

## **Commissioning a Piece of Glass Artwork**

Although I do make panels for exhibitions or even just for my own satisfaction to develop a particular idea, a glass panel should, ideally, be designed specifically for the space in which it will be located, which is why most of my work involves producing pieces to meet specific client requirements.

Each of my glass commissions is unique and is informed by, amongst other things, the ethos of the clients, the budget, the location, function and aspect of the building together with, when working on public commissions, input from the staff and users. Without doubt, the key to a successful commission will be to develop an understanding and synergy with the client, the location and the artist.

One of the most important things to establish at the outset is the overall budget. The budget, along with the size of the location is likely to dictate the scope and complexity of the design as well as the materials and techniques to be employed. Glass can be an expensive material and the processes involved with working it are very labour intensive. When discussing the initial design options, I can give a guide to assist potential commissioners in deciding what may be an appropriate budget for them.

The aim of the initial meeting and consultation is to get a general feel for the site as well as understanding what the client wants from the work. I will probably bring along some glass samples or even samples of completed works in order to give the client a better idea of how certain types of glass or techniques will actually look in that location (a photograph never gives the same impression as the glass itself). The intention at this stage is to allow the client to understand the range of possibilities and to get their full involvement and input into the design which we will develop together from this initial consultation.

For larger scale installations, it may also be necessary to meet with architects, structural engineers, planning officers or other specialists to identify as early as possible any practical issues that may have to be considered within the design. For a small installation in a private property this is probably not necessary, but for some buildings (e.g. listed buildings), it would be prudent to discuss plans with the local planning office before making any commitments. For public locations, it is generally beneficial to involve staff and other users of the building to make sure that they have an input into the design. Sometimes users have their own practical requirements for an installation that need to be taken into account.

When the design and budget have been agreed I will commit to a timescale for the production and keep the client informed of when work has started and how it is progressing. I prefer to construct the work in my own studio using my own facilities since this gives me full control over all the processes involved. Whilst it is being made, clients are very welcome to visit my Studio to see the work as it progresses. In cases where I can't accommodate the work in my own studio for example, where the work is going to be larger than I can cope with or may require specialist processes, then I will work with other specialised glass studios in the UK or mainland Europe.

Once the glass is finished, I will arrange delivery to the site. For small works, I can organise fitting and installation myself, or the client may have their own preferred fitters/glaziers who I will liaise with on any details relevant to the correct installation of the work.