



A Sea of Glass: Searching for the Blaschkas' Fragile Legacy in an Ocean at Risk

C. Drew Harvell

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"The author makes an eloquent plea for marine biodiversity conservation."—*Library Journal*

"Harvell seems to channel the devotion that motivated the Blaschkas."—*The Guardian*
Winner of the 2016 National Outdoor Book Award, Environment Category

It started with a glass octopus. Dusty, broken, and all but forgotten, it caught Drew Harvell's eye. Fashioned in intricate detail by the father-son glassmaking team of Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka, the octopus belonged to a menagerie of unusual marine creatures that had been packed away for decades in a storage unit. More than 150 years earlier, the Blaschkas had been captivated by marine invertebrates and spun their likenesses into glass, documenting the life of oceans untouched by climate change and human impacts. Inspired by the Blaschkas' uncanny replicas, Harvell set out in search of their living counterparts. In *A Sea of Glass*, she recounts this journey of a lifetime, taking readers along as she dives beneath the ocean's surface to a rarely seen world, revealing the surprising and unusual biology of some of the most ancient animals on the tree of life. On the way, we glimpse a century of change in our ocean ecosystems and learn which of the living matches for the Blaschkas' creations are, indeed, as fragile as glass.

Drew Harvell and the Blaschka menagerie are the subjects of the documentary *Fragile Legacy*, which won the Best Short Film award at the 2015 Blue Ocean Film Festival & Conservation Summit. Learn more about the film and check out the trailer [here](#).

A Sea of Glass: Searching for the Blaschkas' Fragile Legacy in an Ocean at Risk Details

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Katrina says

Goodreads win

Phoebe says

This book is a powerful hybrid of science, art, and history. Dr. Harvell, an experienced invertebrate biologist, taps into the world of the Blaschka master glassmakers to create an inspiring call to action. Her vibrant vignettes accompanied by lavish photos of glass invertebrates illustrate the unmatched skill of the Blaschkas as well as the fragility of our ocean's biodiversity. This book is written in a way that makes it accessible to a wide variety of readers--scientists and non-scientists alike. Highly recommend!

Corinne Klohmann says

A wonderful, insightful book that not only educates but also intrigues! Dr. Harvell's knowledge and personal accounts keep you reading. The lovely photographs of the glass animals are another bonus!

David says

"A Sea of Glass" is a wonderful read, artfully bridging gaps between the worlds of art and science. While extremely informative with regards to the diversity of marine invertebrate form and function, this book also delves into the rich history of the Blaschka glassworkers. In a world where environmental outlooks may seem grim, this book is a reminder of the beauty that remains and the importance of marine conservation. Harvell's passion for the ocean is both palpable and contagious, and I'm looking forward to sharing this book with my friends and family.

(a)lyss(a) says

"My hope is that the data we gather here will help with biodiversity conservation and the development of new approaches to sustaining the lifeblood of biodiversity."

I was hoping for more of the history of the Blaschkas' and their work than a look at animals in the ocean.

While there are beautiful photos of the Blaschkas' work and a brief history of their glass marine life, this book really focuses on the author's excursion to document and analyze existing biodiversity in the ocean. I

appreciate the talk about climate change in the book and how it will shape the future of the ocean, but the story really focuses on the author and not the Blaschkas' work.

It's an interesting history of the ocean that's informative about climate change, but it's a rather short look at the Blaschkas' marine life.

Katie says

As someone who has always been extremely passionate about marine life, this book manages to elegantly combine scientific information with an eye-opening perspective on biology and life beneath the ocean! By combining art with science, Drew brings to the table a scientific yet historic view of the Blaschka art collection and hence, pays tribute to the incredible Blaschka legacy. The book is informative, yet humorous and heartwarming, as the author takes you on a personal journey through the wonders of the deep sea: a true testament to diversity beneath the ocean's surface. Throughout the ups and downs of the author's quest to find and conserve some of the world's most precious marine invertebrates, the readers are introduced to a world far greater than their own and are reminded that the fate of the world's marine ecosystems are at stake.

Joan Christine says

Dr. Harvell makes hard science vibrant and artistic. Her personal stories about her students and her research contextualize the timeless art of the Blaschkas in a really unique way. I have seen the glass pieces in person, and the historical background really brought the pieces to life in my mind's eye. I really loved this book, and have already handed it off to one of my friends to read. I'm ready for the next Harvell release! I hear it will be on disease outbreaks...another topical ocean minded discussion...
