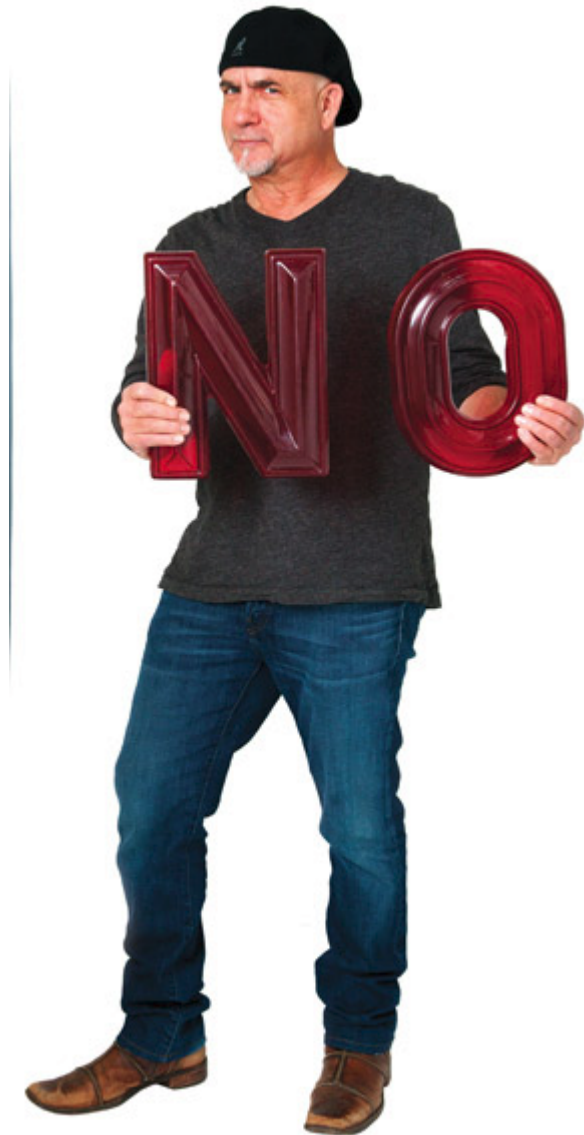




## BEYOND THE BOARDROOM

## ▶ GORDON HUETHER



Artist Gordon Huether started his studio in 1983 in his garage in Napa. “I was working at a window and door company and one day I just made the jump, quit my job and with \$500 started my company,” he says.

“In 1989, I was awarded my first public art commission for the University of Alaska Geophysical Institute. Given the opportunity to collaborate with a building design and construction team let me realize what I had envisioned,” he remembers. “This form of collaboration, to this day, contributes to my continued learning and growth—and not only as an artist. It constantly exposes me to new materials, approaches and ideas and helps me comprehend the public art process as a holistic system.”

Today, he’s based in a 15,000-square-foot building on Monticello Road that houses his design studio, a project gallery, fabrication facilities, administrative offices and the Hay Barn Gallery, which features a revolving exhibition of Huether’s fine art as well as, occasionally, the works of select guest artists.

*Where did you grow up?*

I was born in Rochester, N.Y. My parents brought me to Napa in 1962 and, for the most part, I’ve lived in the Bay Area ever since. I’ve also spent several years living in Germany, where my family is from originally, and I still travel between the two countries regularly. The German culture’s pursuit for perfection and excellent craftsmanship profoundly influences the way things are done at my studio. I feel fortunate to have lived in all

these incredible places—and most of all I love living in Napa!

*Did you go to college?*

I’m a self-taught artist and businessman and don’t have a formal education beyond high school. I’ve found this to be an advantage, because I was never burdened by the rules of the road. I’ve been free to make my own mistakes and learn from them to this day.

*Who were your early influences?*

I learned art composition and appreciation at an early age from my father. My aesthetic vision took an important turn when I met Professor Johannes Schreiter, a German glass artist and one of the pioneers

in contemporary stained glass. In the course of my initial artistic explorations, I was resolved to create a lasting impact on the world through the creation of large-scale works of art.

*Do you ever stop working?*

The person I am at the studio is also very much the person you'll encounter beyond that space. Being an artist is a full-time job and then some. If you want to do it right, it becomes your life and who you are, which is great, because I've arrived exactly where I always wanted to be. My work has morphed into my life and, that's a dream many people dream.

*Where do you find inspiration?*

Much of my inspiration—especially for the large-scale work and privately commissioned work—comes from Mother Nature and, often, from my clients. All the projects I take on are driven by storytelling, and the story for an airport in Houston, for example, will be very different than the one for a meditation room in a hospital in New York. I've always felt that the art I do in the public realm isn't about me; it's about the people who will experience the work on a daily basis. I'm also unceasingly inspired by the work of fellow artists, craftsmen, artisans, architects and designers.

*What recent projects have you been most excited about?*

At any given time, we have 15 to 20 major projects going on. The most significant, right now, is that we've been selected to work with the Salt Lake City Department of Airports to meet the goals of the Terminal Redevelopment Program at Salt Lake City International Airport, including a comprehensive art master plan. It's one of the largest construction projects in the nation, with installation scheduled for 2020. We also have projects happening in Morgan Hill, Calif.; Vail, Colo.; Richardson, Tex.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; and Stamford, Conn., to name just a few. All of them are exciting!

*What do you love to do outside of work?*

I've spent most of my adult life focused on "work" and never really developed any hobbies. As I've gotten older, I'm learning how to enjoy other things besides my work. So far, that means working on my home improvements, gardening, kayaking on the Napa River and cycling. My favorite non-work activity is dancing in my living room.

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