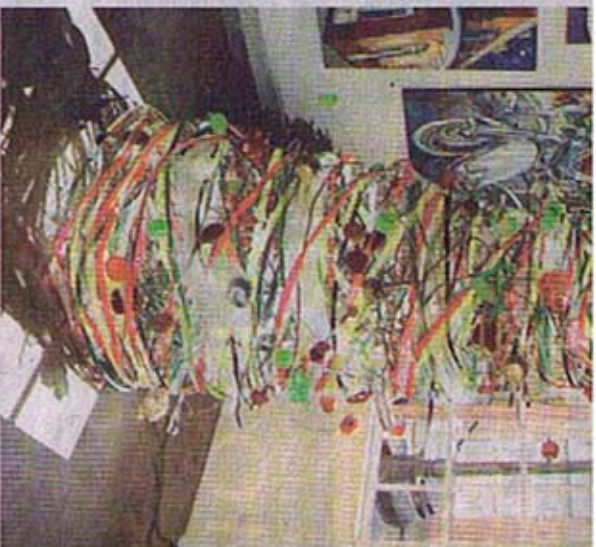


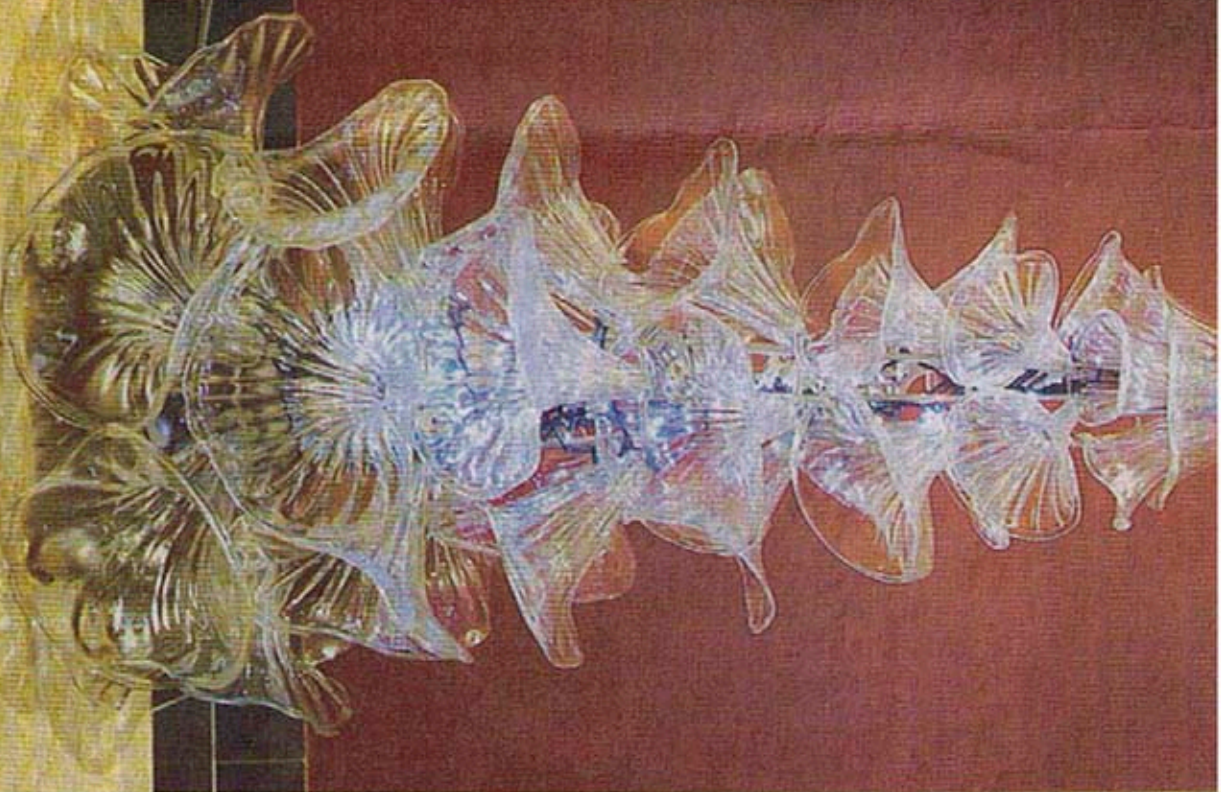


around and they all come together around the nucleus of Christmas."

Find out more: www.michaelopoulos.com/



James Michalopoulos puts his slant on the holiday by using materials found around his studio.



James Vella's (right) blown-glass horns get smaller toward the top, creating a tree shape.

Horns of plenty

The artist, James Vella, whose whimsical glass works range from giant flowers to roast pigs

Abort him: His Vetro Studio suffered major damage in Hurricane Katrina; it took him a year to rebuild it, running at full throttle. Vella likes to compose still lifes from his blown-glass objects because "they tell a story." He spends most of the summer away from New Orleans — usually traveling and teaching in places like Canada, Germany and Turkey — because of the heat, which exacerbates the hazards of the glass furnace.

His tree: A 7-foot composition of 65 blown-glass trumpet-shaped ornaments attached to a metal frame. LED lights and silver ornaments fill the cavity of the metal frame, illuminating the glass from within. A few LEDs in blown glass tops it out.

What he says about it: "I wanted the challenge of trying to interpret glass into a Christmas tree. I completely went for grandeur: Glass is not really suited to a literal translation of a Christmas tree, but I wanted to create something that would be recognizable, so I used graduated sizes to produce a tree shape. The shape of the glass pieces can be interpreted as a cornucopia, which fits with a holiday theme of bounty. Or oversized flowers, like angel trumpets, which also fit. I used matte and shiny silver ornaments for more reflectivity and the LED lights to produce a silver glow."

Find out more: <http://vellowetro.com/>

