



## LINO TAGLIAPIETRA

Born in 1934 in Murano, Italy, Tagliapietra began his apprenticeship under the internationally known Muranese glass master Archimede Seguso at age 12. He was only allowed to participate in glass manufacturing after two years as a water carrier. By the age of 21, he had mastered age-old techniques and earned the title of *maestro*. For the next 25 years, he worked in some of the best-known Muranese glass factories, as both a teacher and mentor. Dale Chihuly describes Tagliapietra as “perhaps the world’s greatest living glassblower.”

In the summer of 1979, Tagliapietra traveled to Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle to demonstrate classic Italian glass working techniques. Although Italian *maestros* closely guarded the glassblowing techniques and many were unwilling to share knowledge that had been proprietary for centuries, Tagliapietra believed it was important to do so in order for glassmaking as a high art form to survive. Defying the criticism of his colleagues, he traveled to the United States to teach these techniques, despite knowing no English and never having traveled by airplane before.

In the 1980s he made the transition from traditional Venetian master glassblower and glass designer to independent studio artist. Tagliapietra has shared his deep understanding, experience and knowledge of Venetian glassblowing, while also branching out and using centuries old techniques to inspire new bursts of creative glassblowing.

### LINO TAGLIAPIETRA GOBLETS

The goblet is a traditional form of Venetian blown glass. For centuries, Venetian maestros perfected complicated methods of adding new types of decoration and color in blown glass. In these pieces, Tagliapietra combines those traditional methods and forms of glassblowing with his own flair. Tagliapietra created these goblets specifically for George Stroemple. Most of his work is much larger and more exuberant.



### GLASS IS INCREDIBLE!

- Glassblowers have to be incredibly strong and dexterous. Molten glass is gathered from a furnace which keeps it at about 2000 °F. That is hotter than lava just ejected from a volcano!
- Molten glass is dangerous because it is exceedingly hot and heavy. The glassblower has to keep it in constant motion so the piece retains its symmetrical shape and does not slump off the blowpipe.
- There is a fine art to blowing air into the glass, as too much air will make the piece too thin, while too little air will cause the piece to be too thick. If the glass is stressed too much, it will burst.
- Glass refracts, reflects and transmits light; one of the qualities which makes it such a beautiful art form. The play of light off of the Laguna Murano Chandelier is an excellent example of this quality.
- Glass is a unique substance. It is neither a liquid nor solid, but an amorphous solid, meaning it behaves like a solid even though it does not have the organized molecular structure typical of solids.
- Glass occurs naturally when sand and rocks are heated to extremely high temperatures and rapidly cooled. Volcanic eruptions create obsidian, a glossy, black glass. Lightening strikes can create fulgurites, fragile pieces of glass that are glossy and smooth on the inside, but the outer surface is coated in sand. Glass formed by meteor strikes is the most rare. Some meteors forms tektites, which look a bit like coal. Incredibly rare are moldavites - green glass formed by meteors. Moldavites are often cut and polished as a gemstone.

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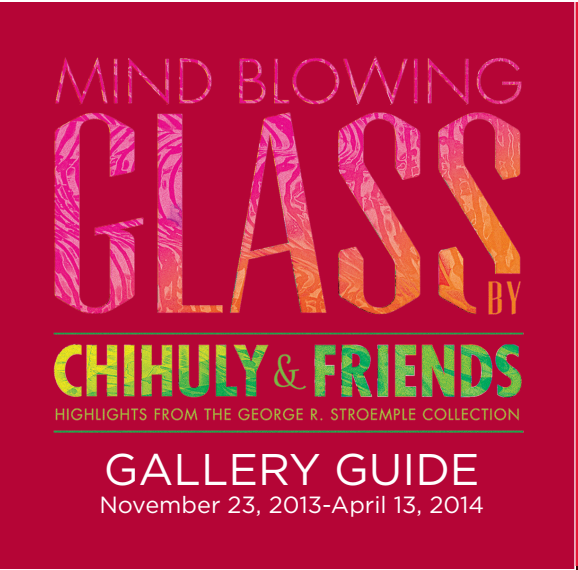
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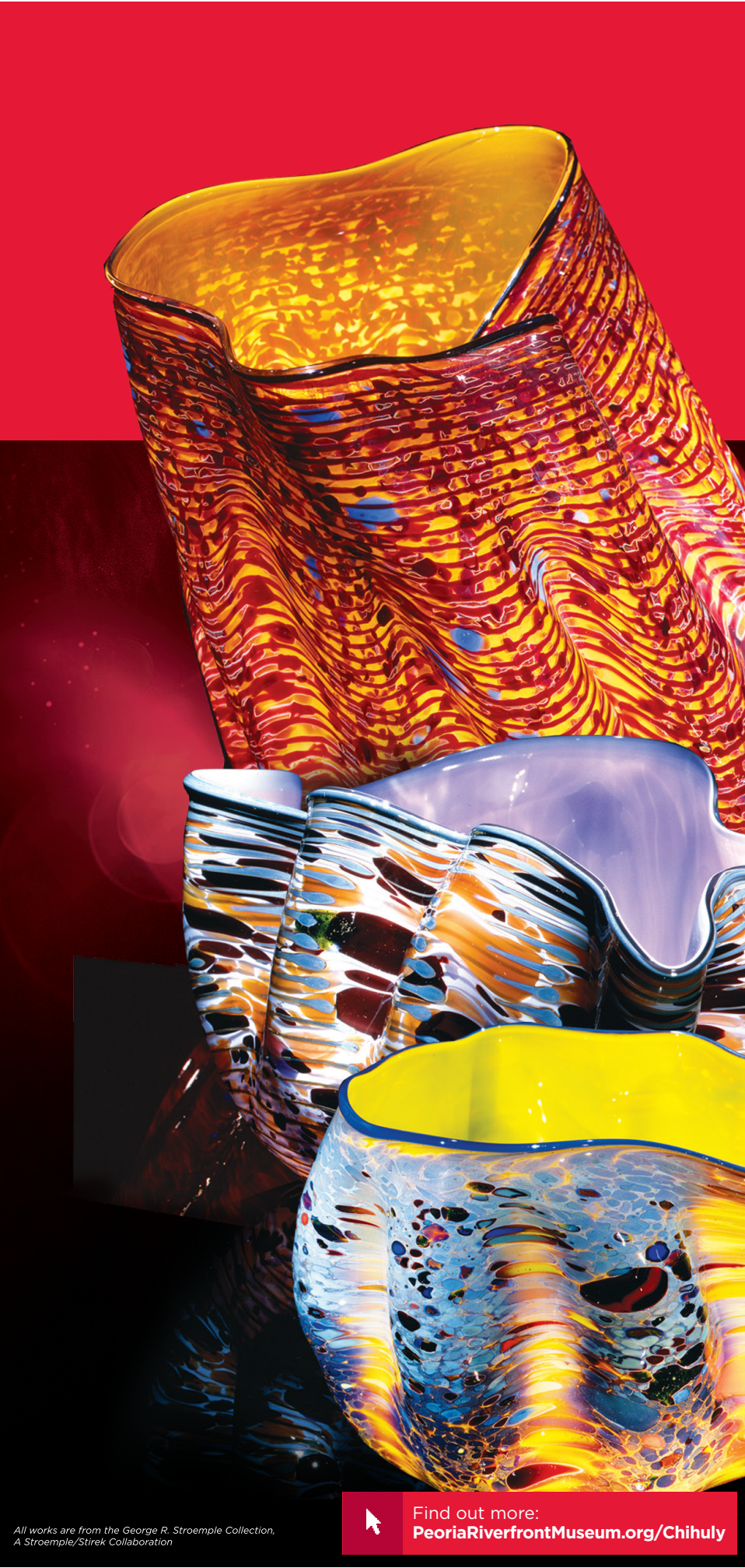
## WHO IS GEORGE R. STROEMPLE?

George R. Stroemple is a businessman with a passionate love of the arts, especially artworks depicting the natural world. His collection is internationally recognized as one of the most significant compendiums of artwork documenting the studio glass movement in the Pacific Northwest. Although this exhibit focuses exclusively on three of the glass artists in his collection, Stroemple’s collection also includes paintings, sculpture, photography, Japanese Meiji objects, Native American artifacts, and examples of traditional crafts.

### CHIHULY & FRIENDS

The title *Chihuly & Friends* refers to the three artists who are featured in this exhibition, Dale Chihuly, Lino Tagliapietra, and Vittorio Costantini; all masters of studio art glass. The contributions of glass sculptor Pino Signoretto are also seen in this exhibition; he created the *putti* on the *Venetians* and the sea creatures that adorn the chandelier. This type of collaboration is reflected in the exhibiton’s title.

It is also important to recognize that Chihuly works as part of a team of highly skilled artists. He first learned the value of synchronized teamwork in glassblowing while working in the Venini glass factory on the island of Murano in 1968. After two accidents in the 1970s left him blind in the left eye and unable to hold up a glassblowing pipe, Chihuly assembled a glassblowing team. He creates drawings and sketches that convey his artistic vision for a piece to his crew, who do the actual glassblowing. With a team, Chihuly is able to create pieces that could never be made by one glass artist alone. In a 2006 interview, Chihuly described himself as “more choreographer than dancer, more supervisor than participant, more director than actor,” a quote that beautifully captures his role as *maestro*, or “master teacher,” reminiscent of the Italian *maestros* in the Venini glass factory.



All works are from the George R. Stroemple Collection,  
A Stroemple/Stirek Collaboration



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[PeoriaRiverfrontMuseum.org/Chihuly](http://PeoriaRiverfrontMuseum.org/Chihuly)





## DALE CHIHULY

Chihuly was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1941. In 1959, he became the first person in his family to attend college. After discovering an interest in art, he transferred to the University of Washington, where he studied interior design and architecture. Distracted by college social life, Chihuly dropped out to study in Italy, France, and the Middle East. In 1963, he returned to the university and began to experiment with fibers, glass, and color. He graduated in 1965 with a B.A. in interior design and began work for an architectural firm in Seattle.

Experimenting with glassblowing in his basement studio convinced Chihuly that he wanted to become a glass artist. In the 1960s, most people thought of glass as a material for making functional objects, not works of art. In 1966, Chihuly obtained a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he studied with Harvey Littleton, founder of the studio glass movement. In 1967, he earned a M.S. degree in sculpture and entered the Master's program at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), where he would later establish the

glass program and teach for more than a decade. In 1968, Chihuly received a Fulbright Fellowship and moved to Venice, Italy, where he became the first American glassblower to work in the prestigious Venini glass factory on the island of Murano. In 1971, Chihuly cofounded the Pilchuck Glass School, an international center designed to focus on glass education, which continues to be considered the most comprehensive educational center in the world for glass artists.

Chihuly's artwork has transformed over the decades. The 1970s were characterized by his *Navajo Blanket* series. The 1980s were characterized by his *Seaform*, *Macchia*, *Persian* and *Ikebana* series. The 1990s were characterized by his *Venetian* series, *Nijima* floats and *Chandeliers*. Despite his changing art sentiments, one thing reverberates through his entire career—Chihuly's emphasis on the importance of working with the community and encouraging other artists.

### CHIHULY WORKS IN THIS EXHIBITION:

*Laguna Murano Chandelier*

In 1996, Chihuly undertook an ambitious project, creating and installing 14 chandeliers in the city of Venice. The *Laguna Murano Chandelier* was the final piece created in this project, and the only one blown on the island of Murano, in the hot shop of Pino Signoretto. The blowing of this chandelier was the first time that three glass masters—Dale Chihuly, Lino Tagliapietra, and Pino Signoretto—were assembled at the request of Chihuly to create a collaborative work. Tagliapietra and Signoretto created the forms representing the Venetian lagoon, a crab, sea jellies, sea stars, eel, octopus, puffer fish, sharks, a mermaid, and the sea god Neptune. These elements were eventually shipped to Seattle to be incorporated into the *Chandelier* design. Tagliapietra blew the hundreds of tendrils (seaweed fronds) were blown at Chihuly Studio, where Chihuly ultimately decided upon the final composition.



*Aureolin Yellow Macchia with Armenian Blue Lip Wrap*, 1981

*Macchia*

In the summer of 1981, Chihuly began an ongoing series called *Macchia* (from the Italian word for spotted or stained). The series began with Chihuly's desire to use all 300 colors of glass in his studio in one series. William Morris, another exceptional glass artist whose work is collected by Stroemple, blew all of the *Macchia* in this exhibition.

*Bottle Stopper Venetians*



*Putti and Tree*, 1997

*Piccolo Venetians*



*Nymph Pink Piccolo Venetian with Pink and Green Ribbons*, 1994

*Putti Venetians*



*Gold over Bright Orange Putti Venetian with Leaves*, 1994

*Drawings*



*Ebeltoft Drawing*, 1991

*The Venetian Series*

This series of exuberantly decorated vessels was inspired by a group of rare Venetian Art Deco vases that Chihuly viewed in 1987 in Venice. He described the vases as being “very odd, with garish colors.” Chihuly's *Venetians* are saturated with color, and feature two forms—the smooth shape of the vessel, and the lush curls and swirls that surround it. Lino Tagliapietra blew all the large vessels for the *Venetians* in this exhibition, and Pino Signoretto sculpted all of the *putti*.

## VITTORIO COSTANTINI

Vittorio Costantini was born in 1944 on the island of Burano, located in the lagoon of Venice, Italy. Like Lino Tagliapietra, Costantini began apprenticing to be a glass artist at the age of 11, working in a nearby glass factory. He worked long days in the factory, and retired in the evenings to the hobby he felt most passionate about—lampworking. Lampworking is a type of glasswork where a torch or lamp is used to melt the rods of glass. Once the glass is softened, it can be easily manipulated by blowing and shaping with tools and hand movements.

Costantini now owns and operates his own workshop in Venice. His passion continues to be lampworking, which he fuses with his love for art and appreciation of nature to create beautiful glass insects, birds, fish, and flowers. Costantini is an avid nature observer, scrutinizing the anatomy of his creatures, as well as studying their habitats and life cycles, in order to create incredibly realistic looking creations. In the past few years, Costantini has dedicated his life not only to creating his beautiful glasswork creatures, but also to teaching and demonstrating his craft to others.



### INSECTS AND ARACHNIDS BY VITTORIO COSTANTINI

The insects and spiders Vittorio Costantini fashions out of glass are beautiful, delicate, and incredibly lifelike. The artist's careful study of his subjects' anatomy is evident in each tiny creation. The insects' features are faithfully reproduced in amazing detail, from the delicate antennae to the minute barbs on the legs. When one looks at the honey bees making their way across the display case, one can even see the pollen baskets on their rear legs, many laden with yellow glass from an imagined trip to gather pollen.



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