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The future is imagined in new exhibit

By [Lana Michelin - Red Deer Advocate](#)

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If the world keeps warming, how will life evolve?

Glass artist Larissa Blokhuis, who helped teach a summer art program at Red Deer College, imagined a fanciful answer to that question, as shown in her exhibit *Awaken*, at the Harris-Warke Gallery, upstairs at Sunworks on Ross Street.

Blokhuis created her own versions of new life forms that might exist in some future time, if global warming causes some unique adaptations in various species.

Her glass, ceramic and fibre art creations will cause viewers to wonder: Are they supposed to be animal, vegetable or mineral? And that's exactly what the 29-year-old was after.

"I went with shapes that might look like a plant or an animal," said Blokhuis.

For instance, the glass-works trio, *Cactus*, can resemble either the type of cacti that turn up in unlikely mountainous habitats or gelatinous sea cucumbers.

A stranger-looking creature is depicted in the mushroom/anemone-like piece *Cosy*. Blokhuis was inspired to create this imagined life form by the shapes of everyday fungi. She sees it having a symbiotic relationship with another unseen creature living in its tentacles.

The artist, who divides her time between Vancouver, where her glass-blowing co-op exists, and Calgary, where family resides, imagined something completely outside the known reality for her multi-media artwork *Swelter*

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A small shrub or maybe underwater being, made of ceramic, polymer and wool fibre, is seen existing inside a bubble of glass. Blokhuis said she imagined a moist, drippy specimen that could survive in a very hot climate but she again encourages debate about whether it's a plant or animal.

"Part of it is the joy of discovery, (where people say) 'it might be this,' and then, after looking looking at it longer, they saying 'This isn't what it is...'"

Blokhuis admitted her favourite comment was from a viewer who suggested one of her glass works looks like a creature that exists today "but is not quite right."

The artist, who has also exhibited in Edmonton and Vancouver, wants to encourage more thought more about global warming, and what the planet might look like if the climate trend isn't reversed.

"I don't like direct messages, because they turn people off... but I think we need to make an active choice about whether we want to be part of the future," she said.

Blokhuis believes the Earth will adapt to whatever changes come. The question is, will people be able to?

"We need to change our behavior for there to be hope for our environment," added Blokhuis, who studied glass blowing at the Alberta College of Art and Design and has shown and sold her works in Alberta and B.C.

The Awaken exhibit will continue until March 26.

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