

Depth of Field

With her ambitious Documenta Project, artist **Mary Van Cline** is on a photographic odyssey to immortalize the unique community she knows so well.

BY PATRICIA GRIEVE WATKINSON, ALL PHOTOS BY MARY VAN CLINE



The photographs are black and white and exquisitely printed at near life-size. Together they evoke a sense of warmhearted playfulness, with touches of the zany. Viewers at the opening exhibition of the new Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Wing of the Tacoma Museum of Art might feel an immediate rapport with the six personalities captured on film. There's patron Becky Benaroya and artists Dan Dailey, Clifford Rainey, Ginny Ruffner, Cappy Thompson, and Lino Tagliapietra. They are all at ease and without pretense. The surprise is that the creator of these portraits is fellow artist Mary Van Cline, known widely for glass sculpture that employs a very different type of photography.

The portraits on view in Tacoma are just a small sampling of the 125 (and counting) in Van Cline's Documenta Project, which she began in 2017. Seeking to capture definitive images of the people who represent the world of glass art—the artists, patrons, collectors, suppliers, gallerists, critics, and curators—she is just getting started. Many more portraits have yet to be taken.

This ambitious one-woman project was born when Van Cline reflected on her life as part of the Studio Glass movement and on the colleagues, teachers, patrons, and galleries that had not only supported her career, but made the movement possible. These are



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