



1998 PAC Winner

Dale Chihuly

If one person has been responsible for transforming the scope and reputation of glass as an artistic medium, it is Dale Chihuly. Glass, once considered decorative rather than aesthetic, has risen to the ranks of high art, ascending from the tables of craft shows to the pedestals of art museums, thanks primarily to the efforts of Dale Chihuly.

Chihuly has shown his work in solo and group exhibitions throughout the world and is one of only three Americans to have had a solo exhibition at the Louvre.

Chihuly was born in Tacoma, Washington. He received a B.A. from the University of Washington in 1965, an M.S. from the University of Wisconsin in 1967, and an M.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1968.

While a student at the University of Washington, he experimented with glass as an aesthetic element and in 1966 studied with glassblower Harvey Littleton, who himself had sparked a glass renaissance. In 1968, two Fulbright Fellowships allowed him to study the art of glass making in Venice.

The artist's studio, now located in a scenic boathouse on Lake Union in Seattle, is a busy workshop of crew members, each of whom plays an essential role from glassblower, to installation designer, to registrar. In 1971 Chihuly, with support from Seattle area art patrons, founded the Pilchuck Glass School on a modest farm north of Seattle.

The school has since burgeoned into a major art hub, enrolling over 250 students at a time. Similarly, Seattle has become a glassmaking epicenter, housing over thirty-five hot shops.

Chihuly is cognizant of the complex fragile nature of glass and within these borders of controlled accident Chihuly not only operates, but prospers. Dale Chihuly is, without question, the world's premier glass artist.