

Steve Tobin

DOCUMENTATION



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## CHRONOLOGY

1957

Born Steven Robert Tobin on 10 February in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Shares February 10 birthdate of his mother, Frances Emanuel.

1964

Family moves to heavily wooded property with abundance of wildlife in Villanova, Pennsylvania. Interest in nature is sparked and Tobin is cited for first honors in "Nature" at Penn View summer camp.

1967

Father builds tree house in large oak trees on property. There Tobin feels more at home with leaves, branches, sky, animals, elements than he does indoors. Below trees is a fire over which he cooks. Later work springs from this tree house of his youth, with fire and nature as early influences and providing endless inspiration.

1970

Encounters glassblowing as physics experiment at Haverford School, leading to his buying torches to make decorative objects, such as glass trees. Takes train into Philadelphia to buy glass tubing and sells glass objects on streets of New York City. Loves using fire and transforming glass through fire; early marriage of science and art. Attends eight-week survival camp in Canada and learns to live off land.

1971

Begins serious study of saxophone with world-renowned, classical saxophonist, Arthur Hegvik, whose high level of commitment strikes chord that would resonate for years. Learns that hard work lays foundation for expression of inspiration.

1972

Follows eldest sister, Lynne, into art department at Harriton High School, Rosemont, Pennsylvania, where is introduced to potter's wheel; has natural facility with clay. Lifelong obsession with the material and its processes begins. His teacher, William Latina, stresses highest level of craftsmanship, influencing Tobin's work thereafter.

1973

Begins studying physics, transferring fascination with natural world to theoretical world. Physics, art, and music become interweaving passions.

1975

Is selected in citywide search for applicants for post of research assistant to the physicist Dr. Campbell Laird, a Nobel Prize-winner, who is conducting six-month experiment on structure of matter at University of Pennsylvania. Experiment involves growing crystals in metal, polishing them, and studying formations under electron microscope.

1976

Attends Tulane University because school has electron microscope available to undergraduate students; also has strong music department. In first year in college continues to study music, physics, and mathematics and takes ceramics course. Takes mathematics in summer school.

1977

Interest in ceramics increases; begins exhibiting work in statewide competitions. Plays in campus jazz bands. Interest evolves from physics to theoretical mathematics. Travels alone to Central America, learns to speak Spanish, and visits many pottery factories and studios.

1978

Gene Koss, ceramics professor at Tulane University, builds glass studio with Tobin's assistance. Tobin plays music professionally in clubs around New Orleans, with James Booker and others. Develops his own glass-blowing techniques and work is chosen for traveling museum shows. Assists Peter Voukos at ceramics workshop at Tulane. Meets Christo at a workshop and is impressed by his scale fabrication process and collaboration with environment.

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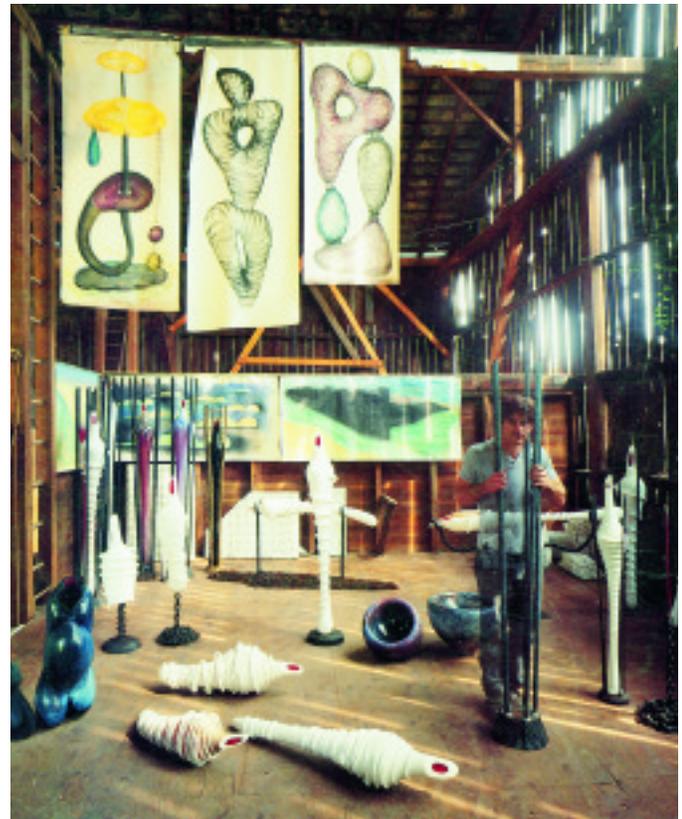
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1 Steve Tobin installing *Roots* at the American Museum of Natural History, 2000. 2 Casting an *Earth Bronze*, 1997. 3 Tobin building *Teepee* 1990. 4 Pouring bronze into a glass torso mold, 1991. 5 Removing the molds from a termite mound in Ghana, 1997. 6 The villagers of Nswam in Ghana working on a *Termite Mound* 1997. 7 Tobin blowing glass, 1989. 8 Tobin and his installation team in the Retretti Caves, 1993. 9 Tobin in his studio, 1988.



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1979

Graduates with bachelor's degree in theoretical mathematics. Moves to North Carolina, builds glass studio, and begins showing work at Heller Gallery in New York. Attends Pilchuck Glass School, Washington State, and Penland School of Crafts, North Carolina.

1980

Moves to Check, Virginia, and builds second glass studio. Has first solo exhibition in New York at Spring Street Enamels Gallery.

1982

Leaves studio in Virginia and becomes a vagabond glass blower. Returns to Penland and Pilchuck as a teaching assistant. Teaches at the New York Experimental Glass Workshop and at Colorado Mountain College.

1983–1984

Receives seven-month fellowship at Wheaton Village, Millville, New Jersey. Here foundation for many concepts for future glasswork is formulated. Makes first outdoor installation (*Waterglass*), a *Glass River* in Millville. Is invited to blow glass at the Seguso Vetri d'Artes in Murano, Italy.

1985–1986

Is invited to teach glass sculpture at Tokyo Glass Art Institute, learns to speak Japanese, and has numerous successful exhibitions throughout Japan.

1987

Returns to United States from Japan, purchases residence and studio in Pleasant Valley, Pennsylvania. Builds hotshop and develops studio.

1988

Exhibits first large-scale (five to fifteen feet high) blown-glass sculptures, titled *Cocoons*, at Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia.

1989

Becomes first foreigner invited to build own studio in Murano, Italy. Travels between studios in Italy and United States. Learns to speak Venetian dialect.

1990

Begins cast-glass series titled *Doors*; unprecedented process of casting bronze and glass together in same mold.

1993

Has first retrospective with Marc Chagall at Retretti Art Centre in Finland. Installs *Water Column* at American Craft Museum (now Museum of Arts and Design) in New York. As last blown-glass piece before officially retiring from glass making, blows world's largest bottle—later included in *Guinness Book of World Records* (1995)—to raise money for the artist's fellowship program at Creative Glass Center of America, Millville, New Jersey.

Begins work in metal sculpture. Philip Berman, chairman of Philadelphia Museum of Art, arrives unannounced at Tobin's studio and invites him to join a Triangle Artists' Workshop, working in steel, granite, and marble with international group of metal and stone sculptors in Allentown, Pennsylvania; Berman becomes mentor.

1994

Builds bronze foundry and begins to cast bronze.

1995

Publishes catalogue, *Steve Tobin: Reconstructions*, with exhibition at Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Collegeville, Pennsylvania, documenting two years' work in metal. Makes the thirty-foot-long *Bone Wall*.

1996

Begins *Earth Bronzes* series with *Forest Floor* bronzes, casting the earth in bronze.

1997

Mortgages home and studio to finance trip to Ghana, West Africa, to make bronze castings of termite hills. Revives acquaintance with Peter Voukos who advises Tobin to return to clay as a medium.

1998

Exhibits *Earth Bronzes* at Fuller Museum of Art, Brockton, Massachusetts. Show moves to New York and exhibited simultaneously at OK Harris and artindustrie Gallery. Phil Berman dies. Retains Kathleen Rogers as manager.

1999

Installs year-long exhibition of *Earth Bronzes* at American Museum of Natural History in New York, with ancillary exhibition at Montefiore Park in West Harlem. Exhibition featured in *Newsweek* magazine. *Roots* sculpture is centerpiece of Vancouver International Sculpture Project in Vancouver, British Columbia, and later, in Kirkland, Washington.

2001

Begins *Lantern House* series using glass lantern slides from 1800s. Revisits Murano and Venice with installation of *Lantern House* at Marco Polo Gallery. Dismantles *Earth Bronzes* show at American Museum of Natural History one day before attack on World Trade Center.

2002

*Lantern House* exhibited at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Major year-long exhibition of *Earth Bronzes*, titled *Tobin's Naked Earth*, installed on grounds of Page Museum, La Brea Tar Pits, Hancock Park, Los Angeles, with ancillary exhibit at Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, underwritten by Wolfgang Puck and Barbara Lazaroff. Exhibition of *Earth Bronzes* at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

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SELECTED SOLO  
EXHIBITIONS AND  
INSTALLATIONS

1979

*Sculptured Glass*, Bienville Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana

1980

*Glass Portraits*, Hanson Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana

*Glasscapes*, Spring Street Enamels Gallery, New York

1982

*Glass Sculpture*, Gallery 10, New York, 11–31 December

1985

David Bernstein Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, 18 September–9 October

*Manhattan Bowls*, Snyderman Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1986

*Wheaton Ware*, LaVaggi Gallery, New York

*Glasscapes*, Glass Gallery, New York

1987

*Dream Glass*, Axis Gallery, Tokyo, Japan, 30 May–8 June

*Glass for Tea Ceremony*, Tazawa Gallery, Kyoto, Japan

1988

*Steve Tobin: The Glass Garden*, Moore College of Art and Design, Levy Gallery for the Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 4 November–9 December, catalogue

1989

*Cocoons*, Holsten Galleries, Palm Beach, Florida, 7 December 1989–9 January 1990

1990

*Cocoons*, Judy Youens Gallery, Houston, Texas, 8 September–13 October

*Steve Tobin*, Sanske Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland, 21 April–16 June

1992

*Steve Tobin, Transformations: Three Installations in Glass*, Lehigh University, Wilson and Hall Gallery, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 4 September–22 October, catalogue

Habatat Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida

1993

*Steve Tobin at Retretti*, Retretti Art Centre, Punkaharju, Finland, 5 May–8 August, catalogue

1994

Sanske Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland

Habatat Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida

1995

*Steve Tobin: Reconstructions*, Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art, Ursinus College, Collegeville, Pennsylvania, 19 September–22 November, catalogue

*Steve Tobin: Reconstructions*, Peyton Wright Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 6 October–14 November

Bentley Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona

1996

*Matzoh House*, Gallery B.A.I., New York, 26 November–21 December

1997

*Broadway River*, New York University, Broadway Windows, New York

1998

*Earth Bronzes*, Fuller Museum of Art, Brockton, Massachusetts, 15 January–15 March, catalogue

*Earth Bronzes*, OK Harris, New York, 23 May–20 June, catalogue

*Earth Bronzes*, artetindustrie Gallery, New York, 23 May–20 June, catalogue

1999

***Cocoons*, Corning Museum of Glass,  
Sculpture Gallery, Corning, New York,  
7 June 1999–30 June 2001**

2000

***Earth Bronzes*, American Museum of  
Natural History, New York, 1 November  
2000–10 September 2001**

***Earth Bronzes*, Montefiore Park, West  
Harlem, New York, 1 November 2000–  
10 September 2001**

2001

***Earth Bronzes*, Lehigh University,  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, October 2001–  
September 2002**

***Earth Bronze Trilogy – Part I*, Buschlen-  
Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 9–  
31 January**

2002

***Tobin's Naked Earth*, George C. Page  
Museum, La Brea Tar Pits, Los Angeles,  
California, 5 October 2002–30 October 2003**

***Tobin's Naked Earth*, Los Angeles County  
Museum of Natural History, 5 October  
2002–30 October 2003**

***Lantern House*, George Eastman House,  
Rochester, New York, 22 June–31 December**

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