

# CHIHULY COLLECTION

PRESENTED BY MOREAN ARTS CENTER

Enjoy a guided tour of The Chihuly Collection as you view the incredible installations of Dale Chihuly.

Please respect fellow visitors and use ear buds while listening to the audio tour.

At the conclusion of the tour, please feel free to revisit the installations, visit our Gift Shop and continue on to the Morean Arts Center, Morean Glass Studio, and Morean Center for Clay, all included with your admission.

## **Basket Series**

As you enter in the first gallery of the Chihuly Collection, there is a long wooden slab table with roughhewn edges upon which a series of artwork is displayed. These asymmetrical forms, with thin undulating walls, are part of Dale Chihuly's *Basket* series.

Begun in the late 70s, Chihuly named the *Basket* series in honor of the Native American woven baskets that first inspired this body of work. He was captivated by a selection of Northwest Indian baskets at the Washington State Historical Society, which were displayed in stacked groupings and had irregular slumping forms as a result of age and gravity.

Several of the *Baskets* in this grouping are from the 80s and demonstrate the artist's early experimentations with subtle color and surface patterns, while others, from later blows in 2008, are known as *Tabac Baskets*. Here the artist chose a smoky tobacco color, *Tabac 222*, that references the natural palette of Native American baskets.

The glass drawings illustrated in these *Tabac Baskets* reference the textile patterns seen in Chihuly's Native American trade blanket collection. These patterns are created from glass threads, which are then fused to the molten vessel through a process called the "pick-up drawing" technique.

## **Carnival Chandelier**

Chihuly began his *Chandelier* series in 1992 for an exhibition at the Seattle Art Museum. These sculptures are composed of multiple hand-blown glass forms mounted to a steel armature. Unlike traditional chandeliers, these sculptures reflect light instead of emitting it. He further explored this series during the pivotal *Chihuly Over Venice* project from 1995-96, during which he mounted fourteen chandeliers over the canals of Venice.

The *Carnival Chandelier* features a variety of forms and colors and is reminiscent of the *Isola di San Giacomo in Palude Chandelier*, created during the *Chihuly Over Venice* project.

## **Azul de Medianoche Chandelier**

*Chandeliers* (and *Towers*) demonstrate Chihuly's desire to mass and control color on a grand scale. Over the years, Chihuly has explored both multicolored compositions and variations on a single color. Here the artist has incorporated various forms in shades of blue adding depth to this monochromatic sculpture.

The *Azul de Medianoche Chandelier* was generously gifted by Joan Stonecipher when she learned that the Morean Arts Center was acquiring a large permanent collection of Chihuly's artwork.

## **Seaforms**

The *Seaform* series evolved from the *Basket* series during the early 1980s. Chihuly and his team used iron molds in the glassmaking process to imprint a ribbed effect on the glass, which creates texture and strengthens the form. Thin lines of color, known as "body wraps," emphasize the *Seaform's* undulating shapes. Delicate and thin-walled, *Seaforms* conjure underwater life but do not imitate it.

## Drawings

What began for Chihuly as a means of expressing his ideas to the glassblowing team, evolved into a unique body of work that references the development of his glass series. *Drawings* vary from light and airy to bold and colorful. Chihuly works with acrylic, watercolor, charcoal, graphite – even fire – to create his expressive two-dimensional artworks.

The *Drawings* seen here are abstract representations of the artist's series in glass, including *Ikebana*, *Baskets*, *Venetians*, and *Niijima Floats*. These works on paper were created in 2007-2009 when Chihuly painted extensively with metallic acrylic paints. The *Drawings*, displayed in an open grid, allow the viewer an unobstructed view of the artwork consistent with the artist's aesthetic.

## Persians

First exhibited in 1986 as part of his exhibition at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Palais du Louvre in Paris, Chihuly's *Persian* series is a celebration of form, scale and color. The series' dramatic compositions have evolved to include installations mounted on walls, displayed overhead in ceilings, and in the form of towers.

The scale and thickness of these *Persians* allows light to travel through them, casting vivid shadows on the wall. The ribs, a result of the optic mold, spiral outward from the center, adding texture and dimension to both these forms and the resulting shadows.

The *Sunset Persian Wall* was created for the Chihuly Collection and evokes the beautiful sunsets seen in St. Petersburg.

## **Float Boat**

Chihuly first filled boats with glass in Nuutajärvi, Finland, during the 1995 *Chihuly Over Venice* project. After several days of glassblowing, Chihuly started tossing glass forms into the Nuutajoki river to see how they would look in the environment. As the glass floated downstream it was retrieved in wooden boats by local teenagers, inspiring Chihuly to begin massing various forms in wooden boats, creating what would become the *Boat* series.

The forms featured in this *Boat* are referred to as *Niijima Floats* and are named after the island of Niijima in Tokyo Bay and for the small fishing floats Chihuly found as a child on the shores of the Puget Sound. These colorful spheres vary in size and can be as large as 40 inches in diameter, some of the largest forms currently being hand-blown.

## **Ikebana on Acrylic**

Chihuly often describes his need to draw as an outlet for his creative energy, an explosive, gestural process that began as a way to communicate with the glassblowing team and evolved into an independent art form. The use of acrylic sheets as backdrops represents the artist's desire to introduce additional materials into his drawing repertoire.

Illuminated from behind, these translucent *Drawings* are evidence of the artist's continued exploration of color and light.

## **Persian Ceiling**

Originally created in 2008, this *Persian Ceiling* was reconfigured in 2016 for the Chihuly Collection's home on Central Avenue.

This installation celebrates the movement of light through translucent *Persians*, resulting in intentional washes of color across the walls. Nested among the *Persians* are various whimsical forms including cones, snooters, *Seaforms*, crab, nautilus, and a Putti perched on a clam shell. The multifaceted nature of this installation invites the viewer to linger.

## **Ikebana**

Chihuly developed the *Ikebana* series as an offshoot of the *Venetians* in the late 1980s. The series, like others initiated by Chihuly during this period, demonstrates the artist's aspiration to move glass from the pedestal into the realm of large-scale sculpture.

Similar to the Japanese artform for which it is named, Chihuly's *Ikebana* include multiple elements, a vessel and organic twisting stems, that are composed to create a single artwork.

These pieces have a sense of playfulness and even whimsical nature to them.

## **Ruby Red Icicle Chandelier**

The *Ruby Red Icicle Chandelier* is considered the signature piece in this collection with its vibrant red icicles that extend in all directions, capturing and reflecting light. Unlike traditional chandeliers, Chihuly *Chandeliers* are not internally lit.

The icicle form originated in the late 90s and was created for Chihuly's first permanent outdoor sculpture, *Icicle Creek Chandelier* in Leavenworth, WA.

## **Venetians**

In the summer of 1988, Chihuly embarked on a series inspired by Art Deco Venetian glass. Working with the Italian glass master Lino Tagliapietra, Chihuly initially sought to replicate Venetian glass of the 1920s; however, this soon evolved into a new body of work. Chihuly combined historical traditions of glassmaking and decorative arts with contemporary techniques and unconventional forms. For the first time, Chihuly used additive elements to embellish his blown glass works. Consistently pushing the boundaries of scale, ornamentation, and technical complexity, each *Venetian* has a character of its own, with flamboyant attachments, sometimes humorous, and often organic.

Through continued experimentations with scale, Chihuly developed what he calls *Piccolo Venetians*, smaller, more delicate, iterations of the *Venetians*.

## Neon Tumbleweed

Chihuly has experimented with neon in his art installations since he was a student in the late 1960s. He has continued to work with the medium throughout his career. In 1993, he began the *Tumbleweeds*, in which neon tubes are massed together to form illuminated bundles of light and color.

Consisting of linear, factory-made tubes that are bent into curvilinear forms when heated, *Tumbleweeds* are composed as individual sculptures or grouped together in larger installations.

## Mille Fiori

In this series the artist has revisited and refined many of the forms and techniques that he developed earlier in his career. In the early 2000s, this series evolved into a new type of installation called *Mille Fiori*, Italian for “a thousand flowers,” in which the artist composed groupings of *fiori* on a platform to create an “indoor garden” for the Tacoma Art Museum.

Chihuly's *Fiori* demonstrate the artist's penchant for organic, free flowing forms that often reference the natural world, as is evident by their names – green grass, herons, reeds, marlins, and trumpet flowers. Many of the vertical forms in this installation were made in Finland during annual trips made by Chihuly and his glassblowing team. Tallest among them are the iridescent lavender colored *Neodymium Reeds*. To create the long, tubular shape of a *Reed*, one glassblower is elevated in a mechanical lift while blowing through the pipe to encourage the form to stretch, while another pulls the glass toward the ground.

## Macchia Forest

Motivated by a desire to use as many color combinations in one series as possible, Chihuly created the *Macchia* (Italian for “spotted”) in 1981. The development of the series involved creating a technique for applying a layer of white between colors to prevent them from blending. Pieces of colored glass are fused to the surface of the *Macchia* during the glassblowing process to create the mottled effect for which this series is named. This series is also distinguished by the contrasting lip wrap color, which encircles the undulating edge of these forms.