

Q & A with Tracy Silva Barbosa of Duende Glass LLC

You had a successful career in NYC and relocated to NB in 2009. We understand you had a new business idea and participated in local business development programs to assist you. Tell us a bit about your new idea.

Ever since I graduated from Mass Art in 1999, I wanted to pursue my studies involving various types of printmaking on plate glass. Glass has a quality like no other material. Virtually invisible, stable, and poetic- these are just a few of its many personalities. Glass is a major part of architecture, and I feel my expertise with it as an artistic medium puts me in a unique position to work with architects and builders to include glass art within their building designs.



My glass is multilayered laminated plate glass with beautiful images captured within the layers. These images suggest landscape, and allude to classical stained glass in a modern

and unusual way. These art glass pieces are used for applications such as window, door, wall, restaurant, hotel etc.

How long have you been in business as a fine artist?

I have been supporting my family (me, my husband and our daughter) with my artwork since 2003.



You participated in the first South Coast Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) Pitch Contest and Accelerator Program. Tell us a bit about the experience.

It was a seminal experience. I have wanted to make this glass studio idea happen for so long. I felt like it was now or never... The pitch contest was a great way to just SAY IT OUT LOUD. If not to the judges and audience, but to myself. There was such an overwhelming positive response to my pitch that it just propelled me in the right direction: To the Accelerator

Program!



Photo Credit: New Bedford Open Studios.

You were a grand prize winner at the end of E for All's Accelerator Program. What next steps did you take?

Yes, it was quite an honor to be recognized by E for All. I certainly poured my all into the Accelerator and it paid off. Not just in prize money, but in an investor, and clear plan as to what the next steps are to making my architectural glass business a reality.

With the prize money, I purchased a company vehicle (nothing fancy!) which enabled me to get so much more done. Also, I invested in prototype development, website development, and company branding.

(talk about financial planning with Mike Andre and MSBDC business planning experience with Melinda Ailes)

After working with the MSBDC, how did you secure the working capital required to start your new business?

After winning the prize.... There was/is a lot to do! One major hurdle was actually finding the money I needed for the start up. I was referred to Melinda Ailes via NBEDC to help me settle and understand my projection costs and what I(realistically) needed to succeed in my first 18months. Working with Melinda was great. Not only was her service FREE, but she is knowledgeable, diligent, and empathic. With her help, and the hefty handed help of my accountant, Mike Andre's, I was able to construct realistic projections.

With these projections, I am able to make more accurate guesses toward my next steps in attaining accounts. I was also able to submit these projections to the NBEDC for a micro loan (\$10k) which I got. My projections also persuaded a wonderful Angel Investor to take a chance on me and Duende Glass. We just signed up for the ABX Boston 2016 architectural convention in November. I will be there with my newest prototypes and hoping for the best.

Where do you see your business heading over the next 5 years? Do you plan to have a small manufacturing site here in the city?

One of the hurdles which tended to dissuade me from pursuing this business through the years was the sheer size overhead involved with purchasing such costly glass equipment. Through many brainstorming sessions with my E for All cohort, and my fabulous mentors, I was able to construct a plan to use subcontractors i.e. local glass manufacturers to handle my fabrication... FOR NOW. I feel this business will take off. And when it does, I fully intend to open my own fabrication facility here in New Bedford.

To find out more visit these websites:

southcoast.eforall.org/
msbdc.org/
tsilvabarbosa.com

duendeglass.com

Thinking about starting a business or could use some help with an existing business? Check out what the New Bedford EDC has to offer: <http://www.nbedc.org>