

# gg GoggleWorks Center for the Arts



## **GoggleWorks Hot Glass Goes Mobile**

New, portable furnace to bring classroom experience out to the community

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**READING, PA – February 24, 2021** – GoggleWorks Center for the Arts (GoggleWorks), one of the country’s largest interactive art centers, announced today its purchase of a mobile furnace to increase access to glass blowing experiences and instruction beyond the classroom. In an effort to better serve the

City of Reading and others in Berks County, the nonprofit, which traditionally offers programs from its massive studio on-campus, plans to offer outdoor, community art experiences as early as Summer 2021.

“While heating glass to 2000 degrees normally requires massive equipment and resources, the mobile setup makes the glass program flexible and portable without sacrificing quality,” said Tim Compton, Artistic Director.

Leaders at the art center said they have been gathering feedback from the community to target ways to make its mission more relevant and accessible for new audiences and students in the community. “Not everyone feels comfortable walking into an institutional art center,” said Levi Landis, Executive Director. Landis cited the vitality of outdoor programs such as the annual Iron Pour, Pumpkin Palooza, and demonstrations at the Penn Street Market and elsewhere. “Since we have such a dynamic campus experience, it’s easy to become overly-focused on pulling people into our doors, Landis said. “But we have engaged new people and met dynamic artists when we simply move programs outside of our walls.”

The temporary closure of GoggleWorks’ on-campus hot glass shop, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, led Compton and Hot Glass Studio Manager Scott Krenitsky to consider creative, new ways to serve the mission. The leaders reexamined a long-held dream of taking one of their most popular creative processes offsite.



"The potential and possibilities in having the smaller mobile furnace are very exciting!" said Scott Krenitsky, Hot Glass Studio Manager. "We can now do live glassblowing demonstrations in any school parking lot, participate in many downtown events and festivals, and even offer classes and workshops off-site to reach a much broader audience. It will also allow us to continue our usual operations in our studio on a smaller scale by running a variety of programs with a limited capacity of students, as well as catering to renters in our local glass community."

Support from the [Windgate Foundation](#) and [Wyomissing Foundation](#) helped realize the leaders' dream, which will provide immediate assistance for working artists during the health crisis and continued community programs post-pandemic.

"Our central goals are to meet those in the community where they are, providing flexibility for health concerns in the near future and broader access to high-quality education long-term," Compton said. The GoggleWorks team hopes to continue

the momentum and build a broad mobile platform that will offer other art mediums, methods and materials through similar outdoor programs.”

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### **About GoggleWorks Center for the Arts**

Located in downtown Reading, PA, GoggleWorks operates in a former goggle factory and is composed of 145,000 square feet of creative space. GoggleWorks offers year round arts education, including workshops, classes, and visiting artists; community outreach programs; a summer residency; youth programs and camps; 35 on-site studio artists; Albert and Eunice Boscov film theatre; three galleries for exhibitions; the Berks Launchbox maker space; and eight communal studios-hot glass, wood, printmaking, warm glass, metals, ceramics, photography and virtual reality. There are over three dozen dynamic arts partners located on GoggleWorks' campus. [www.GoggleWorks.org](http://www.GoggleWorks.org)

### **About GoggleWorks Hot Glass Studio**

The Hot Glass Studio is located in Building 5 on the GoggleWorks campus, which is the former boiler room for the historic Willson Goggle Factory. The studio boasts 3,000 square feet of communal, state of the art studio space for teaching, public demonstrations, and artist work. Classes are taught by professional artists and educators over three terms per year - spring, summer, and fall. The studio also offers public demonstrations and workshops for the public; passport and residency programs to develop career artists; and portfolio prep for Reading High School students. Leaders plan to open the on-campus studio soon to facilitate the summer slate of classes, artist rentals, and a prominent hot glass artist as their 2021 summer artist-in-residence. [Learn more about our Hot Glass Studio here.](#)

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