

# Glass chandelier sparkles at national 3D awards

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Martinborough glass artists Jim Dennison and Leanne Williams have captured the only national award in the medium with a chandelier tilted Quill.

The couple, who run a studio from the Martinborough home they share with son Willie, 6, were on Friday announced winners of the \$5000 Molly Morpeth Canaday 3D Award, which is the only national competition for glass artists in New Zealand, Dennison said.

"We are quite isolated here as glass artists and it was a surprise to actually win and very gratifying.

"It's important to enter and support competitions like this – especially because it's the only national competition of its type in the country."

Dennison said Quill is their second chandelier to win contest plaudits after a piece titled RIP won a special mention in a regional competition in 2005 before featuring on the cover of Pro Design magazine and finding a home – for \$12,000 – at the Auckland headquarters of multinational drinks company 42 Below.

Dennison was born in Masterton and attended Wairarapa College before studying biology and ecology at university and afterward launching a successful landscaping business in Wellington.

He met his partner, then a teacher, in the capital and in 1999 the couple retrained as artists and reincarnated their careers in glass.

In 2007 the pair won a residency at an American studio and began experimenting with pressing glass, which eventually led to the creation of Quill, which features scores of detailed pressed-glass feathers and comes with a \$7200 price tag.

Dennison said their artistic work is fraught with ecological



**MARTINBOROUGH GLASS** artists Leanne Williams and Jim Dennison have won the \$5000 Molly Morpeth Canaday Art 3D Art Award prize with a pressed-glass chandelier titled Quill. Pictured in their studio in Martinborough, Jim holds a bellbird and Leanne holds a quill of which their prize-winning pressed-glass chandelier is made. PHOTO: LYNDA FERINGA

science background and their manufacturing of chandeliers paces smaller "bread and butter" works that sell in galleries throughout New Zealand.

"Our sculptural work is aimed for galley sales and exhibitions but we decided to make something functional and took the exotic idea of chandeliers and made it contemporary.

"I suppose it's almost a commercial diversion of our work that we still treat in an artistic way."

The winning work and 20 other pieces, selected by judge Philip Clarke, of Auckland's Objectspace, from the original 41 entries, form the Molly Morpeth Canaday 3D

the Whakatane District Museum and Gallery until September 27.

Mr Clarke described Quill as "a beautiful and extravagant object" that impresses in total form and fine detail.

"In its form it refers directly to glass history whilst being utterly contemporary. Not only is it beautiful to look at, it has a point to make, which I think is about showiness and conspicuousness in relation to hunting and collecting."

Museum spokeswoman Kay Boreham said all works are for sale and represent a range of glass-making techniques including pressed and cast glass, blown glass and the extremely