have had a fantastic time on the island, although I have been working like a bull in a

'Exhibitions are my way of life and I have been very happy with the work I've produced'

Renato Santarossa

'I have been fascinated by the local weather which changes very quickly, creating some wonderful variations in light - there is inspiration everywhere.' He has created several dramatic pieces of glass-sculpted artwork exclusive to the exhibition. 'Exhibitions are my way of life and I have been very happy with the work I've produced.'

◆ **The exhibition, at Grange House, St John Street, St Peter Port, 10am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday (or by appointment, tel. 706422), runs until 14 December.**

■ **GLORIOUS GLASS:** Some examples of his work which are currently on display at Grange House. (0151363/62)